

WORSHIP KIT

# O Come, Emmanuel



**A Series of Special Services  
for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany**





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# O Come, Emmanuel

**A Series of Special Services  
for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany**

## About the Series

This series of worship services for the Sundays of Advent, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Epiphany walks through the O antiphons that declare who Christ is to us and that he has come to each one of us. We are reminded in this series that Jesus is our Wisdom, our Lord, the Root of Jesse, the Key of David, our Dayspring, our Emmanuel and the King of Nations.

The CD includes a .pdf of the entire services, text of the orders of service, prayers, sermons, children's sermons, newsletter/bulletin notices and hymns in .rtf (rich text format), a list of contemporary music song suggestions and PowerPoint documents of the services (with a copyright release) for use on screens.



# O Come, Emmanuel

**A Series of Special Services  
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**Week 1: Come, O Wisdom**

## Newsletter Notice

Join us for our Advent worship series, O Come, Emmanuel, as we walk through the O antiphons that declare who Christ is to us and that he has come to each one of us. Each week will focus on a different O antiphon that highlights a specific aspect of Christ that enhances our life in him.

In Week 1 we take a look at the O Wisdom antiphon and rejoice in the great guidance Christ provides for us.

## Bulletin Notice

Welcome to our Advent worship series, O Come, Emmanuel. Each week in the series focuses on a different O antiphon that highlights a specific aspect of Christ that enhances our life in him. In our worship for today we take a look at the O Wisdom antiphon and rejoice in the great guidance

Christ provides for us.



# O Come, Emmanuel

A Series of Special Services  
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Week 2: Come, O Lord

## Newsletter Notice

Join us for our Advent worship series, O Come, Emmanuel, as we walk through the O antiphons that declare who Christ is to us and that he has come to each one of us. Each week will focus on a different O antiphon that highlights a specific aspect of Christ that enhances our life in him. In Week 2 we take a look at the O Lord antiphon and rejoice that Jesus is the great I AM who is all-holy and all-powerful.

## Bulletin Notice

Welcome to our Advent worship series, O Come, Emmanuel. Each week in the series focuses on a different O antiphon that highlights a specific aspect of Christ that enhances our life in him. In our worship for today we take a look at the O Lord antiphon and rejoice that Jesus is the great I AM who is all-holy and all-powerful.



# O Come, Emmanuel

**A Series of Special Services  
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## Week 3: Come, O Root of Jesse

### Newsletter Notice

Join us for our Advent worship series, O Come, Emmanuel, as we walk through the O antiphons that declare who Christ is to us and that he has come to each one of us. Each week will focus on a different O antiphon that highlights a specific aspect of Christ that enhances our life in him. In Week 3 we take a look at the antiphon O Root of Jesse and rejoice that we are part of God's family tree through Jesus.

### Bulletin Notice

Welcome to our Advent worship series, O Come, Emmanuel. Each week in the series focuses on a different O antiphon that highlights a specific aspect of Christ that enhances our life in him. In our worship for today we take a look at the antiphon O Root of Jesse and rejoice that we are part of God's family tree through Jesus.



# O Come, Emmanuel

**A Series of Special Services  
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## Week 4: Come, O Key of David

### Newsletter Notice

Join us for our Advent worship series, O Come, Emmanuel, as we walk through the O antiphons that declare who Christ is to us and that he has come to each one of us. Each week will focus on a different O antiphon that highlights a specific aspect of Christ that enhances our life in him. In Week 4 we take a look at the antiphon O Key of David and rejoice that Jesus unlocks the door to heaven for us.

### Bulletin Notice

Welcome to our Advent worship series, O Come, Emmanuel. Each week in the series focuses on a different O antiphon that highlights a specific aspect of Christ that enhances our life in him. In our worship for today we take a look at the antiphon O Key of David and rejoice that Jesus unlocks the door to heaven for us.



# O Come, Emmanuel

**A Series of Special Services  
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**Christmas Eve: Come, O Dayspring**

## **Newsletter Notice**

Join us for our Christmas Eve service in our worship series, O Come, Emmanuel, as we walk through the O antiphons that declare who Christ is to us and that he has come to each one of us. On this holy night we take a look at the antiphon O Dayspring and rejoice that Jesus has brought the light of his love into our dark world of sin.

