

# Worship Service- "Sacred Yearnings,Crazy Comfort"

December 10, 2023 – Advent 2B ,

[Isaiah 40:1-11](#) NRSV / [Mark 1:1-8](#) NSRV

## Prelude

played by church musician Annie Center,  
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## Opening Music (video)

[Oceans \(Spirit Lead Me\)](#)

Liv Harland

**AUTHORS** Joel Houston, Matt Crocker, Salomon Ligthelm **CCLI**  
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## Welcome / Announcements

### Pass the Peace

Opening Hymn "*Comfort, Comfort O My People*" 176

### Advent Candle Lighting Litany (Responsive)

Reader 1: Last week we lit the first candle, inviting God's awakening Spirit to accompany us during Advent.

Reader 2: *Today we light the second candle, which calls us to welcome each other as Christ has welcomed us.*

**People: How we long to bask in God's extravagant welcome!**

Reader 2: *In God's peaceable kin-dom, violence is overcome by relationships of understanding and respect.*

Reader 1: A spirit of wisdom prevails, breaking down borderlands of hostility and fear.

**People: How we long to embrace one another in harmony!**

Reader 2: *In God's vision of justice, no one is poor, no one oppresses another.*

Reader 1: God's peace showers upon us as fresh as spring rain delivering hope from a season of drought.

**People: How we long to welcome God's reign of peace! Come, Holy One, and prepare a way in the wilderness of our need and longing.**

## **Invocation**

Surprise us, O God, with the vision of your reign. Strengthen us to uphold your justice and peace. Stir us to welcome all people as you have welcomed us.

## **Gospel Reading     Mark 1:1-8**

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way;

the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'"

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.

He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals.

I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

## **A Time of Prayer**

### **Sharing Joys and Concerns**

Start with status of congregational members e.g. Robert Oberg

### **Pastoral Prayer**

O God, open our senses to know and experience your promise of liberation, of comfort and strength for the journey. Guide us to words and deeds of compassion, until the glory of the Lord is fully revealed, and all flesh shall see the liberation of our God. And may God's church be awake to and inspired by the adventure which is the whole process of getting to that time and place. Amen

***Prayer by pastor***

**Old Testament Reading Isaiah 40:1-11 NSRV**

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.

Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field.

The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass.

The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!"

See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.

He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

**Message Sermon Title: "Sacred Yearnings, Crazy Comfort"****Call to Serve**

*We know that the daylight will shift, that the weather will change, but in this moment, O God, help us to settle deep into this season. To understand the harshness and bleakness of this time, but that it will pass. We remember that Good News appears out of nowhere. It is a voice of one—one person. It is a voice*

*that cries out in the wilderness, in the middle of nowhere. It is a voice that sees the futility of life, that people are like grass that withers and fades away, and yet still has hope. Still calls for comfort. Still calls for peace. We hear Your voice, O God, in the bleak midwinter. We hear Your voice, O God, in the terrible cries of war and violence and bloodshed. We hear Your voice, O God, calling us to turn back to You. We hear Your voice, O God, calling us to the water. We are settled in deep, O God, into the bleakness, and yet we know Your voice is calling us, and will move us and shake us and stir us to do something, for You will make all things new. The world is about to turn. Amen.*

## **A Time of Reflection**

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

God of hope,  
you call us from the exile of our sin  
with the good news of restoration;  
you build a highway through the wilderness;  
you come to us and bring us home.  
Comfort us with the expectation of your saving power,  
made known to us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Hymn                    "O Come, O Come Emmanuel"                    172**

### **Benediction**

*Short prayer by pastor Dan Stern*

### **Postlude**