

*the*  
Practice



Learning *the*  
Unforced Rhythms  
*of* Grace

ORDER *of* PRACTICE  
December 13th, 2015



Willow Creek Chapel

Advent Celebration 2015

**Please Speak, Your servant is listening  
Please Speak, Your servant is listening  
O Come, O Come, Immanuel  
O Come, O Come, Immanuel**

The Lord Himself will give you a sign.  
Behold, the virgin shall conceive  
and bear a son, and shall call  
his name, Immanuel.

*(Isaiah 7:14)*

**O come, O come, Immanuel  
O come, O come, Immanuel**

The people who walked in darkness  
Have seen a great light;  
Those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,  
On them has light shone.

*(Isaiah 9:2-7)*

**O come, O come, Immanuel,  
And Ransom captive Israel,  
That Mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear**

You have multiplied the nation;  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as they are glad when they divide the spoil.

**O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free  
Thine own from Satan's tyranny  
From depths of Hill Thy people save  
And give them victory o'er the grave**

For the yoke of his burden,  
and the staff for his shoulder,  
the rod of his oppressor,  
you have broken as on the day of Midian.  
For every boot of the tramping warrior  
in battle tumult  
and every garment rolled in blood  
will be burned as fuel for the fire.

**O come, Thou Day-Spring, come and cheer  
Our spirits by Thine advent here  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night  
And death's dark shadows put to flight.**

For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given;  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,  
and his name shall be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government  
and of peace there will be no end,  
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,  
to establish it and to uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time forth and forevermore.  
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

**Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Immanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Immanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

[Luke 1:26-38: Mary]

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.

He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

*Mother of God*

*Your baby boy will grant us peace*

*Your baby boy will grant us peace*

And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.” And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

Mary, full of grace

The Lord your God is with thee

Blessed are you to bless all the world

Mary, peace is yours

The Spirit is upon you

You will be with child, do not fear

Mother of God

Your baby boy will grant us peace

Your baby boy will grant us peace

Word made flesh

Born of virgin Mary

Hope is in the world, Emmanuel

The Lamb of God

Born to die, He came

He would show the world a better way

**Immanuel,**

**God with us, God with us.**

**Immanuel,**

**God with us, God with us.**

**Son of God  
Hear Your people calling  
All cry out for peace, can you hear?  
In our despair  
We doubt in Your return  
Messiah, will You come once again?**

**Immanuel,  
God with us, God with us.  
Immanuel,  
God with us, God with us.  
Immanuel,  
God with us, God with us.  
Immanuel,  
God with us, God with us.**

[Matthew 1:18-2:23 : Joseph]

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

**“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).**

When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Lord, just as Joseph struggled, yet through your gospel news, was transformed to prepare room in his heart for the glory and wonder of what it means to know you as Immanuel, so too do we pray that every heart would prepare you room this Advent Season.

For our friends, our families,  
our neighbors and our enemies,  
For the children, that they would know  
your face in the midst of many narratives,  
**Lord, let every heart prepare you room.**

For our country, in the midst of consumerism,  
distraction, and self centeredness,  
For those who work long, hard, hours,  
strangers to the joy of your birth,  
**Lord, let every heart prepare you room.**

For our world, for those who do not know that it  
is the advent of the Savior's birth,  
For those who have yet to encounter you as  
Immanuel, God with us,  
**Lord, let every heart prepare you room.**

For the downcast, the broken,  
the hurting, and the lonely,  
For those who suffer through  
this season without hope,  
For those who long for light,  
meaning and intimacy to return,  
**Lord, let every heart prepare you room.**

For each and every child of God,  
For every tribe, and people,  
and nation and tongue,  
For every heart, young and old,  
broken and whole, near and far from you,  
**Lord, let every heart prepare you room.**

**Let every heart,  
prepare him room.  
And Heaven and nature sing,  
And Heaven and nature sing,  
And Heaven, and Heaven  
and nature sing.**

## [Luke 2:1-7 : The Birth of Jesus Christ]

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

### Manger Reflection & Invitation

*Curtis Miller*

(Holy Silence)

## [Luke 2:8 – Jesus Birth is Announced]

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

**“Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace among those  
with whom He is pleased!”**

**Glory to God  
Glory to God  
Glory to God Forever**

**Glory to God  
Glory to God  
Glory to God Forever**

**Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;  
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord.**

When the angels went away from them into Heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

**Glory to God  
Glory to God  
Glory to God Forever**

**Glory to God  
Glory to God  
Glory to God Forever**

**O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord.**



## Passing of the Peace

*“Peace on Earth through Christ be with you.”*

*“And also with you.”*

### [Matthew 2:1-12 – The Wise Men]

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

“And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.”

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

What Child is this who laid to rest  
On Mary's lap is sleeping  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet  
While shepherds watch are keeping?

This, this is Christ the King  
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing!  
Haste, haste to bring Him laud  
The Babe the Son of Mary

**So bring Him incense gold and myrrh  
come peasant King to own Him  
The King of kings salvation brings,  
let loving hearts Enthroned Him**

**Raise, raise a song on high!  
The virgin sings her lullaby  
Joy, joy for Christ is born  
The Babe, the Son of Mary!**

**This, this is Christ the King  
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing!  
Haste, haste to bring Him laud  
The Babe, the Son of Mary**

**Nails, spears shall pierce Him through  
The Cross He bore for me, for you  
Hail, hail the Word made flesh  
The Babe, the Son of Mary  
The Babe, the Son of Mary  
The Babe, the Son of Mary**

#### CONFESSION

O promised Christ, God with us,  
We are a people divided and at war  
**Our peace depends on your coming**

We are a sinful people  
Who have wandered far from You  
and from Your law

**Our salvation depends on your coming**

We have not loved you with our whole hearts,  
We have ignored your Gospel,  
we have lived lives of apathy,

**Our forgiveness depends on your coming**

Lord Christ, Word made flesh,  
Our world waits for your peace,  
your salvation, and your grace

**Have mercy on us and forgive us we pray,**

Free us from our sin, captivity, and darkness.