## **Bulletin Notice**

Welcome to our Christmas Eve service in our worship series, O Come, Emmanuel, as we walk through the O antiphons that declare who Christ is to us and that he has come to each one of us. On this holy night we take a look at the antiphon O Dayspring and rejoice that Jesus has brought the light of his love into our dark world of sin.



# O Come, Emmanuel

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## Christmas Day: Come, O Emmanuel

### Newsletter Notice

Join us for our Christmas Day service in our worship series, O Come, Emmanuel, as we walk through the O antiphons that declare who Christ is to us and that he has come to each one of us. On this special day we take a look at the antiphon O Emmanuel and rejoice that Jesus is born to be God With Us here on earth.

### Bulletin Notice

Welcome to our Christmas Day service in our worship series, O Come, Emmanuel, as we walk through the O antiphons that declare who Christ is to us and that he has come to each one of us. On this special day we take a look at the antiphon O Emmanuel and rejoice that Jesus is born to be God With Us here on earth.



# O Come, Emmanuel

**A Series of Special Services  
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**Epiphany: Come, O King of Nations**

## **Newsletter Notice**

Join us for our Epiphany service in our worship series, O Come, Emmanuel, as we walk through the O antiphons that declare who Christ is to us and that he has come to each one of us. On this special day we take a look at the antiphon O King of Nations and rejoice that Jesus is born to rule over all.

## **Bulletin Notice**

Welcome to our Epiphany service in our worship series, O Come, Emmanuel, as we walk through the O antiphons that declare who Christ is to us and that he has come to each one of us. On this special day we take a look at the antiphon O King of Nations and rejoice that Jesus is born to rule over all.



# O Come, Emmanuel

A Series of Special Services  
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Week 1: Come, O Wisdom

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# O Come, Emmanuel

A Series of Special Services  
for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany

Week 1: Come, O Wisdom

## Order of Service

*We preach Christ crucified ... Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.  
1 Corinthians 1:23-24*

Opening Hymn.....Milwaukee 88 88 88 66

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates!  
Behold, the King of glory waits.  
The King of kings is drawing near;  
The Savior of the world is here.  
Life and salvation he doth bring;  
Therefore rejoice and gladly sing.  
To God the Father raise  
Your joyful songs of praise.

A righteous Helper comes to thee;  
His chariot is humility,  
His kingly crown is holiness,  
His scepter, pity in distress,  
The end of all our woe he brings;  
Therefore the earth is glad and sings.  
To Christ the Savior raise  
Your grateful hymns of praise.

How blest the land, the city blest,  
Where Christ the ruler is confessed!  
O peaceful hearts and happy homes  
To whom this King in triumph comes!  
The cloudless sun of joy is he  
Who comes to set his people free.  
To God the Spirit raise  
Your happy shouts of praise.

#### Invocation and Lighting of the Advent Wreath

**P** In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

**P** For centuries, the church has used through Advent a series of antiphons, or responses, to prepare our hearts to celebrate Christ's birth. These seven responses, names and titles for our Savior, are often called the "O Antiphons," familiar to us in the hymn, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel." We light the first candle on the Advent wreath in praise to Christ, who is the Wisdom of God. The apostle John writes, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God..."

**C** All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:1-3).

**P** The apostle Paul writes, "For by [Christ] all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

**C** And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together" (Colossians 1:16-17).

**P** O Wisdom, O holy Word of God, you govern all creation with your strong yet tender care.

**C** Come show your people the way to salvation.

Confession and Absolution

**P** Let us confess our sins to God and ask his forgiveness.

**C** **Almighty God, you rule over us in wisdom, but we, your servants, do not always act wisely. Foolishly, we listen to the temptations of the devil and the world around us. We follow our own selfish desires. We have sinned against you in our thoughts, words and actions. Have mercy on us and forgive us.**

**P** God in his mercy sent his Son to be our Savior and our Wisdom. Jesus laid down his life and rose from the dead to win for us forgiveness and life. I announce to you that your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**C** **O Wisdom, O holy Word of God, rule over us and keep us in your care.**

Prayer of the Day

The Apostles' Creed

**C** **I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Hymn .....Milwaukee 88 88 88 66

Fling wide the portals of your heart;  
Make it a temple set apart  
From earthly use for heav'n's employ,  
Adorned with prayer and love and joy.  
So shall your Sov'reign enter in  
And new and nobler life begin.  
To God alone be praise  
For word and deed and grace!

