

A close-up photograph of a Christmas tree branch on the left side of the frame. The branch is decorated with several purple and gold ornaments, including a large clear one with a red and orange design. Warm, golden lights are visible in the background, creating a bokeh effect. The overall scene is festive and celebratory.

Because
you are a
God of **hope**,
we know that
you create all
the possibilities
of the future.

First Week of Advent



Sunday, November 29, 2020

First Sunday of Advent

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

Advent Calendar by Rowan Williams, 104th Archbishop of Canterbury

He will come like last leaf's fall.

One night when the November wind
has flayed the trees to bone, and earth
wakes choking on the mould,
the soft shroud's folding.

He will come like frost.
One morning when the shrinking earth
opens on mist, to find itself
arrested in the net
of alien, sword-set beauty.

He will come like dark.
One evening when the bursting red
December sun draws up the sheet
and penny-masks its eye to yield
the star-snowed fields of sky.

He will come, will come,
will come like crying in the night,
like blood, like breaking,
as the earth writhes to toss him free.
He will come like child.

Daily Readings: Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37
Daily Prayer: God of justice and peace, from the heavens you rain down mercy and kindness, that all on earth may stand in awe and wonder before your marvelous deeds. Amen.

Monday, November 30

Daily Readings: Psalm 79; Micah 4:1-5; Revelation 15:1-8

Daily Prayer: Raise our heads in expectation, that we may yearn for the coming day of the Lord and stand without blame before your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

Tuesday, December 1

Daily Readings: Psalm 79; Micah 4:6-13; Revelation 18:1-10

Daily Prayer: We seek the mighty God in the most unlikely places as a child in a stable, and in an empty tomb. May God hear these prayers, which come from the unlikely corners of our lives.

Wednesday, December 2

Daily Readings: Psalm 79; Micah 5:1-5a; Luke 21:34-38

Daily Prayer: Give us ears to hear, O God, and eyes to watch, that we may know your presence in our midst during this holy season of joy as we anticipate the coming of Jesus Christ.

Thursday, December 3

Daily Readings: Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; Hosea 6:1-6; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

Daily Prayer: Creator of the world, you are the potter, we are the clay, and you form us in your image.

Friday, December 4

Daily Readings: Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; Jeremiah 1:4-10; Acts 11:19-26

Daily Prayer: Shape our spirits by Christ's transforming power, that as one people we may live out your compassion and justice, whole and sound in the realm of your peace. Amen.

Saturday, December 5

Daily Readings: Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; Ezekiel 36:24-28; Mark 11:27-33

Daily Prayer: Open our eyes to Christ's presence in the shadows of our world, so that we, like him, may become beacons of your justice, and defenders of all for whom there is no room.

Second Week of Advent



Sunday, December 6, 2020

Second Sunday of Advent

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

Advent Oratorio by Paul Spicer & N.T. Wright

Come, Lord, and cleanse us from our sin;
Your new, glad work in us begin.
Remove our idols from our sight;
Let us in you alone delight.

Prepare us for your coming reign
By washing us from every stain;
Make known to us your holy Name;
Let us no more turn back to shame.

Call us to you from every land,
And guide us with your powerful hand;
Show us the path that we must tread,
Let us by you with joy be led.

Implant your Spirit in our heart,
That, with your Breath, new life may start;
Take from our flesh the heart of stone,
Let us rejoice in you alone.

For your own sake your love display,
That we may worship and obey;
Rebuild the wild and desert place;
Let us acclaim your sovereign grace.

Daily Readings: Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8

Daily Prayer: God of timeless grace, you fill us with joyful expectation. Make us ready for the message that prepares the way...

Monday, December 7

Daily Readings: Psalm 27; Isaiah 26:7-15; Acts 2:37-42

Daily Prayer: Make us ready ... that with uprightness of heart and holy joy we may eagerly await the kingdom of your Son, Jesus Christ, who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

Tuesday, December 8

Daily Readings: Psalm 27; Isaiah 4:2-6; Acts 11:1-18

Daily Prayer: God of hope, you raised up John the baptizer as a herald who calls us to conversion. As we joyfully await the glorious coming of Christ, we pray to you for the needs of ... the world.

