

Prairieland Parish

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



Opening Meditation

Christmas is approaching. Sometimes there is a joy in the waiting, like counting down the days before vacation or a party. Other times, it feels like that snowball rolling down a mountain that is going to swallow you up before you can get out of the way.

It's easy to slip into that mode, to recognize that there is much to do before Christmas gets here. We've got to move heaven and earth; we've got to shovel out; we've got to clear the path. That is why John the Baptist seems to fit in so well with the Advent season. There is threat aplenty in the early part of the Gospel of Luke. Sometimes, we'd like to skip over John's tirade and get on to the angels and the baby and the sheep. But no, let's pause and listen in again: "Prepare the way of the Lord!" (Luke 3:4.)

The point here is that there is work to be done: getting-ready work; opening-up work; pulling-the-kinks-out kind of work.

Maybe that "Christmas is closer than you think" feeling isn't to be thought of as a warning and much as it should be a joy. Maybe it shouldn't make us feel more frenzied, feel more behind, more afraid we won't be ready in time. Maybe that phrase ought to be a promise, a comfort. Maybe it ought to be an assurance that we are not alone in this season of Emmanuel because God is with us. Maybe it ought to be a means by which we can overcome the fear of going home.

Today we light these candles, the candle of hope and the candle of peace, as a sign of our assurance that though the road is hard, we believe it is worth the journey. It is time to go home.

I invited our advent readers to come forward at this time

Second Sunday of Advent Litany

Last Sunday we lit the first candle in our Advent Wreath, the candle of hope. Today, we light it again as we remember that Christ, who was born in Bethlehem, will come again to fulfil all of God's promises to us.

****Light the first Advent Candle of Hope****

The second candle of Advent is the Candle of Peace. Peace is a word that we hear a lot. It is one of the things that we hope for. Christ brought peace when he first came to us and he will bring everlasting peace when he comes again.

The prophet Isaiah called Christ "the Prince of Peace". When Jesus came he taught people the importance of being peace makers. He said that those who make peace shall be called the children of God.

Today we light the candle of peace to remind us that Jesus is the Prince of Peace and that through him peace is found.

****Light the second Advent Candle of Peace****

Let us pray: Thank you God for the peace 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 peace with each other. We ask it in the name of the one who was born in Bethlehem. Amen.

Advent Song – verse 2 FWS @2090

Words Mary Lu Walker

Music: Mary Lu Walker

**Light the Advent candle two;
Think of humble shepherds who
Filled with wonder at the sight
Of the child of Christmas night.**

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

O come, O come, Immanuel,

And be light for our darkness.

Be comfort in our grief, be a friend for our loneliness,

An oasis for our searching.

O come, O come, Immanuel,

Restore our joy, heal our wounds, and bring us peace.

ADVENT PRAYER

God in this season

suspended between hope and fulfillment,

let us never forget what you have done.

May we be overwhelmed by your mercy,

which flows in wave after wave.

May we be honest about the darkness within us,

and perceptive of the light around us.
May we make straight the path for the Lord,
that together we may see God's glory revealed.

Praise Hymn #211 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

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**1 O come, O come, Immanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.**

**Refrain:
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.**

**2 O come, O Wisdom from on high,
who ordered all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show
and teach us in its ways to go. Refrain**

**3 O come, O come, great Lord of might,
who to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times did give the law
in cloud and majesty and awe.
Refrain**

**4 O come, O Branch of Jesse's stem,
unto your own and rescue them!
From depths of hell your people save,
and give them victory o'er the grave.
Refrain**

We Hear God's Word

Gospel Reading..... Luke 1:68-79 (NRSV)

68 "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.

69 He has raised up a mighty savior[a] for us
in the house of his servant David,

70 as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,
71 that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.

72 Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,
and has remembered his holy covenant,

73 the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,
to grant us 74 that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,
might serve him without fear, 75 in holiness and righteousness
before him all our days.

76 And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

77 to give knowledge of salvation to his people
by the forgiveness of their sins.

78 By the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon[b] us,
79 to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace."

Word of God, for the People of God, **Thanks be to God!**

Children's Moments

Faith Hymn #209 "Blessed Be the God of Israel"

Author: Michael Perry (1973) Publication Date: 1989

Composer: Hal H. Hopson (1983) Copyright: Music © 1983 Hope Publishing Co.

1 Blessed be the God of Israel, who comes to set us free, who visits and redeems us, and grants us liberty. The prophets spoke of mercy, of freedom and release; God shall fulfill the promise to bring our people peace.

2 Now from the house of David a child of grace is given; a Savior comes among us to raise us up to heaven. Before him goes the herald, forerunner

in the way, the prophet of salvation, the harbinger of day.

**3 On prisoners of darkness the sun begins to rise, the dawning of forgiveness upon the sinner's eyes, to guide the feet of pilgrims along the paths of peace;
O bless our God and Savior with songs that never cease!**

Meditation

Joys/Concerns

PASTORAL PRAYER

Grant, Almighty God, that all who confess your Name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world.

Guide the people of this land, and of all the nations, in the ways of justice and peace; that we may honor one another and serve the common good.

Give us all a reverence for the earth as your own creation, that we may use its resources rightly in the service of others and to your honor and glory.

Bless all whose lives are closely linked with ours, and grant that we may serve Christ in them, and love one another as he loves us.

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit; give them courage and hope in their troubles, and bring them the joy of your salvation.

We commend to your mercy all who have died, that your will for them may be fulfilled; and we pray that we may share with all your saints in your eternal kingdom.

O merciful God, we come to you this day and join our prayers with the One who stands before you in heaven, Jesus Christ our Lord – Our Father ...

Offertory/Doxology/Prayer

We humbly lift up our offerings on this second Sunday of Advent, seeking your blessing upon them for multiplication and guidance for faithful stewardship. Bless us the givers as well as those who will receive. Surround us with the hope of this Advent season, we pray in Jesus' holy name. Amen.

***Departing Hymn #419 "I Am Thine, O Lord"**

Author: Fanny J. Crosby (1875)

Composer: William H. Doane (1875)

Publication Date: 1989

1. I am thine, O Lord, I have heard thy voice, and it told thy love to me; but I long to rise in the arms of faith and be closer drawn to thee.

Refrain:

Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, to the cross where thou hast died. Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, to thy precious, bleeding side.

2. Consecrate me now to thy service, Lord, by the power of grace divine; let my soul look up with a steadfast hope, and my will be lost in thine.

A Peaceful Benediction

Be people of peace.

Let peace live in your heart and share the peace of Christ with all you meet.

Share peace by acting out of compassion and not fear.

Share peace by listening to all sides of the story.

Share peace by praying for our world.

In this Advent season, we need to see, feel, and share peace.

As you go out into the wonder of God's creations, share peace and hope with those you meet. Amen.

(Refrain)

3. O the pure delight of a single hour that before thy throne I spend, when I kneel in prayer, and with thee, my God, I commune as friend with friend!

(Refrain)

4. There are depths of love that I cannot know till I cross the narrow sea; there are heights of joy that I may not reach till I rest in peace with thee.

(Refrain)