

The Worship of God

1st Sunday of Advent - Commitment Sunday

Welcome, Announcements and Sharing of Our Vision

Lay Leader: Nancy Carol Willis

Preparing to Meet God

Preparing Ourselves for Worship During the Prelude...

*The first week of Advent is always a surprise - no matter how much preparation takes place within the life of the church; no matter that out there in the wider world, Christmas has been advertised for months. We are always surprised when the season of Advent rolls around. There is more of a theological reason for this than a calendar one. Part of the purpose of the season, then, is to remind us that we are **waiting**; we are **looking forward**; we are **leaning into** what is coming. And the "what" is, for us, more of a **who**. That's why the theme of "Company's Coming" reminds us that we are looking for the Christ who comes, but also the community we are becoming. And so, one of our Advent questions must be, "Who is missing from our fellowship?" Or to say it another way, "Who are we leaving out?" "Who can we include" states it in the positive. "How can we contribute to making this season the best Advent ever?"*

Advent Call to Worship

Win and Barb Bookhart

L: Come, Lord Jesus.

P: Today we begin the journey of Advent. Let us pray that we may be ready and able to welcome the Christ Child into our lives again.

L: May the keeping of Advent be upon our hearts and in our lives.

P: Come, Lord Jesus.

L: May this Advent wreath constantly remind us to prepare for Christ's coming. We will watch and wait for him, and we will light candles of hope, peace, joy and love, remembering the promises of God with prayer.

P: Come, Lord Jesus.

L: The first candle is the candle of HOPE. It was hope that gave people the courage to go on, and it was hope that directed their prayers toward a Messiah. *(Light front blue candle, followed by the singing of the Advent Response; then be seated.)*

Advent Response

He Came Down

*He came down that we may have hope. He came down that we may have hope,
He came down that we may have hope. Hallelujah forevermore.*

*Hymn of Praise

When Morning Gilds the Skies

*When Morning Gilds the Skies, my heart awaking cries:
May Jesus Christ be praised!
Alike at work and prayer, to Jesus I repair:
May Jesus Christ be praised!*

*Does sadness fill my mind? A solace here I find:
 May Jesus Christ be praised!
 Or fades my earthly bliss? My comfort still is this:
 May Jesus Christ be praised!*

*Let earth's wide circle round, in joyful notes resound:
 May Jesus Christ be praised!
 Let air and sea and sky, from depth to height reply:
 May Jesus Christ be praised!*

*Be this, while life is mine, my canticle divine:
 May Jesus Christ be praised!
 Be this the eternal song, through all the ages long:
 May Jesus Christ be praised!*

Prayer of Confession

We confess, surprising God, that our sense of anticipation has been dulled. We have ceased to expect any wonders from your hand. We no longer see the marvels around us in the people and nature as we view as everything as common and ordinary. We are not alert to your presence or your working in our midst, on our behalf. Wake us up, Holy One, lest we miss out on encountering you – the One who created, redeemed and sustains us. Pardon us, that we may escape the judgment we bring on ourselves. Send your light that it may shine through us into a needy world. And now we turn to you in silent prayer to share our concerns and seek your forgiveness.....Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

- L: Hear the Good News: The King of Kings is coming.
 P: ***Let us prepare our hearts and lives with repentance and hope that we might serve the Lord.***
 L: Friends, believe the Good News of the Gospel –
 P: ***In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!***



Meeting God in the Word

Children's Message

Prayer for Illumination

First Lessons

Isaiah 64: 1-9 & I Corinthians 1: 3-9

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence - as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil - to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him.

You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.

Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind - just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you - so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Special Music

Thank You, Lord

Don Moen

I come before you today and there's just one thing that I want to say -

Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord.

For all you've given to me, for or all the blessings I cannot see,

Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord.

Chorus:

With a grateful heart, with a song of praise, with an outstretched arm,

I will bless your name.

Thank you, Lord.

I just want to thank you Lord.

Thank you, Lord. I just want to thank you Lord. Thank you, Lord.

For all you've done in my life, you took my darkness and gave me your light.

Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord.

You took my sin and my shame; you took my sickness and healed all my pain.