Children's Message

Hymn .....Milwaukee 88 88 88 66

Redeemer, come and open wide  
My heart to thee, here, Lord, abide!  
O enter with thy grace divine;  
Thy face of mercy on me shine.  
Thy Holy Spirit guide us on  
Until our glorious goal is won.  
Eternal praise and fame  
We offer to thy name.

Old Testament Reading .....Isaiah 55:8-13

Epistle Reading .....1 Corinthians 1:20-25

Gospel Reading..... Matthew 7:24-29

Sermon Hymn ..... Puer Nobis LM

On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry  
Announces that the Lord is nigh;  
Awake and hearken, for he brings  
Glad tidings of the King of kings!

Sermon

Hymn of Response ..... Puer Nobis LM

Then cleansed be ev'ry life from sin;  
Make straight the way for God within,  
And let us all our hearts prepare  
For Christ to come and enter there.

All praise, eternal Son, to thee  
Whose advent sets thy people free,  
Whom with the Father we adore  
And Holy Spirit evermore.

Offering

Prayers

Lord's Prayer

Benediction (1 Corinthians 1:23-24; 2 Thessalonians 3:16)

**P** We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks,

**C** **Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God.**

**P** Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all.

**C** **Amen.**

Closing Hymn..... Veni Emmanuel LM and refrain

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, thou Wisdom from on high,  
Who ord'rest all things mightily;  
To us the path of knowledge show  
And teach us in her ways to go.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel!



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Week 1: Come, O Wisdom

## Complete Script for Worship Leaders

- If desired, an **Environmental Projection** is shown on a screen or on the walls of your worship space to set the tone for the service before the service begins or throughout the service at various points:

<https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/woman-standing-on-beautiful-paths-arms-1111328021>

- This **Theme Verse** can be read by the pastor alone or in unison with the congregation at the start of the service, or can be read silently by the congregation before the service begins:

*We preach Christ crucified ... Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.  
1 Corinthians 1:23-24*

- The **Opening Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Milwaukee 88 88 88 66:

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates!  
 Behold, the King of glory waits.  
 The King of kings is drawing near;  
 The Savior of the world is here.  
 Life and salvation he doth bring;  
 Therefore rejoice and gladly sing.  
 To God the Father raise  
 Your joyful songs of praise.

A righteous Helper comes to thee;  
 His chariot is humility,  
 His kingly crown is holiness,  
 His scepter, pity in distress,  
 The end of all our woe he brings;  
 Therefore the earth is glad and sings.  
 To Christ the Savior raise  
 Your grateful hymns of praise.

How blest the land, the city blest,  
 Where Christ the ruler is confessed!  
 O peaceful hearts and happy homes  
 To whom this King in triumph comes!  
 The cloudless sun of joy is he  
 Who comes to set his people free.  
 To God the Spirit raise  
 Your happy shouts of praise.

- The **Invocation and Lighting of the Advent Wreath** is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

**P** In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

**P** For centuries, the church has used through Advent a series of antiphons, or responses, to prepare our hearts to celebrate Christ's birth. These seven responses, names and titles for our Savior, are often called the "O Antiphons," familiar to us in the hymn, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel." We light the first candle on the Advent wreath in praise to Christ, who is the

Wisdom of God. The apostle John writes, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...”

**C All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made” (John 1:1-3).**

**P** The apostle Paul writes, “For by [Christ] all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

**C And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Colossians 1:16-17).**

**P** O Wisdom, O holy Word of God, you govern all creation with your strong yet tender care.

**C Come show your people the way to salvation.**

- The **Confession and Absolution** is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

**P** Let us confess our sins to God and ask his forgiveness.

**C Almighty God, you rule over us in wisdom, but we, your servants, do not always act wisely. Foolishly, we listen to the temptations of the devil and the world around us. We follow our own selfish desires. We have sinned against you in our thoughts, words and actions. Have mercy on us and forgive us.**

**P** God in his mercy sent his Son to be our Savior and our Wisdom. Jesus laid down his life and rose from the dead to win for us forgiveness and life. I announce to you that your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**C O Wisdom, O holy Word of God, rule over us and keep us in your care.**

- The **Prayer of the Day** is read by the pastor:

**P** Lord Jesus, Word and Wisdom of God, you came among us as a helpless infant, and now you are exalted to rule over all creation. Crucified and risen Lord, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to you. Rule over us in wisdom and love. Lead us by your Spirit to walk in your ways, through this Advent season and always. Help us to be bold and faithful witnesses for you so that others will come to know and worship you as Lord. Amen.