**Free us to your light, and love, and mercy,**

Through Immanuel our Lord.

**Amen.**

Silence.

*Space to confess our sin to God.*

ASSURANCE

**No more let sins and sorrows grow**

**Nor thorns infest the ground**

**He comes to make**

**His blessings flow**

**Far as the curse is found**

**Far as the curse is found**

**Far as, far as the curse is found**

**Immanuel, God with us, God with us.**

**Immanuel, God with us, God with us.**

**Immanuel, God with us, God with us.**

**Immanuel, God with us, God with us.**

**Thank You, Maker**

**Thank You, Savior**

**Hallelujah**

**Praise God on High**

**Praise God on High**

**Hallelujah**

**Hallelujah**

**Hallelujah**

**Hallelujah**

**Hallelujah**

**Hallelujah**

## COMMUNION

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts!

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

We come to the table because

we are perpetually invited.

**We come to the table celebrating  
that God comes near to us.**

**We come to the table acknowledging our  
participation with God and with others.**

**We come to the table remembering and  
proclaiming God's story centered on Jesus'  
birth, life, death and resurrection.**

**We come to the table anticipating God's  
healing in our own lives and of the whole  
world.**

And so this day we join with Saints and Angels  
in the chorus of praise that rings through  
eternity, lifting our voices to magnify you as  
we sing:

**Glory to God, Glory to God,  
Glory to God, Forever  
Glory to God, Glory to God,  
Glory to God, Forever**

**O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord.**

On the night before he died for us, Jesus was at  
table with his friends. He took bread,  
gave thanks to you, broke it, and gave it  
to them, and said: "Take, eat: This is my  
Body, which is given for you. Do this for the  
remembrance of me."

As supper was ending, Jesus took the cup of  
wine. Again, he gave thanks to you, gave it to  
them and said: "Drink this all of you: This is my  
Blood of the new Covenant, which is poured  
out for you and for all for the forgiveness of  
sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the  
remembrance of me."

Great is the mystery of faith

**Christ has died**

**Christ has risen**

**Christ will come again.**

The prophets foretold it:

the desert burst into bloom.

Angelic messengers delivered the news:

In the face of critics and skeptics,

our faith cries out, resilient,

Like a baby from a manger bed.

From that Bethlehem beginning,

Jesus, baptized in the Jordan,

spent his life serving others

That all might know the compassionate

attention of a loving God.

Today, Jesus serves us yet again,

As we gather at this Table he prepares for us,

To once more receive our King.

May we prepare him room this advent season,

Full in the love that He has prepared

each of us room at his very table.

**AMEN.**

The gifts of God, for the people of God.

### Holy Communion

*(When you are ready, please come forward,  
share your name, and hold your hands open  
to receive communion.)*

*\*\*A gluten free option is available at the piano.*



JOY TO THE WORLD

**Joy to the world! The Lord is come  
Let earth receive her King!  
Let every heart prepare Him room  
And heaven and nature sing  
And heaven and nature sing  
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing**

**Joy to the world! the Savior reigns  
Let men their songs employ  
While fields and floods  
Rocks, hills and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy  
Repeat the sounding joy  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy**

**No more let sins and sorrows grow  
Nor thorns infest the ground  
He comes to make  
His blessings flow  
Far as the curse is found  
Far as the curse is found  
Far as, far as the curse is found**

**He rules the world with truth and grace  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness  
And wonders of His love  
And wonders of His love  
And wonders and wonders of His love**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow  
Praise Him all creatures here below  
Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost  
Amen.**



# Kingdom Practices

## January at The Practice:

A Theology of Vocation  
(with Steven Garber)

January 10, 17, 24

Preparing to Practice Lent  
(with Mark Scandrette)

January 31

## Benediction

The prayer team is available (near the chapel stage)  
for any who want prayer after the gathering.



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Niequist. Used with permission. // "Mother of God" by David  
Gungor and John Arndt. ©2014 The Brilliance Music. // "Glory  
to God Forever" by Fee and Beeching. // "Joy to the World"  
arrangement and additional music by David Gungor and John  
Arndt. CCLI#5032549.*

The Practice is an experimental community learning to align the rhythms of our lives with God's eternal rhythms. We long to become the kinds of people who can put Jesus' words into practice, for the sake of the world.



We seek to be:

**KINGDOM-FOCUSED.**

Jesus has invited every one of us to join Him in healing and redeeming this world. Through the scriptures, story, and worship, we want to align ourselves with this good work.

**EQUIPPERS.**

According to Eph 4, the church exists to equip the people for ministry. Sunday night is not the main event, but a training ground to become the kinds of people who can live our actual lives the way Jesus would if He were in our place.

**PRACTICE-BASED.**

More of a spiritual gymnasium than classroom. The focus is on the practices and disciplines that form us into Christlikeness.

**ECUMENICAL.**

Relentlessly committed to humbly learning from other Christian traditions and practices.

**EUCCHARISTIC.**

Every gathering will culminate with communion to weekly anchor us in Christ's death, resurrection, and promise of return.

**COMMUNITY.**

The Christian life is not meant to be lived alone. We need each other.

*A part of the Willow Creek community.*



[practicetribe.com](http://practicetribe.com)