

*As we unite in worship today, we extend a warm welcome to each one present.
May we together experience the presence of God*

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We Gather to Prepare Our Hearts to Meet Our Lord

**Prelude
Welcome**



**FIRST SUNDAY OF
ADVENT
December 1, 2024**

So, what do we do when we get ready to go home? We make lists. We put things in order. We set our minds on our destination. What is our destination? Our destination is home. So now we begin to prepare.

First, we prepare with Light, of course, because light is crucial to Advent. We light the candles on the wreath, not to count down to Christmas, but as a beacon to call us home. "We'll leave the light on for you" isn't just a slogan for a hotel chain, but a gospel promise that we will find our way by the light that is Jesus the Christ and now is reflected in the body of Christ, the church.

Today is our reminder that it is time to head home. So, I invite our reader to come forward to light our first candle of advent.

First Sunday of Advent Litany

Keep awake! Be watchful! The Son of Man is coming with power and great glory. Hold your heads high, for your salvation is near.

Today we light the first Advent candle which is the candle of hope, The people of Israel hoped in God's promises and were not disappointed. Again, and again God delivered Israel from its enemies. We too have the same experience of salvation. That is why we believe in God's promise to send Jesus to us once again to judge the world and establish his kingdom forever upon the earth. Today we are reminded of how Gods promised Messiah will break into our time and space to show us the way of salvation. May we stay alert for his coming.

***Light the first advent candle of Hope. ***

Let us pray: Thank you God for the hope you give us. We ask that as we wait for all your promises to come true, and for Christ to come again, that you would remain present with us. Help us today, and every day to worship you, to hear your word, and to do your will by sharing your hope with each other. We ask it in the name of the one who was born in Bethlehem. Amen.

Advent Song Verse 1 – FWS #2090

Words Mary Lu Walker

Music: Mary Lu Walker

**Light the Advent candle one;
Now the waiting has begun;
We have started on our way,
Time to think of Christmas Day.**

**Candle, candle burning bright,
Shining in the cold winter night;
Candle, candle burning bright,
Fill our hearts with Christmas light**

A Call to Worship

Something stirs deep within us – a longing, a hope,

A thirst for joy, a hunger for peace, a yearning for blessing.

We know deep within that our hopes and fears

Will be met by angel songs and baby sighs.

It is Advent -

Season of waiting, hoping, yearning.

Advent -

All: Time to go home.

PRAYER REFLECTION

But when these signs begin to happen, stand erect and raise your heads.

We shudder at signs we see. Anxieties bombard us. Our hearts are afraid. Lord, Let us be vigilant, hold our heads high. Make us an Advent people with hope as our stronghold. Jesus, You once came into our world with all its sorrows. Keep us awake and alert to your presence in the midst of our struggles now. Tell us again that your love will triumph.

Praise Hymn #196 Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

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**Come, thou long-expected Jesus born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
Dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.**

**Born they 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.**

We Hear God's Word

Gospel Reading..... Luke 21:25-36 (NRSV)

The Coming of the Son of Man

25 "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. 26 People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27 Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. 28 Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

The Lesson of the Fig Tree

29 Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees; 30 as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. 31 So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. 32 Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. 33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

Exhortation to Watch

34 "Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, 35 like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. 36 Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

The word of God for the People of God, **Thanks Be to God**

Children's Message

Faith Hymn UMH #395 "Take Time To Be Holy"

**1. Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord;
Abide in Him always, and feed on His Word.
Make friends of God's children, help those who are weak,
Forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek.**

**2. Take time to be holy, the world rushes on;
Spend much time in secret, with Jesus alone.
By looking to Jesus, like Him thou shalt be;
Thy friends in thy conduct His likeness shall see.**

**3. Take time to be holy, let Him be thy Guide;
And run not before Him, whatever betide.
In joy or in sorrow, still follow the Lord,
And, looking to Jesus, still trust in His Word.**

**4. Take time to be holy, be calm in thy soul,
Each thought and each motive beneath His control.
Thus led by His Spirit to fountains of love,
Thou soon shalt be fitted for service above.**

Meditation
The Great Thanksgiving for Advent

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Almighty and all-loving God,
through your Son Jesus Christ
you have reconciled the world to yourself.
Help us now to be reconciled with one another,
that again we might dwell in the warmth of your love.
Inspire us with your Holy Spirit
to put aside the cloak of pride and put on Christ,
that we might forgive and be forgiven;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

DECLARATION OF PARDON

Pastor: Friends, hear the good news! Christ has entered into heaven.

People: Christ now appears in the presence of God on our behalf.

Pastor: Friends, believe the good news!

People: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere to give thanks to you,
Father Almighty creator of heaven and earth.
You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life.
When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast.
You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God,
and spoke to us through your prophets, who looked for that day
when justice shall roll down like waters
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream,
when nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war anymore.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ,
whom you sent in the fullness of time to be a light to the nations.
You scatter the proud in the imagination of their hearts
and have mercy on those who fear you from generation to generation.
You put down the mighty from their thrones and exalt those of low degree.
You fill the hungry with good things, and the rich you send empty away.
Your own Son came among us as a servant
to be Emmanuel, your presence with us.
He humbled himself in obedience to your will
and freely accepted death on a cross.
By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection
you gave birth to your Church,
delivered us from slavery to sin and death,
and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread,
gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:
"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over he took the cup,
gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:
"Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving
as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us,
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,
and on these gifts of bread and wine.
Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ,
that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ,
one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world,
until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church,
all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father (God), now and forever. **Amen.**

Sharing of the Elements

Joys/Concerns

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE:

O God, the days are surely coming when all your promises will be fulfilled to your faithful children. We pray for the church that we might fulfill our promises to you, and be forgiven for all our failures.

In your time, O Lord, a righteous branch sprang up and you brought justice and righteousness in every land. We pray for our nation, and all nations, that your peace would be manifest in every corner of the earth.

In your Kingdom, O Lord, you bring your people safety and comfort. We pray for the sick, the suffering, and those in distress of any kind (especially . . .); that you would heal all injuries, comfort all grief, and settle all wrongs.

In the fullness of time, O God, you sent your son, to be born of Mary. And his name was Emmanuel: God With Us. We thank you for your Presence with us, and we pray that you might be always present with those whom we love but see no longer.

Come among us O God, and hear our prayers; so that when your Son Jesus comes among riding on a cloud and with great power and might, we might come to adore him as we will all unite in the prayer He taught us to pray, Our Father...

Offertory/Doxology/Prayer

As we present our tithes and offerings on this first Sunday of Advent, we give thanks for the gifts you bestow upon us especially the gift of Jesus. May you bless these offerings and multiply them as we strive to do the work of your kingdom here on earth.

Departing Hymn UMH #213. "Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates"

**1 Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates;
behold, the King of glory waits;
the King of kings is drawing near;
the Savior of the world is here!**

**2 Fling wide the portals of your heart;
make it a temple, set apart
from earthly use for heaven's employ,
adorned with prayer and love and joy.**

**3 Redeemer, come, with us abide;
our hearts to thee we open wide;
let us thy inner presence feel;
thy grace and love in us reveal.**

**4 Thy Holy Spirit lead us on
until our glorious goal is won;**

**eternal praise, eternal fame
be offered, Savior, to thy name!**

SENDING FORTH: Faithful God, our normal rhythm is rushing. We are thankful for this season of Advent as a reminder to pause, wait, and anticipate your miraculous ways that are often found in unexpected places. May we pay attention this week to signs of your coming kingdom. Amen.