Thank you, Lord.

Thank you, Lord.

Chorus: *With a grateful heart, with a song of praise, with an outstretched arm,*

I will bless your name and thank you Lord.

I just want to thank you, Lord.

Thank you, Lord.

I just want to thank you Lord.

Thank you, Lord. I just want to thank you Lord. Thank you, Lord.

I just want to thank you Lord.

Thank You Lord

Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord

Instrumental interlude

Thank you, Lord.

Thank you, Lord.

Chorus: *With a grateful heart, with a song of praise, with an outstretched arm,*

I will bless your name.

Thank you, Lord.

I just want to thank you. I just want to thank you, Lord

Thank you, Lord.

I just want to thank you Lord.

Thank you, Lord.
 I just want to thank you. I just want to thank you, Lord.
 Thank you, Lord.
 I just want to thank you Lord.
 Thank you, Lord.

Third Lesson *Mark 13: 24-37* *The Lesson of the Fig Tree and the Necessity for Watchfulness*

'But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in clouds" with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

'From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

'But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake - for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.

Sermon **'The Graciousness of Christ'** Paul Willbanks

Responding to the Word

***Hymn**

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

*A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing.
 Our helper he, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing.
 For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe.
 His craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate,
 On earth is not his equal.*

*Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing,
 Were not the right man on our side, the man of God's own choosing.
 Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is he.
 Lord Sabaoth his name, from age to age the same,
 And he must win the battle.*

*And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,
 We will not fear, for God hath willed his truth to triumph through us.
 The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him.
 His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure.
 One little word shall fell him.*

*That word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them, abideth.
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through him who with us sideth.
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also.
The body they may kill; God's truth abideth still.
His kingdom is forever.*

*Litany of Faith

- L: Gracious God, in the Exodus you led Israel from slavery into freedom –
P: *And then, your children afflicted you like harsh taskmasters.*
 L: With the patience of a parent, you greeted their rebellions.
P: *But they continued to test your love like suspicious orphans.*
 L: O Lord, we call ourselves the new Israel, but we act like your children of old;
P: *We call you the Spirit of the living present, but we worship the idol of a long-dead past.*
 L: We proclaim that you will bring justice without the sword and replace all death with life,
P: *But our wars and rumors of war consume our world with violence.*
 L: O God, rekindle our hope for freedom, and spark our desire for peace,
A: *That all taskmasters may become your servants, and all orphans may find their home!*

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

Cares Chorus:

*I cast all my cares upon you. I lay all of my burdens down
at your feet. And anytime I don't know what to do,
I cast all my cares upon you.*

The Call to Celebrate Our Gifts

The Invitation *You are invited to place your regular offerings in the basket in the back of the sanctuary, or mail them in. In addition to your regular offerings, you are invited to come forward and place your 2021 commitments on the communion table, in addition to your Time and Talent forms.*

Prayer of Dedication *Holy God, we give thanks for all the ways you provide for us. Help us to thankful and generous in every aspect of our lives that we might we your faithful servants.*

Going Out to Serve God

* Hymn

Lead On, O King Eternal

*Lead on, O King eternal! The day of march has come;
Henceforth in fields of conquest, your tents shall be our home.
Through days of preparation, your grace has made us strong,
And now, O King eternal, we lift our battle song.*

*Lead on, O King eternal, till sin's fierce war shall cease,
And holiness shall whisper the sweet amen of peace;
For not with swords' loud clashing, nor roll of stirring drums;
With deeds of love and mercy, the heavenly kingdom comes.*

*Lead on, O King eternal: We follow, not with fears,
For gladness breaks like morning, where'er your face appears;
Your cross is lifted o'er us; we journey in its light.
The crown awaits the conquest; lead on, O God of might!*

*** Blessing**

L: We begin our journey toward Bethlehem.

P: *O God, where you will reveal the glory of heaven and the hope of earth.*

L: May the light of your glory brighten our path to the future,

P: *And may the brilliance of your hope beckon us to new beginnings.*

***Response**

He Is Lord

He is Lord, He is Lord!

He is risen from the dead and he is Lord!

Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess,

That Jesus Christ is Lord.