- **The Apostles' Creed** is read in unison by the congregation:

**C** I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

**And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

- The **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Milwaukee 88 88 88 66:

Fling wide the portals of your heart;  
Make it a temple set apart  
From earthly use for heav'n's employ,  
Adorned with prayer and love and joy.  
So shall your Sov'reign enter in  
And new and nobler life begin.  
To God alone be praise  
For word and deed and grace!

- The **Children's Message** is delivered by the pastor or other worship leader:

Needed: a diploma

**P** This piece of paper filled with fancy writing is called a diploma. A diploma is a certificate, a special paper given to someone who has finished a time of study and learning. Students who graduate from high school or college receive a diploma. Teachers and doctors and lawyers and pastors receive a diploma to show that they have studied many things and passed many tests. The things they have learned will help them in the work that they do. The diploma shows that the person knows a lot!

Jesus our Savior never had a diploma, but he knows more than anyone! Jesus is God, so he knows everything there is to know. We have many special names for Jesus. He is our King, our Lord, our Good Shepherd and our Redeemer. Another name for Jesus is Wisdom. That means Jesus not only knows everything, but he also uses everything he knows to care for us and rule over us in the best possible way. He always knows what is right and he always does what is right. Jesus was there when the world was created. He will be there when this world ends. Jesus is with us right now, wisely ruling over us and caring for us—because he is our Wisdom, who knows all things. Let's pray:

Jesus, our Wisdom, we know that you will take care of us and wisely rule over us, today and forever. Amen.

- The **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Milwaukee 88 88 88 66:

Redeemer, come and open wide  
My heart to thee, here, Lord, abide!  
O enter with thy grace divine;  
Thy face of mercy on me shine.  
Thy Holy Spirit guide us on  
Until our glorious goal is won.  
Eternal praise and fame  
We offer to thy name.

- The **Old Testament Reading**, Isaiah 55:8-13, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall make a name for the Lord, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

- The **Epistle Reading**, 1 Corinthians 1:20-25, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

- The **Gospel Reading**, Matthew 7:24-29, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.” And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

- The **Sermon Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Puer Nobis LM:

On Jordan’s bank the Baptist’s cry  
Announces that the Lord is nigh;  
Awake and hearken, for he brings  
Glad tidings of the King of kings!

- The **Sermon**, “Come, O Wisdom,” is delivered by the pastor:

Ⓟ The farthest star from earth is Icarus or, known by its official designation, MACS J1149+2223 Lensed Star 1 is five billion light years away. That is not very close by, and no one is going to get there anytime soon. That is just one example of how high the heavens are above the earth.

Through the prophet Isaiah, God declares, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8-9). The thoughts of God, the ways of God, the reasons for his mighty acts are as far above our thoughts and plans as the star Icarus is above the ground on which we stand. In fact, God’s thoughts and ways are much farther above us—beyond human understanding.

Yet as far as his thoughts are above our thoughts, God in his infinite grace and mercy came down to our level. That lofty, heavenly wisdom came down from the heavens to the earth. God continues as he speaks to us through his prophet: “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:10-11).

When God speaks his mighty Word, things happen. At creation, God merely spoke the word, “Let there be light,” and light appeared. By his Word he placed the star that is our sun into

the sky, and called all the other stars into existence, even Icarus. As the psalmist says, “He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names” (Psalm 147:4).

The Word works, it does what God sends it to do. The Word accomplishes the purpose for which God sends it. When the time was right, he sent his Word to earth and very soon we will celebrate the birth of God’s Son, the Word who was and is God, who took on human flesh, born among us to be our Savior. It’s not a plan that we would have considered. God’s thoughts are higher than our thoughts and his ways higher than our ways. We might have thought of a more spectacular plan, but the Word came among us as a little helpless infant who slept in a manger in Bethlehem. The Word, the Wisdom of God, came to us in a way the world could not, and would not, recognize or understand. The mighty, creating Word came among us, not in power, but in weakness as a newborn who needed to be diapered and fed and rocked to sleep.