Wednesday, December 9

Daily Readings: Psalm 27; Malachi 2:10-3:1; Luke 1:5-17

Daily Prayer: God of hope...you come to us and bring us home. Comfort us with the expectation of your saving power, made known to us in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thursday, December 10

Daily Readings: Psalm 126; Habakkuk 2:1-5; Philippians 3:7-11

Daily Prayer: Hear our humble prayer that we may serve you in holiness and faith and give voice to your presence among us until the day of the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Friday, December 11

Daily Readings: Psalm 126; Habakkuk 3:2-6; Philippians 3:12-16

Daily Prayer: God of hope, you call us from the exile of our sin with the good news of restoration; you build a highway through the wilderness;

Saturday, December 12

Daily Readings: Psalm 126; Habakkuk 3:13-19; Matthew 21:28-32

Daily Prayer: By your grace, transform our prayers from words to deeds, that we may live as a holy people in the dawn of your peace, redeemed from all that divides us.

Third Week of Advent



Sunday, December 13, 2020

Third Sunday of Advent

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

O Sapientia by Madeleine L'Engle

It was from Joseph first I learned
of love. Like me he was dismayed.
How easily he could have turned
me from his house; but, unafraid,
he put me not away from him
(O God-sent angel, pray for him).
Thus through his love was Love obeyed.

The Child's first cry came like a bell:
God's Word aloud, God's Word in deed.
The angel spoke: so it befell,
and Joseph with me in my need.
O Child whose father came from heaven,
to you another gift was given,
your earthly father chosen well.

With Joseph I was always warmed
and cherished. Even in the stable
I knew that I would not be harmed.
And, though above the angels swarmed,
man's love it was that made me able
to bear God's love, wild, formidable,
to bear God's will, through me performed.

Daily Readings: Isaiah 61:1-11; Psalm 126; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8

Daily Prayer: God of hope, you call us home from the exile of selfish oppression to the freedom of justice, the balm of healing, and the joy of sharing.

Monday, December 14

Daily Readings: Psalm 125; 1 Kings 18:1-18; Ephesians 6:10-17

Daily Prayer: Make us strong to join you in your holy work, as friends of strangers and victims, companions of those whom others shun...

Tuesday, December 15

Daily Readings: Psalm 125; 2 Kings 2:9-22; Acts 3:17-4:4

Daily Prayer: God of joy and exultation, you strengthen what is weak; you enrich the poor and give hope to those who live in fear.

Wednesday, December 16

Daily Readings: Psalm 125; Malachi 3:16-4:6; Mark 9:9-13

Daily Prayer: God of joy...look upon our needs this day. Make us grateful for the good news of salvation and keep us faithful in your service until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives for ever and ever.

Thursday, December 17

Daily Readings: Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26; 2 Samuel 6:1-11; Hebrews 1:1-4

Daily Prayer: Merciful God of peace, your work, spoken by the prophets, restores your people's life and hope.

Friday, December 18

Daily Readings: Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26; 2 Samuel 6:12-19; Hebrews 1:5-14

Daily Prayer: Fill our hearts with the joy of your saving grace, that we may hold fast to your great goodness and in our lives proclaim your justice in all the world.

Saturday, December 19

Daily Readings: Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26; Judges 13:2-24; John 7:40-52

Daily Prayer: Light of life, you came in flesh ... and gave us power to be your children. Grant us faith, O Christ, to see your presence among us, so that all of creation may sing new songs of gladness and walk in the way of peace.

Fourth Week of Advent



Sunday, December 20, 2020

Fourth Sunday of Advent

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

The Annunciation *by Edwin Muir*

The angel and the girl are met. Earth was the only meeting place.
For the embodied never yet travelled beyond the shore of space.

