

An abstract, vibrant artwork featuring a mix of warm colors like orange, red, and yellow, with cooler tones of blue and green. The composition is layered and textured, resembling a marbled or stained paper effect. A large, dark, stylized 'X' shape is superimposed over the lower half of the image, pointing downwards. The text 'BIRTH STORIES' is centered in the upper half, overlaid on the colorful background.

BIRTH STORIES

11:00 – DECEMBER 11, 2016

WELCOME and RELATIONSHIPS of PEACE

OPENING SONG “Your Name”

INVOCATION

P: In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

CONFESSION

P: Let us confess our sins to God our Father:

C: **Gracious God, we confess that we have not always turned to You for guidance. At times, we have allowed the world’s time to dominate Your time. Forgive us for our sins of hurriedness and impatience. Forgive us when we have slumbered instead of remaining alert, waiting and watching for You. Forgive us for allowing the world’s fears to become our fears. Shine upon this Advent season so that we may be restored unto You. Guide us into Your time. As we call upon Your name, hear our prayers and give us life. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.**

ABSOLUTION *(based on 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13)*

P: And now may our God make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all. Christ promises to strengthen our hearts in holiness that we may be blameless before our God and creator at the coming of the Lord. In the name of Jesus Christ, we are all forgiven. Alleluia!

C: Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON I Kings 3:16-28 [NIV]

¹⁶Now two prostitutes came to the king and stood before him. ¹⁷One of them said, “Pardon me, my lord. This woman and I live in the same house, and I had a baby while she was there with me. ¹⁸The third day after my child was born, this woman also had a baby. We were alone; there was no one in the house but the two of us.

¹⁹“During the night this woman’s son died because she lay on him. ²⁰So she got up in the middle of the night and took my son from my side while I your servant was asleep. She put him by her breast and put her dead son by my breast. ²¹The next morning, I got up to nurse my son—and he was dead! But when I looked at him closely in the morning light, I saw that it wasn’t the son I had borne.”

²²The other woman said, “No! The living one is my son; the dead one is yours.” But the first one insisted, “No! The dead one is yours; the living one is mine.” And so they argued before the king.

²³The king said, “This one says, ‘My son is alive and your son is dead,’ while that one says, ‘No! Your son is dead and mine is alive.’”

²⁴Then the king said, “Bring me a sword.” So they brought a sword for the king. ²⁵He then gave an order: “Cut the living child in two and give half to one and half to the other.”

²⁶The woman whose son was alive was deeply moved out of love for her son and said to the king, “Please, my lord, give her the living baby! Don’t kill him!”

But the other said, “Neither I nor you shall have him. Cut him in two!”

²⁷Then the king gave his ruling: “Give the living baby to the first woman. Do not kill him; she is his mother.”

²⁸When all Israel heard the verdict the king had given, they held the king in awe, because they saw that he had wisdom from God to administer justice.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God!

GOSPEL VERSE “Prepare the Way”

HOLY GOSPEL Luke 1:57-66 [NIV]

⁵⁷When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy.

⁵⁹On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, ⁶⁰but his mother spoke up and said, “No! He is to be called John.”

⁶¹They said to her, “There is no one among your relatives who has that name.”

⁶²Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child. ⁶³He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone’s astonishment he wrote, “His name is John.” ⁶⁴Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God. ⁶⁵All the neighbors were filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things. ⁶⁶Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, “What then is this child going to be?” For the Lord’s hand was with him.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God!

THE APOSTLES’ CREED

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

SERMON SONG “Emmanuel”

SERMON “UNPLANNED BIRTHS”

SERMON RESPONSE “Emmanuel”

OFFERING

“I Wonder as I Wander”

B. Wayne Bisbee

Cindy Hurd, Kaylan Eastepp, Carolyn Scheers

PEOPLE of PEACE in PRAYER

THE LORD’S PRAYER *The Family Prayer of the People of God*

CLOSING SONG “Angels We Have Heard on High”

CONNECT

- **Giving Trees | Gifts Cards for Sudanese | Donations for Adoption Agency**
- **Children’s Christmas Program | Wednesday, December 14 | 7pm**
- **Northeast Orchestra Concert | Friday, December 16 | 7:30pm**
- **Lessons & Carols | Sunday, December 18 | 8:30 & 11:00am**
- **Christmas Eve Worship | Saturday, December 24 | 5:00, 6:30, 8:00p**
- **Christmas Day Worship | 8:30am – Fellowship | 9:45am - Worship**

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE “Carillon on ‘Come, All Ye Shepherds’”

arr. Gordon Young

SERMON: *Rev. James L. Mueller*
LITURGIST: *Rev. Morgan Hamilton*

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