

First Week of Advent

Sunday, November 29, 2020

Sunday Morning Worship

Please join us online for worship this morning. The video will go "live" at 10:30am.

Call to Worship

Awake from your sleep: salvation is near! The night is far gone; the day is at hand.
Heaven and earth will pass away, but the word of God endures forever.
The day of the Lord is surely coming; the promise of God will be fulfilled.

Opening Prayer

Faithful God, your promises stand unshaken through all generations. Renew us in hope, that we may be awake and alert as we watch for the glorious return of Jesus Christ, our judge and Savior, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Lighting the Advent Candle

Light the first purple candle.

Light one candle for hope. Because the world is broken and the wait is long, but hope just won't let go. Hope holds space for all our longings lingers on the edge of harsh reality like the dawn gently awakening the sky. "Keep awake," she whispers, "for the world is being made new." So we light one candle, because it only takes one: Christ with us.

Sung Response

We Gather 'Round

by Rev. Elana Keppel Levy

We gather 'round in hope and faith, Looking for the savior for whom we pray.
We pray that we will see him near, Bringing forth life and justice for all in fear.
The candles glow, showing us God's light, Calling us forward, united in Christ.

Invitation to Confession

Like a faded, dry leaf that the wind blows away, our sins dry us up; faded and brittle, we are carried off by the wrongs we have done. Yet God loves us still and is able to restore and renew us with the water of life. Let us pray.

Prayer of Confession

God-with-us, even in Advent, we confess that you can seem far away. You are hidden when we need you near. In our hurt, doubt, and fear, we do not try to draw closer to you; instead, we lash out – against you, our neighbor, even those we love. Forgive us, we pray, and come to save us! Let your face shine until our tears are dried, our sins are faded, and our hope is restored. After all, we belong to you, and in your hands, we can be made new. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon

The grace of God, given to us in Christ Jesus, strengthens us to the end so that we may be blameless when Christ comes again. Thanks be to God, who is faithful and has called us into the fellowship of the Son, Jesus Christ our Lord! In his name, we are forgiven! Amen.

Prayer of Illumination

Gracious God, heaven and earth will pass away, but your words will not pass away: Your Word stands forever. May our generation be attentive so that, by the power of your Holy Spirit, we remember your ways and gladly do right, meeting you wherever and whenever you appear. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Scripture Readings

Matthew 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

*“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,”*

which means, “God is with us.” When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Sermon

*“It’s the Most Wonderful Time of the Year”
First in a series, “The Christmas Playlist”*

Musical Reflection

“It’s the Most Wonderful Time of the Year”

Prayers of Intercession and The Lord’s Prayer

God of power and glory, we remember your awesome deeds across the ages – the times you saved us and brought us home. Yet, we also remember the times when we felt alone and afraid. O God, we are your people, the work of your hand. Look upon us with your shining face, especially in the time of need.

We pray for those who look to you for healing and hope...
those who are sick or recuperating from illness and injury...
those who are lonely and need companionship and care...
those for whom the holidays bring sorrow or pain...
those whose deep sadness overshadows joy.
Let your face shine upon us, O God.

We pray for people in need of restoration and reconciliation:
for those battling addictions and those in recovery...
for people estranged from those they love...
for someone lost in grief... for someone far from home.
Let your face shine upon us, O God, that we might be saved.

Renew the spirit of a world grown weary with waiting and hoping. Especially we pray for wars to end, for hunger and poverty to be crowded out by abundance. And we pray, too, for the church because we also grow weary in our waiting and watching for your power and glory to be made known. Grant us clarity, passion, and true fellowship so that we are awake to your presence.

Let your face shine upon the church and all this weary world, we pray; in the name of the One born in a manger and coming again on clouds of glory, who taught us to pray, saying:

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 debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and glory forever. Amen.

Benediction and Sending