The eternal spirits in freedom go.
See, they have come together, see, while the destroying minutes flow,
Each reflects the other's face till heaven in hers and earth in his
Shine steady there. He's come to her from far beyond the farthest star,
Feathered through time. Immediacy
Of strangest strangeness is the bliss
That from their limbs all movement takes.
Yet the increasing rapture brings
So great a wonder that it makes
Each feather tremble on his wings.

Outside the window footsteps fall
Into the ordinary day and with the sun along the wall
Pursue their unreturning way.
Sound's perpetual roundabout rolls its numbered octaves out
And hoarsely grinds its battered tune.

But through the endless afternoon these neither speak nor movement make,
But stare into their deepening trance as if their gaze would never break.

Daily Readings: 2 Samuel 7:1-11; Psalm 89: 19-26; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38
Daily Prayer: God of all ages, in the birth of Christ your boundless love for your people shattered the power of darkness. Be born in us with that same love and light, that our song may blend with all the choirs of heaven and earth to the glory of your holy name.

Monday, December 21

Daily Readings: Luke 1:46b-55; 1 Samuel 1:1-18; Hebrews 9:1-14

Daily Prayer: O God of Elizabeth and Mary, you visited your servants with news of the world's redemption in the coming of the Savior.

Tuesday, December 22

Daily Readings: Luke 1:46b-55; 1 Samuel 1:19-28; Hebrews 8:1-13

Daily Prayer: Make our hearts leap with joy, and fill our mouths with songs of praise, that we may announce glad tidings of peace, and welcome the Christ in our midst.

Wednesday, December 23

Daily Readings: Luke 1:46b-55; 1 Samuel 2:1-10; Mark 11:1-11

Daily Prayer: God of promise, you have given us a sign of your love through the gift of Jesus Christ, our Savior, who was promised from ages past.



Christmas



Thursday, December 24

Christmas Eve

Please join us online for worship with communion, carols, and candlelight this evening.

The video will go “live” at 5:30pm.

Nativity by John Donne (1572-1631)

Immensity cloistered in thy dear womb,
Now leaves His well-belov'd imprisonment,
There He hath made Himself to His intent
Weak enough, now into the world to come;
But O, for thee, for Him, hath the inn no room?
Yet lay Him in this stall, and from the Orient,
Stars and wise men will travel to prevent
The effect of Herod's jealous general doom.
Seest thou, my soul, with thy faith's eyes, how He
Which fills all place, yet none holds Him, doth lie?
Was not His pity towards thee wondrous high,
That would have need to be pitied by thee?
Kiss Him, and with Him into Egypt go,
With His kind mother, who partakes thy woe.

Daily Readings: Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14

Daily Prayer: Give us, O God, such love and wonder that with the shepherds and magi, and pilgrims unknown, we may come to adore the holy child, the promised king; and with our gifts worship him, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Christmas Bells *by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

I HEARD the bells on Christmas Day
Their old, familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet, The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!
And thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along, The unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!
Till ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day,
A voice, a chime, A chant sublime
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!
Then from each black, accursed mouth
The cannon thundered in the South,
And with the sound, The carols drowned
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!
It was as if an earthquake rent
The hearth-stones of a continent,
And made forlorn, The households born
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!
And in despair I bowed my head;
"There is no peace on earth," I said;
"For hate is strong, And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"
Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
The Wrong shall fail, The Right prevail,
With peace on earth, good-will to men."

Daily Readings: Isaiah 62:6-12; Psalm 97; Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2:15-20

Daily Prayer: All glory to you, great God, for the gift of your Son, whom you sent to save us. With singing angels, let us praise your name, and tell the earth his story, that all may believe, rejoice, and bow down, acknowledging your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Saturday, December 26

Daily Readings: Psalm 148; Jeremiah 26:1-9, 12-15; Acts 6:8-15; 7:51-60

Daily Prayer: Lord and Giver of all good things, the magi travelled for miles to bring the Christ child the first Christmas presents. So may we, too, remember with thankful hearts the love that comes with each present we open. We also thank you for the love you have for each of us, and we thank you for the many gifts that you give us, especially the gift of life itself. Amen.

