



*The service begins in silence so all may participate in a time of reflection.  
May God help each of us to participate tonight and throughout the season as we are able.*

**Prelude**

**"O come, O come, Emmanuel"**

**UMH Pg 211**

**Verse 1**

*O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lonely exile here  
until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

**Call to Worship & Opening Prayer**

Leader: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Leader: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; on those who live in a land of deep shadow, a light has shone. For the yoke that was weighing upon them, and the burden upon their shoulders, you have broken in pieces, O God, our Redeemer. Let us pray:

**All: God of mercy, hear our prayer in this Advent season for ourselves and for our families who live with painful thoughts and memories. We ask for strength for today, courage for tomorrow and peace for the past. We ask these things in the name of Jesus Christ, who shares our life in joy and sorrow, death and new birth, despair and promise. Amen.**

**First Scripture Reading**

**Isaiah 40:1, 25-31 (New Living Translation)**

*Leader: A Reading from the book of Isaiah:*

*Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God...*

*25 "To whom will you compare me? Who is my equal?" asks the Holy One.*

*26 Look up into the heavens. Who created all the stars?*

*He brings them out like an army, one after another, calling each by its name.*

*Because of his great power and incomparable strength, not a single one is missing.*

*27 O Jacob, how can you say the Lord does not see your troubles?*

*O Israel, how can you say God ignores your rights?*

*28 Have you never heard? Have you never understood?*

*The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth.*

*He never grows weak or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding.*

29 He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless.

30 Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in exhaustion.

31 But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.

### Responsive Reading

Leader: I will lift up my eyes to the hills, from where is my help to come?

**People: My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.**

Leader: He will not let your foot be moved.

**People: He who keeps watch over you shall neither slumber nor sleep.**

Leader: The Lord Himself watches over you; the Lord is your shade at your right hand.

**People: So that the sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.**

Leader: The Lord shall watch over your going out and your coming in, from this time forth for ever more.

**All: Amen.**

Adapted from Psalm 121

### Second Scripture Reading

Matthew 11:28-30 (New Living Translation)

Leader: Hear now these words of Jesus from the Gospel of Matthew:

28 Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you.

Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."

### Special Music

"O come, O come, Emmanuel"  
Verse 2

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*O come, thou Wisdom from on high,  
and order all things far and nigh;  
to us the path of knowledge show,  
and cause us in her ways to go.  
Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

### Liturgy of Remembrance: Lighting of Advent Candles

#### First Candle:

Leader: The first candle we light to remember those persons whom we have loved and lost. We pause to remember their name, their voice, their face, the memory that binds them to us in this season. We hold them before God, giving thanks for their lives in ours.

*Please take a moment to remember those who have died, naming them either aloud or in silence.*

Leader: Let us pray.

Lord, each of us takes our loved one by the hand and leads them to you, the God of love. Here we present them to you. Accept our love and thanksgiving as we entrust them to your loving care. We want our loved ones to be free at home with you. We ask that you save a place for us beside them. We ask that you fill us with motivation and energy in the days ahead when we feel like giving up and remind us often of our true homeland when we are caught up in the desolation of the journey. Help us to find joy in the people, events, and the beauty of the season which surrounds us.

**All: Thank you for the gift each of these people has been in our lives. We want to believe that we will celebrate the treasure of love with them again, when we are all in your presence forever. May this truth sustain us in the days to come. Take our sad and aching hearts and comfort us. Comfort us, for we only feel hollowness and emptiness. God of sorrowing, draw near! Amen.**

### Closing Reflection

Leader: As we prepare to go forth this evening, we acknowledge and claim the darkness that is present both in the world and in our own lives. We are people who are familiar with the darkness, but may we also remember that the light of the Christ Child illumines our world and our lives this Christmas season. May that same Child, our Lord and Savior Jesus, born in a lowly stable- himself destined to be outcast and marginalized- bring light, comfort, peace, and joy this holiday season.

### Closing Hymn

"O come, O come, Emmanuel"  
Verses 7 and 1

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*O come, Desire of nations, bind  
all peoples in one heart and mind.  
From dust thou brought us forth to life;  
deliver us from earthly strife.  
Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lonely exile here  
until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

### Benediction

Leader: May the hope of the Christ Child sustain us through this darkness.

**People: That together we may shine again.**

**All: Amen.**

*This order of Worship was adapted from a service created by Rev. Heather Hill found at  
youngclergywomen.org*