

The Wonder of a Promise

Call to Worship:

One: God has promised to send Immanuel.

All: God has promised never to leave us, nor forsake us.

One: God has promised to be our God and to adopt us as family.

**All: God has promised to accept our worship
when we live in charity with all our neighbors.**

One: Let us embrace these promises revealed to us through this and every child of God.

Prayer of Confession:

You are Immanuel, God with us, yet we have failed to notice Your holy presence. You have been hungry, yet we did not provide You with a place at our table. You have been thirsty, yet we claimed the water for our own use. You have been naked, and we laughed at Your predicament, yet even with a full closet, we complained we had nothing to wear. We built prisons to house You, and threw away the key. You were out of sight, and out of mind. Your diseases made us uneasy, so we stayed away. You were alone, and we refused to befriend You. Immanuel, God with us, forgive us. Give us a fresh opportunity to see You in the people around us so we might worship You. Amen.

Words of Grace:

One: Jesus, our Immanuel invites you into true fellowship. What we have done to the least, we have done to Christ. Yet while we were still sinners, Christ died for us and forgave our unrighteousness. Immanuel forgives you.

All: Immanuel forgives you too, for we all sin and fall short of the expectations of God. We are forgiven, thanks be to God. Amen.

Prayer of Illumination:

Immanuel, holy presence of God, speak to us as we listen to Your word. Use it to melt our hearts of stone. Use it to heal our unresponsiveness to Your voice, and Your desires for our lives expressed there. With humble and contrite hearts, we wait on what You have to say to Your people. Amen.

Great Thanksgiving:

One: God is with us.

All: God has never left us, nor have we ever been forsaken.

One: God promises to be with us to the very end.

All: When two or more of us are gathered, God is in the midst of us.

One: This is truly cause for praise.

All: Immanuel is truly a cause for rejoicing.

One: Where can we go from Your presence,
or where can we flee from Your face?
If we go to heaven, You are there with us.
If we go down to hell, You stay right beside us.

No matter how far we go astray,
You are there to take us by the hand and lead us home.
Your hand never leaves our own.
If we seek to hide from You in our darkest despair,
You will sit with us silently to bring some lightness to our being.
Our wildest nightmares do not scare You away.
You are our Immanuel, You are the God who is always with us.

We desire to gather together a thousand tongues to sing.
We are striving to invite ten thousand times ten thousand voices,
seeking to leave no one out.
We add our voices to the throngs of heaven who gather around
the throne of our Beloved to proclaim:

**All: Faithful, reliable, and true is the Lover of our souls,
the God who is always with us.
Hallelujah!
Our God is here, and we are safe.
Hallelujah!**

One: God is faithful, and Jesus is Immanuel, God with us.
Jesus celebrated with a couple at their wedding in Cana.
Jesus was present to feed the multitudes in their hunger.
Jesus was present for folks who wrestled with demons.
Jesus was present for those who needed a touch to see,
to walk, to find new life.
Jesus was and is, Immanuel, God with us.

We saw Immanuel, God's presence
when Jesus chose to take on the role of a servant,
removing his garments to humbly share hospitality
through the washing of feet.
Whenever we do for the least of these,
we find Immanuel, God with us.

We saw Immanuel, God's presence
when Jesus took bread with a thankful heart,
breaking it to share with all, saying:
"Take and eat, this is my body given and broken for you."
Whenever we do for the least of these,
we find Immanuel, God with us.

We saw Immanuel, God's presence
when Jesus took the cup with a thankful heart,
sharing it with all, saying:
"Drink from this cup with me, it is filled with my blood,

poured out as an offering of grace reflecting
God's eternal covenant granting forgiveness to you
and to all who will believe."

Whenever you do for the least of these,
we find Immanuel, God with us.

God is with us.

We have seen him in so many ways
in the lives of so many people.

However, we see God most clearly in Jesus,
as proclaimed in this statement of faith:

**All: God was with us, when Christ died.
God was with us, when Christ arose.
God is still with us, when Christ comes again.**

One: Constant Companion, Faithful Friend,
be in these gifts of bread and wine
so that they might be for us the body and blood of Christ,
Immanuel, God with us.

Constant Companion, Faithful Friend,
be in the gift of our lives, in our work and in our play,
so that we might be for the world, Your church
the body and bride of Christ, Immanuel, God with us.

Constant Companion, Faithful Friend
be with Ebenezer United Methodist Church.
May the troubled find Immanuel in this place and in our lives.
May those in darkness find Immanuel here and the light of his presence.
May those who feel alone, find Immanuel here and a community of grace.
Because Christ lives among us,
The Holy Spirit fills us, pressed down and overflowing,
And the Love that created all things good is worshiped and adored
by us every day in every way. Amen.

Now let us pray as Christ taught us:

**All: 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. Amen.**

Prayer after communion:

Thank you for allowing us to share in this holy mystery found in Jesus Christ. We have sensed the wonder of Immanuel, God with us. God's presence has touched us and transformed us. We have been renewed and filled with grace. Now send us out to share this grace. Use our lives to become as extension of the Christ presence, so others might experience Immanuel in their lives, God with them as You have been with us. May this be Your gift to all the world. Amen.