An Evening with Isaiah
by Naomi Schmidt

# Words of Welcome/Opening Prayer

Opening Anthem

Hymn 23 - O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

**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.**

**O come, O Root of Jesse, free
Your own from Satan’s tyranny;
From depths of hell your people save,
And bring them vict’ry o’er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**O come, O Day-Spring, from on high,
And cheer us by your drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

Opening Litany

Leader: Oh Lord, how shall we greet you and welcome you tonight?

**Group: We’ve gathered here to praise you, O Christ Child, our delight.**

Leader: Lord, draw us to the manger to see the Savior’s face,

**Group: Remind us that we need you and fill us with your grace.**

Leader: In love you dwelt among us, a man that we could see

**Group: Our Brother, Teacher, Savior, you came to set us free**

Leader: Oh, love beyond all telling, the Lord has brought us grace!

**Group: Now righteous and forgiven, we dwell in Love’s embrace. Amen.**

Light 1st Advent Candle

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.

Anthem

A Moment with Isaiah

Responsive Reading

L: Therefore, the Lord himself will give youa sign:

G: The virginwill conceive and give birth to a son, andwill call him Immanuel.

L: A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;

**G: from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.**

L: The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might.

**G: Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.**

L: Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.

**G:See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the people,**

L: but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you.

**G: Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.**

L: I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness;

G: I will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles,

L: to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison,

G:   and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

L: The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;

G: on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

L: For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.

G:And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

L: Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, from that time on and forever.

G: The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

Light 2nd Advent Candle

Darkness covers the earth but the LORD rises upon you and His glory appears over you.

Hymn 90 - The People that in Darkness Sat

**The people that in darkness sat
A glorious light have seen;**

**The light has shone on them who long**

**In shades of death have been, In shades of death have been.**

**To us a child of hope is born,**

**To us a son is giv’n,**

**And on his shoulders ever rests**

**All pow’r in earth and heav’n, all pow’r in earth and heav’n.**

**His name shall be the Prince of Peace,**

**The Everlasting Lord,**

**The Wonderful, the Counselor,**

**The God by all adored, the God by all adored.**

**His righteous government and pow’r
Shall over all extend;**

**On judgment and on justice based,**

**His reign shall have no end, His reign shall have no end.**

A message from Isaiah

Hymn 54 – Where Shepherds Lately Knelt

**Where shepherds lately knelt and kept the angel’s word,**

**I come in half belief, a pilgrim strangely stirred;**

**But there is room and welcome there for me, (repeat)**

**In that unlikely place I find him as they said:**

**Sweet newborn Babe, how frail and in a manger bed,**

**A still, small voice to cry one day for me, (repeat)**

**How should I not have known Isaiah would be there,**

**His prophecies fulfilled, with pounding heart I stare:**

**A child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me, (repeat)**

Light 3rd Advent Candle

And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

The Red of Our Sin

Light 4th Advent Candle

Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow;

though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.

Hymn 304 vs. 4, 6 - Jesus Sinners Does Receive

**Come, O sinners, one and all, Come accept his invitation.**

**Come, obey his gracious call; Come and take his free salvation!**

**Firmly in these words believe-Jesus sinners does receive.**

**Oh, how blest it is to know, Were as scarlet my transgression,**

**It shall be as white as snow By your blood and bitter passion,**

**For these words I do believe-Jesus sinners does receive.**

The Whiteness of Our Forgiveness

# The 4th Advent Candle

The final candle in the wreath is the Christ candle. It is lit as the pinnacle of what we have been waiting for and so desperately need – a Savior. This white candle symbolizes Christ’s purity, righteousness and radiant light. It is beautiful and simple; it warms our hearts as it shines with God’s love. It brightens the darkness with the hope of forgiveness and peace with God as a free gift of grace. It draws our hearts to worship the child who has been born to us; the son who has been given to us. It proclaims the majesty of the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace. This is the light of Christ.