Sunday, December 27

Please join us online for worship this morning, as we worship with the Presbytery of Detroit.

The video will go "live" at 10:30am.

True Christian Christmas by Joanna Fuchs

Christmas isn't showy gifts Or glittering decoration;
It's honoring our Savior, Jesus Christ In humble adoration.

It's serving those less fortunate, Meeting their needs before our own;
It's making sure at Christmas time That no one is alone.

It's taking what we would have spent On things that no one needs,
And using it to help someone With service and good deeds.

Our Savior showed us how to live With charity, faith and service.
It makes the holidays a joy, More peaceful, and less nervous.

So let's remember Christmas is About our Savior's birth;
That's the way to happiness, The way to peace on earth.

Daily Readings: Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Psalm 148; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40

Daily Prayer: Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King, born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring. By thine own eternal spirit rule in all our hearts alone; by thine all sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne.

Monday, December 28

Daily Readings: Psalm 148; Jeremiah 31:15-17; Matthew 2:13-18

Daily Prayer: When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone, when the kings and princes are home, when the shepherds are back with the flocks, then the work of Christmas begins: To find the lost, to heal those broken in spirit, to feed the hungry, to release the oppressed, to rebuild the nations, to bring peace among all peoples, to make a little music with the heart. And to radiate the Light of Christ, every day, in every way, in all that we do and in all that we say. Then the work of Christmas begins.

Tuesday, December 29

Daily Readings: Psalm 148; Isaiah 49:5-15; Matthew 12:46-50

Daily Prayer: Lord, I thank You for coming to earth so You could redeem me. When I think of the extent to which You were willing to go in order to save me, it makes me want to shout, to celebrate, and to cry with thankfulness. You love me so much, and I am so grateful for that love. Without You, I would still be lost and in sin. But because of everything You have done for me, today I am free; my life is blessed; Jesus is my Lord; Heaven is my home; and Satan has no right to control me. I will be eternally thankful to You for everything You did to save me! I pray this in Jesus' name!

Wednesday, December 30

Daily Readings: Psalm 148; Proverbs 9:1-12; 2 Peter 3:8-13

Daily Prayer: May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi, and the peace of the Christ child. Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever.

Thursday, December 31

New Year's Eve

Daily Readings: Psalm 148; 1 Kings 3:5-14; John 8:12-19

Daily Prayer: God grant you the light of Christmas, which is faith; the warmth of Christmas, which is purity; the righteousness of Christmas, which is justice; the belief in Christmas, which is truth; the all of Christmas, which is Christ.

Friday, January 1

New Year's Day

A New Year's Poem by Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light;
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.
Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow;
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.
Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.
Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.
Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rimes
But ring the fuller minstrel in.
Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.
Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.
Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

Daily Readings: Ecclesiastes 3:1-13; Revelation 21:1-6a; Matthew 25:31-46

Daily Prayer: In a world where worry, not peace, prevails, stir up that good news again. This Christmas, make it real in our hearts. Never have we needed Your joy and peace more than now. Thank You for the gift of Jesus, our Immanuel, the Word made flesh. Forgive us for forgetting—that Your love never changes, never fades, and that You never abandon the purpose for which You came: to save us from our sinful condition, and to give us life eternal, the joy of relationship with a holy God. Your birth—and Your death—sealed Your promise to us forever.

Saturday, January 2

Daily Readings: Psalm 148; Proverbs 1:1-7; James 3:13-18

Daily Prayer: Dear Lord, don't let us miss You this Christmas season. Help us to simplify our activities and traditions so we can focus our celebration on Your birth. Thank You for being the Prince of Peace, and I ask You for that supernatural peace to reign in our hearts. Thank You for the simple but life-changing message of Your love for us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Sunday, January 3

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

The Truce of Christmas by GK Chesterton (1874–1936)

Passionate peace is in the sky--
And in the snow in silver sealed
The beasts are perfect in the field,
And men seem men so suddenly--
(But take ten swords and ten times ten
And blow the bugle in praising men;
For we are for all men under the sun,
And they are against us every one;
And misers haggle and madmen clutch,
And there is peril in praising much.
And we have the terrible tongues uncurled
That praise the world to the sons of the world.)

