

You sent your Son, Jesus—your message-made-flesh to dwell among us: Harbinger of Hope, Prince of Peace, Cup of Joy, Bread of Love. Through Jesus you gave birth to your church and sealed a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

### Words of Institution

And so as we anticipate the birth of joy anew, we proclaim the mystery of faith:  
**C: Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

Touch us, O Spirit, and these gifts, with your transforming power. Open us to your promise of resurrection from fear and death. In partaking of these elements, make us a people ready as your Body in and for an anxious world.

**C: Let us become your messengers of joy in all that we say and do. Make us one in this purpose, O God. Make us one in your Son Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray: Our father....** (The Lord's Prayer)

### INVITATION TO THE TABLE:

These are the gifts of God for the people of God and all are welcome.

Video: *Emmanuel* by Martin Smith

POST COMMUNION BLESSING: And now may the body and blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in his peace. **C: Amen.**

Let us pray: **God of joy and possibility, we offer these gifts so that they may be transformed into your good news for the sake of the world. Amen.**

DOXOLOGY (song of praise: words on screen)

### WE GO FORTH

When this Christmas song comes across your path this week, as it most probably will, stop for a moment and remember the reason for the season... we can know joy right now, even in the midst of fear. For God desires so much to be with and for humanity that God sent Jesus, Emmanuel, and this Spirit continues with us, always and forevermore.

**Closing Hymn: "Joy to the World!" #267** (words on screen)

P: I'm inviting you to be "messengers of joy" this week by sharing pictures which express **#morejoy** to you.

Let us turn toward the Candle of Joy in the center of our sanctuary and sing to one another the message we must take to the world:

**Benediction: Do not be afraid (x4)**

**L:** Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **C: Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE: Pictures of Joy from last year.

Angels Among Us: #DoNotBeAfraid  
**Advent 3: Do Not Be Afraid: #morejoy**



### GATHERING MUSIC/PRELUDE

### Welcome and Announcements

### Threshold Moment

**There are angels among us that may not meet the eye  
There are messages of joy coming from a choir on high  
But don't just look up; for the way God works  
is to plant more joy right here on earth just like it was with Jesus birth.  
There are angels among us, there are angels among us,  
there are angels among us, bringing joy on earth.**

**Do not be afraid. Do not be afraid. Do not be afraid. Do not be afraid.**

### Prayer

Holy Living God, Blessed Jesus, Guiding Spirit,  
**alight within us your flame of joy this day.**  
Grant us openness to hear your message.

**ALL: Grant us courage to be your messengers in the world,  
creating more joy in the midst of fear.**

And with the angel messengers above us, among us and within us, we sing...



**OPENING HYMN: *Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn* #242**

### **Passing the Peace**

I invite you to pass the joy of Christ with your neighbors, for each time we connect with one another, joy grows.

[the people are seated]

### **WE PROCLAIM GOD'S WORD**

#### **Younger Messengers of the Church**

Children come forward as we sing, *Surely the Presence of the Lord is in This Place*

***Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place;  
I can feel his mighty power and his grace.  
I can hear the brush of angel wings, I see glory on each face;  
Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.***

#### **Children's Message**

Thank you, God, for your message of Joy.  
Give us wings to share your message  
With the whole world. Amen.

**Scripture Reading: Matthew 1: 18-25** adapted from *The Voice* translation

**Narrator:** So here is the story of the birth of Jesus the Anointed... it is quite a remarkable story:

**Reading continues...**

**Narrator:** Years and years ago, Isaiah, a prophet of Israel, foretold the story of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus in this way:

**HYMN: *Savior of the Nations, Come* #263 vss. 1, 2 and 6**

### **MESSAGE**

"Yes, I believe there are angels among us. We can be messengers of joy, flying in the face of fear, for God, Emmanuel, is truly with us."

### **WE RESPOND**

Music: *Angels Among Us* [refrain]

**I believe there are angels among us  
Sent down to us from somewhere up above  
They come to you and me in our toughest hours  
To show us how to live, to teach us how to give  
To guide us with a light of love**

### **Prayers of the People**

L: In this moment we pray for all those who are in need of joy. [You are invited to call out names and places.] At the end of the naming, leader says:

Leader: "We hear the message of God, **C: Do not be afraid.**"

L: In this moment we give thanks for all the ways we have experienced God's presence among us, in the words and actions that bring joy in the midst of fear.

...

Leader: "For all who proclaim your reign on earth, we join their refrain,  
**C: Do not be afraid.**"

**We believe there are angels among us Called within us, not just from up above  
You give us joy enough in these times of trial You us how to live, You teach us  
how to give You call us to be light and love.**

### **COMMUNION LITURGY**

L: God be with you! **C: And also with you!**  
L: Lift up your hearts! **C: We lift them up to God!**  
L: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.  
**C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**