



Wednesday Evening Advent

December 1, 2021

7:00 pm

**Prepare the Royal Highway: A Midweek Series for Advent
Week of Advent 1: Highway Under Construction**

Prelude: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* Albrecht

Opening Dialogue

P. Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord.

C. **Go through the gates, build up the highway,**

P. clear it of stones, remove any obstacles.

C. **Prepare the way of the Lord.**

P. Come, let us journey to the Bethlehem manger.

C. **Hear of God's promises, witness God's faithfulness,**

P. sing with Mary, rejoice with Elizabeth.

C. **Prepare our hearts for Christ's coming.**

Gathering Hymn: Prepare the Royal Highway #264

Greeting

P. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C. **And also with you.**

Prayer

P. God of the covenant, we hear the voice of John the Baptist breaking into our world: The kingdom is near! Prepare the way! Come and dwell in the pathways of our hearts, that we may be ready for the Messiah's birth, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C. **Amen.**

Hymn: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (stanza 1) #257

Reading: Isaiah 40:1-11

Hymn: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (stanza 2) #257

Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-24

Hymn: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (stanza 5) #257

Reflection

Hymn: Comfort, Comfort Now My People

#256

Prayers

P. Gracious God, send your Son into our midst.

C. Show us your pathways of love.

P. Grant that war may cease and divisions end.

C. Show us your pathways of peace.

P. Watch over all who are sick, mourning or in special need of your care.

C. Show them your pathways of hope.

P. Fill our world with gladness at the coming of the Savior.

C. Show us your pathways of joy.

Here other prayers may be offered.

P. Lord, accompany us on our journey,
and keep teaching us to pray:

C. Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.

Blessing

P. The light of Christ illumine your path,
the love of God remain your guidepost,
and the power of the Spirit sustain your journey.

C. Amen.

Sending Song: There's a Voice in the Wilderness #255

Dismissal

Go in peace to prepare the way.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude: *Fling Wide the Door*

Reger

**Please place your offering in the offering plate.*

Prepare the Royal Highway: A Midweek Series for Advent

Highways, pathways, gates, and journeys figure prominently in the imagery of Advent. We hear the voice shouting, "Prepare the way of the Lord! Make straight the path!" We witness the unexpected detours for Elizabeth and Zechariah, Mary and Joseph. We make way in our hearts and lives for our God.

Overview

Week of Advent 1: Highway under construction

How exactly do you prepare a highway for God? A passage from 1 Thessalonians offers a construction blueprint: rejoice, pray, give thanks, hold fast to what is good. In this way, we make a straight path into our hearts for the coming of Christ.

Week of Advent 2: G.P.S. (God's Positioning System)

What are your expectations for the Messiah? Likely not a tiny child ushering in a new vision of peace. Through the coming of Christ, God repositions and reorients our lives. Are you ready to follow God's new direction?

Week of Advent 3: Standing at the crossroads

Decisions, decisions, decisions. Would Zechariah and Elizabeth doubt the angel's message, or prepare for a newborn in their advanced age? Would Joseph quietly dismiss his pregnant betrothed, or accept the responsibility of raising Jesus as his own? When standing at a crossroads, do you also choose the leap of faith?