

Sunday, December 3, 2023 – 9:30 a.m.

The First Sunday of Advent — The Sunday of Hope

TODAY'S FOCUS: What does our preparation for God look like? Do we stop at lights and trees or do we also do some internal work? How does Jesus enter our preparation?

PRELUDE — Anneke Toomey

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS — Lin

PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST — Lin

***OPENING HYMN**

UMH #196 "Come Thou Long Expected Jesus"

**1. 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.**

**2. 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.**

CALL TO WORSHIP — Liturgist

One: Joy indescribable, hope unbelievable, love inconceivable came down to earth!

Many: We gather excitedly, we stand expectantly, we wait patiently for Christ to come again!

All: Come, Jesus, come soon!

OPENING PRAYER — Lin

Loving God, today we start the journey toward a stable in Bethlehem, and we remember the day your Son came into the world, a tiny baby destined to be the savior of the world. We also await his return, we know not when, we know not how, but we believe we will one day look on that blessed face. Open our hearts so that as we journey through this Advent season, the joy of knowing your love, embodied in Jesus Christ, overshadows everything else we experience. It is in his name, we pray. Amen.

BLESSING OF THE ADVENT WREATH — Liturgist

One: Christ came to save us and has promised to come again to save the world. Let us pray that we may always be ready to welcome him;

Many: Come Lord Jesus.

One: That the keeping of Advent may open our hearts to God's love;

Many: Come Lord Jesus.

One: That the light of Christ may penetrate the darkness of the world;

Many: Come Lord Jesus.

One: That these Advent candles may remind us to prepare our hearts for Christ;

Many: Come Lord Jesus.

One: That the Christmas season may fill us with peace and joy as we strive to follow the example of Jesus;

All: Come Lord Jesus. Come.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE OF HOPE — The Justin Presnall Family

HYMN

TFWS #2233 "Where Children Belong"

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE — Lin

HANGING OF THE GREENS

INTRODUCTION — Lin

One: How shall we prepare this house for the coming of the eternal Christ?

Many: With evergreens, to signify life everlasting through Christ.

One: How shall we prepare this house for the coming of our Savior?

Many: With the cross, to tell of his passion, death and resurrection.

One: How shall we prepare this house for the coming of the Son of Man?

Many: With a crèche, to remind us that he came as a child, the Word made flesh.

One: How shall we prepare this house for the coming of the Lamb of God?

Many: With garlands and wreaths that represent his sacrifice and God's never-ending love for us.

One: How shall we prepare our hearts for the coming of the Son of God?

Many: By hearing again the words of the prophets, who foretold the saving work of God.

One: For God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

ALL: Glory to God in the highest!

GOD WILL SEND A RIGHTEOUS KING: Jeremiah 23:5-6 — Liturgist

ADVENT HYMN — UMH #216 “Lo, How A Rose E’er Blooming”

1. Lo, how a Rose e’er blooming from tender stem hath sprung!

Of Jesse’s lineage coming, as those of old have sung.

It came, a floweret bright, amid the cold of winter, when half spent was the night.

2. Isaiah ‘twas foretold it, the Rose I have in mind;

with Mary we behold it, the Virgin Mother kind.

To show God’s love aright, she bore to us a Savior, when half spent was the night.

3. O Flower, whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air,

Dispel in glorious splendor the darkness everywhere.

True man yet very God, from sin and death now save us, and share our every load.

THE PROPHET DECLARES A CHILD WILL BE BORN: Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 — Liturgist

THE BLESSING OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE — Lin

As we prepare for the coming of Jesus ... Blessing Of The Christmas Tree found in your bulletin?

All: Holy Lord, may this tree, arrayed in splendor, remind us of the life-giving cross of Christ, that we may always rejoice in the new life that shines in our hearts. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Mark 1:1-8 — Liturgist

¹ The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ² As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, ‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; ³ the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,”’ ⁴ John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵ And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶ Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷ He proclaimed, ‘The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸ I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.’

MESSAGE

“John the Baptist”

Rev. Lin Cheek

RESPONSIVE HYMN

UMH #210

“Toda la Tierra (All Earth Is Waiting)” (verses 1-2)

1. All earth is waiting to see the Promised One,

and the open furrows, the sowing of the Lord.

All the world, bound and struggling, seeks true liberty;

It cries out for justice and searches for the truth.

2. Thus says the prophet to those of Israel,
"A Virgin mother will bear Emmanuel,"
For his name is "God with us," our brother shall be,
with him hope will blossom once more within our hearts.

OFFERTORY — Anneke Toomey

DOXOLOGY

UMH #94

PRAYER OF DEDICATION — Lin

All: God of the Advent, we enter this time of hopeful waiting, anticipating the coming of your son. He is our teacher and the guide of our lives. We hope to emulate his generosity and compassion as we share these gifts. Please use our offering so others may feel the warmth of your unconditional love and grace. Amen!

COMMUNION THANKSGIVING AND BLESSING

Adapted from "The Great Thanksgiving for Advent" by Taylor Burton-Edwards. Used by Permission

One: Prepare the way of the Lord!

Many: Straighten our crooked paths, O God!

One: The day of the Christ's coming draws near.

Many: Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

One: The Spirit of the Lord is in this place ... all who have ever sung this hymn of praise:

Many: 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!

One: Blessed are you, Jesus Christ, Word made flesh, making all things new.

Many: Blessed are you, Holy Spirit, dissolving every chain of sin that binds us and setting all creation free.

One: We rejoice in you, O God ... thanks to you, breaking it, and feeding all of them, saying:

Many: This is my body given for you. Take, eat, and remember me.

One: Quench our thirst ... thanks to you, and giving it to all of them, saying:

Many: This is my blood poured out for you. Drink, and remember me.

One: So come, Holy Spirit ... by him, the one who taught us to pray, saying:

All: 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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

RECEIVING THE BREAD AND THE CUP

*In the United Methodist Church, all are welcome to share in Communion, and all means all.
Please come forward when invited by the usher and take first the bread, then drink the cup.
For the convenience of all, we use non-alcoholic grape juice and also provide gluten free wafers.
When you return to your seat, please take time to pray for those on the prayer list in the bulletin.*

***CLOSING HYMN — UMH #204** “Emmanuel, Emmanuel” (sing twice)
Emmanuel, Emmanuel, his name is called Emmanuel.
God with us, revealed in us, his name is called Emmanuel.

***BENEDICTION — Rev. Lin Cheek**

POSTLUDE — Anneke Toomey

Prelude/Postlude—Anneke
Song Leader—Janice
Liturgist — ??

Accomp.—Anneke
Special Music — N/A
Children’s Message— Lin

Offertory—Anneke
Organ — TBD