When the young Lord Jesus, the Word and Wisdom of God, grew to adulthood, he “increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52). As he traveled among the people of God, he certainly taught wisely, with all the wisdom of God. As he himself said, his words were words on which to build our lives. To do otherwise is to be swept away in the troubles and storms of life. But then the Wisdom of God did much more. The mighty Word and Wisdom acted to win for us forgiveness and eternal life, achieving our salvation in the most unimaginable ways. “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways.” This was the purpose for which the Word was sent. God said of the Word he sends out, that it “shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”

The helpless infant of Bethlehem, the adult who taught with such wisdom, allowed himself to be nailed up on a cross as a helpless victim. The Son of God took onto himself the penalty of death that we earned, that we deserve, for our sins. That was God’s plan to save us. “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways.”

The apostle Paul points out that, in the eyes of the world, God’s plan of salvation simply appears foolish and weak. The world cannot figure it out. A baby in a manger? Where is the power in that? The Son of God hanging helpless on a Roman cross? Where is the wisdom in that plan? Does that even work? How can the death of one man save everyone from death? Paul asks, “Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe” (1 Corinthians 1:20-21).

The world cannot know God through wisdom, but only through the grace and power of God himself. His thoughts are not our thoughts, and his ways are not our ways. His plans are as far above our heads as the star Icarus, and farther still than that. Yet God’s Word, God’s Wisdom,

his own Son, came down to us. Those who are called to faith in Christ crucified, called by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel, recognize the Savior for who he is: “Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

In just a few weeks, we will look into the manger in Bethlehem. What will you see? You will see a foolish idea, a weak and helpless infant. He won't look wise or powerful, but he is the one who called light into existence, who gave the stars their names. You will see Christ Jesus, God in human flesh, Christ who is the Wisdom of God. Amen.

- The **Hymn of Response** is sung by the congregation to the tune Puer Nobis LM:

Then cleansed be ev'ry life from sin;  
Make straight the way for God within,  
And let us all our hearts prepare  
For Christ to come and enter there.

All praise, eternal Son, to thee  
Whose advent sets thy people free,  
Whom with the Father we adore  
And Holy Spirit evermore.

- The **Offering** is collected at this time.
- The **Prayers** are spoken by the pastor:

☐ Lord Jesus Christ, you are for us the power of God and the wisdom of God. We pray that you will help us to grow in wisdom according to your Word. Lead us to build our lives and hope on your Word and promises. You came among us in weakness, yet in that weakness was found all the power and wisdom of God for our salvation. Use us to reach out to those among us who are suffering illness, loss and need. Give us opportunities to share your love with them through our kind and caring words and actions. Help us by your Spirit to be bold witnesses for you, to share with an unbelieving world that you are the Wisdom of God, and the power of God for our salvation and theirs. As we prepare to celebrate your birth, lead us to look into the manger with eyes of faith and to recognize you there as the Wisdom and power of God. Amen.

- The **Lord's Prayer** is spoken in unison.
- The **Benediction** (1 Corinthians 1:23-24; 2 Thessalonians 3:16) is spoken responsively by the pastor:

☐ We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks,

**C** Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God.

**P** Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all.

**C** Amen.

- The **Closing Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Veni Emmanuel LM and refrain:

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, thou Wisdom from on high,  
Who ord'rest all things mightily;  
To us the path of knowledge show  
And teach us in her ways to go.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel!



# O Come, Emmanuel

A Series of Special Services  
for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany

## Week 1: Come, O Wisdom

### Scripture Readings

- The **Old Testament Reading**, Isaiah 55:8-13, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

¶ For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall make a name for the Lord, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

- The **Epistle Reading**, 1 Corinthians 1:20-25, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:
  - Ⓟ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.
  
- The **Gospel Reading**, Matthew 7:24-29, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:
  - Ⓟ “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.” And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.



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### Children's Message

- The **Children's Message** is delivered by the pastor or other worship leader:

Needed: a diploma

**P** This piece of paper filled with fancy writing is called a diploma. A diploma is a certificate, a special paper given to someone who has finished a time of study and learning. Students who graduate from high school or college receive a diploma. Teachers and doctors and lawyers and pastors receive a diploma to show that they have studied many things and passed many tests. The things they have learned will help them in the work that they do. The diploma shows that the person knows a lot!