### White as Snow –. A soloist will sing it once and then the ladies are invited to repeat the anthem twice.

**White as snow, white as snow, though my sins were as scarlet,**

**Lord I know, Lord I know, that I’m clean and forgiven.**

**Through the power of Your blood, through the wonder of Your love,**

**Through faith in you I know that I can be white as snow.**

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Prayer

Video clip

Hymn 47 – Behold, a Branch is Growing

**Behold, a Branch is growing Of loveliest form and grace,
As prophets sang, foreknowing; it springs from Jesse’s race
And bears one little flow’r In midst of coldest winter,
At deepest midnight hour.**

**Isaiah had foretold it In words of promise sure,**

**And Mary’s arms enfold it, A virgin meek and pure.**

**Through God’s eternal will This child to her is given
At midnight calm and still.**

**This flow’r so small and tender, With fragrance fills the air;
His brightness ends the darkness That kept the earth in fear.
True God and yet true man, He came to save His people
From earth’s dark night of sin.**

**O Savior, Child of Mary, Who felt our human woes
O Savior, King of glory, Who conquered all our foes,**

**Bring us at last we pray, To the bright courts of heaven
And to the endless day.**

Isaiah’s Tenderness

Selected Readings from Isaiah 40:

Reader 1

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her sin has been paid for.

Reader 2

There is a voice of one calling: “Prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

Reader 3

All people are like grass, and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.

Reader 4

He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

Reader 5

Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Hymn 11 - Comfort, Comfort All My People

**“Comfort, comfort all my people; Speak of peace,” so says our God.**

**“Comfort those who site in darkness, Groaning from their sorrows’ load.**

**Speak to all Jerusalem Of the peace that waits for them;**

**Tell them that their sins I cover, That their warfare now is over.”**

**All their sins our God will pardon, Blotting out each dark misdeed;**

**All that well deserve his anger He no more will see or heed.**

**They have suffered man-y a day; Now their griefs have passed away.**

**God will change their aching sadness Into ever-springing gladness.**

**John the Baptist’s voice is crying In the desert far and near,**

**Calling people to repentance For the kingdom now is here.**

**Oh, that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God a way;**

**Let the valleys rise to meet him And the hills bow down to greet him.**

**Straighten out the crooked highway; Make the rougher places plain.**

**Let your hearts be true and humble, Ready for his holy reign.**

**For the glory of the Lord Now o’er earth is spread abroad,**

**And all flesh shall see the token That his word is never broken.**

Responsive Prayer

L: O gracious and almighty Father, we praise you that you have kept your ancient promises by sending your everlasting Son in human flesh.

**G: Receive our thanks and devotion, our songs and prayers.**

L: You sent Jesus to demonstrate your love for all people, the weak and lonely, the troubled and frightened, the timid and helpless. No one is overlooked by your ever-seeking eyes. No one is excluded from your strong, protective arms. No one is denied the comfort and help of your outstretched hand.

**G: Bless us with a childlike faith that confidently knows you love and care for us always.**

L: You sent Jesus as the Savior of the world to deliver all from the curse of sin and the power of death. He came to die and rise again that we might live eternally. Firmly plant this good news in our hearts, and fill us with an eager desire to spread the Word concerning what we have heard tonight.

**G: May all who hear the message, in every nation under heaven, be amazed and believe what is told them about this child.**

L: You sent Jesus as the light of the world to drive out all darkness. Christ brings us the full life that you intend for us. May the “*joy that will be for all people*” be our joy. May the “*peace to all on whom his favor rests*” be our peace. May the treasure that Mary “*pondered in her heart*” be our treasure.

**G: For today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to us. He is Christ the Lord, Amen.**

Lord’s Prayer sung to “Away in a Manger”

**Our Father in heaven, all praise to your name!
Your kingdom among us, your will done the same
By mortals and angels. Come, Lord, reign, alone;
Oh, hear us and bless us from heaven’s high throne.**

**The bread that we yearn for provide us each day;**

**As we forgive others, our sins take away;**

**In times of temptation, to lead us be near;**

**From evil deliver your children most dear.**

**For yours is the kingdom, o’er all things you reign.
And yours is the power; all things you maintain.**

**To you be the glory, resounding again
From all of creation, forever! Amen!**

Closing Comments

Hymn 60 - Silent Night! Holy Night

**Silent Night! Holy Night! All is calm, all is bright,**

**Round yon virgin mother and child.**

**Holy infant, so tender and mild,**

**Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Silent Night! Holy Night! Shepherds quake at the sight.**

**Glories stream from heaven afar;**

**Heav’nly host sing, Alleluia;**

**Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!**

**Silent Night! Holy Night! Son of God, love’s pure light.**

**Radiant beams from thy holy face**

**With the dawn of redeeming grace,**

**Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.**