The idle humble hill and wood
Are bowed upon the sacred birth,
And for one little hour the earth
Is lazy with the love of good--
(But ready are you, and ready am I,
If the battle blow and the guns go by;
For we are for all men under the sun,
And they are against us every one;
And the men that hate herd all together,
To pride and gold, and the great white feather
And the thing is graven in star and stone
That the men who love are all alone.)

Hunger is hard and time is tough,
But bless the beggars and kiss the kings,
For hope has broken the heart of things,
And nothing was ever praised enough.
(But bold the shield for a sudden swing
And point the sword when you praise a thing,
For we are for all men under the sun,
And they are against us every one;
And mime and merchant, thane and thrall
Hate us because we love them all;
Only till Christmastide go by
Passionate peace is in the sky.)

Daily Readings: Jeremiah 31:7-14; Psalm 147:12-20; Ephesians 1:3-14; John 1:10-18
Daily Prayer: Jesus, the Light of the World, as we celebrate your birth, may we begin to see the world in the light of understanding you give us. As you chose the lowly, the outcasts, and the poor to receive the greatest news the world had ever known, so may we worship you in meekness of heart. May we also remember our brothers and sisters less fortunate than ourselves in this season of giving. Amen.

Monday, January 4

Daily Readings: Psalm 110; Proverbs 3:1-12; James 4:11-17

Daily Prayer: Lord, At the start of each day, help us to recognize you above all else. Enlighten the eyes of our heart that we might see you and notice how you're at work through our lives. Give us wisdom to make the best choices, fill us with a desire to seek after you more than anything else in this world. Let your Spirit and power breathe in us, through us, again, fresh and new. Thank you that you are greater than anything we may face in our day. Thank you that your presence goes with us, and that your joy is never dependent on our circumstances, but it is our true and lasting strength, no matter what we're up against. We ask that your peace lead us, that it would guard our hearts and minds in you. We ask for your grace to cover our lives this day. We love you Lord...we need you.

Tuesday, January 5

Daily Readings: Psalm 110; Proverbs 22:1-9; Luke 6:27-31

Daily Prayer: Father, I know that you are all-powerful, that you are Sovereign, and that nothing is too difficult for you. Yet today, I still struggle with worry and fear, still carrying the same burdens leftover from yesterday. It's hard to shake it off even though I'm desperate to leave it fully in your hands. Please lift all the things that are weighing me down, right off shoulders and heavy heart, and give me the peace that only you can provide. I know that you care for whatever concerns me, and your ears are open to my prayers. I know that you understand my struggles, and you see right where I am, even on the days I feel that no one notices. Guard my heart and mind in you today, as I meditate on your words and truth.

Star-Giving by Ann Weems

What I'd really like to give you for Christmas is a star...

Brilliance in a package,

something you could keep in the pocket of your jeans
or in the pocket of your being.

Something to take out in times of darkness,

something that would never snuff out or tarnish,

something you could hold in your hand,

something for wonderment,

something for pondering,

something that would remind you of

what Christmas has always meant:

God's Advent Light into the darkness of this world.

But stars are only God's for giving,

and I must be content to give you words and wishes

and packages without stars.

But I can wish you life

as radiant as the Star

that announces the Christ Child's coming,

and as filled with awe as the shepherds who stood beneath its light.

And I can pass on to you the love

that has been given to me,

ignited countless times by others

who have knelt in Bethlehem's light.

Perhaps, if you ask, God will give you a star.

Daily Readings: Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-14; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12

Daily Prayer: God of starlight, shine your love into the darkness of our lives.

Preoccupied with ourselves, we forget the needs of others; we participate in systems that oppress; we accept violence as a way of life; we fail to respond to the cry of others. May your love fall upon us like rain on the mown grass. May your love wash away our indifference and water the tender shoots of our care and compassion. Nourished in the sunlight of your love, may we grow into people who live in righteousness and who work for justice for all your children. Amen.