Jesus our Savior never had a diploma, but he knows more than anyone! Jesus is God, so he knows everything there is to know. We have many special names for Jesus. He is our King, our Lord, our Good Shepherd and our Redeemer. Another name for Jesus is Wisdom. That means Jesus not only knows everything, but he also uses everything he knows to care for us and rule over us in the best possible way. He always knows what is right and he always does what is right. Jesus was there when the world was created. He will be there when this world ends. Jesus

is with us right now, wisely ruling over us and caring for us—because he is our Wisdom, who knows all things. Let's pray:

Jesus, our Wisdom, we know that you will take care of us and wisely rule over us, today and forever. Amen.



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## Week 1: Come, O Wisdom

### Sermon

- The **Sermon**, “Come, O Wisdom,” is delivered by the pastor:
  - ▣ The farthest star from earth is Icarus or, known by its official designation, MACS J1149+2223 Lensed Star 1 is five billion light years away. That is not very close by, and no one is going to get there anytime soon. That is just one example of how high the heavens are above the earth.

Through the prophet Isaiah, God declares, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8-9). The thoughts of God, the ways of God, the reasons for his mighty acts are as far above our thoughts and plans as the star Icarus is above the ground on which we stand. In fact, God’s thoughts and ways are much farther above us—beyond human understanding.

Yet as far as his thoughts are above our thoughts, God in his infinite grace and mercy came down to our level. That lofty, heavenly wisdom came down from the heavens to the earth. God continues as he speaks to us through his prophet: “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout,

giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:10-11).

When God speaks his mighty Word, things happen. At creation, God merely spoke the word, “Let there be light,” and light appeared. By his Word he placed the star that is our sun into the sky, and called all the other stars into existence, even Icarus. As the psalmist says, “He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names” (Psalm 147:4).

The Word works, it does what God sends it to do. The Word accomplishes the purpose for which God sends it. When the time was right, he sent his Word to earth and very soon we will celebrate the birth of God’s Son, the Word who was and is God, who took on human flesh, born among us to be our Savior. It’s not a plan that we would have considered. God’s thoughts are higher than our thoughts and his ways higher than our ways. We might have thought of a more spectacular plan, but the Word came among us as a little helpless infant who slept in a manger in Bethlehem. The Word, the Wisdom of God, came to us in a way the world could not, and would not, recognize or understand. The mighty, creating Word came among us, not in power, but in weakness as a newborn who needed to be diapered and fed and rocked to sleep.

When the young Lord Jesus, the Word and Wisdom of God, grew to adulthood, he “increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52). As he traveled among the people of God, he certainly taught wisely, with all the wisdom of God. As he himself said, his words were words on which to build our lives. To do otherwise is to be swept away in the troubles and storms of life. But then the Wisdom of God did much more. The mighty Word and Wisdom acted to win for us forgiveness and eternal life, achieving our salvation in the most unimaginable ways. “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways.” This was the purpose for which the Word was sent. God said of the Word he sends out, that it “shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”

The helpless infant of Bethlehem, the adult who taught with such wisdom, allowed himself to be nailed up on a cross as a helpless victim. The Son of God took onto himself the penalty of death that we earned, that we deserve, for our sins. That was God’s plan to save us. “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways.”

The apostle Paul points out that, in the eyes of the world, God’s plan of salvation simply appears foolish and weak. The world cannot figure it out. A baby in a manger? Where is the power in that? The Son of God hanging helpless on a Roman cross? Where is the wisdom in that plan? Does that even work? How can the death of one man save everyone from death? Paul asks, “Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the

world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe” (1 Corinthians 1:20-21).

The world cannot know God through wisdom, but only through the grace and power of God himself. His thoughts are not our thoughts, and his ways are not our ways. His plans are as far above our heads as the star Icarus, and farther still than that. Yet God’s Word, God’s Wisdom, his own Son, came down to us. Those who are called to faith in Christ crucified, called by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel, recognize the Savior for who he is: “Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

In just a few weeks, we will look into the manger in Bethlehem. What will you see? You will see a foolish idea, a weak and helpless infant. He won’t look wise or powerful, but he is the one who called light into existence, who gave the stars their names. You will see Christ Jesus, God in human flesh, Christ who is the Wisdom of God. Amen.