

Sunday, November 30, 2025 – 9:30 a.m.
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT — A SUNDAY OF HOPE

TODAY'S FOCUS: PREPARE. We know how to prepare for our Christmas celebrations, but how do we prepare the Way of the Lord? Are those preparations the same, or different?

PRELUDE — Betsy Foushee

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS — Lin

INTROIT — Scott Anderson “Recitative” from Elijah

***PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST** — Lin

***OPENING HYMN** UMH #196 “Come Thou Long Expected Jesus” (with Choir)

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** (*from Psalm 122*) — Suzanne Gallagher

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

Many: With branches of pine and fir, whose leaves are evergreen.

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

Many: With Chrismons that 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 Jesus into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

All: Glory to God in the highest!

OPENING PRAYER — Lin

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH — The Zuromski Family

HYMN TFWS #2233 “Where Children Belong”

CHILDREN’S STORY — Sharon Goldade

SPECIAL MUSIC — Scott Anderson “If With All Your Hearts”

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 40:3-5 & Matthew 3:1-12 — Suzanne Gallagher

ISAIAH 40:3-5

³ A voice cries out: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴ Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; The uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵ Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

MATTHEW 3:1-12

¹ In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ² “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” ³ This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’” ⁴ Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁷ But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Bear fruit worthy of repentance. ⁹ Do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰ Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ¹¹ I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing-fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing-floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

MESSAGE “Isaiah & John: Preparing the Way”

Rev. Lin Cheek

***RESPONSIVE HYMN** TFWS #2092 “Like A Child”

1. Like a child love would send to reveal and to mend, like a child and a friend, Jesus comes.
Like a child we may find claiming heart, soul, and mind, like a child strong and kind, Jesus comes.

2. Like a child we will meet, ragged clothes, dirty feet, like a child on the street, Jesus comes.
Like a child we once knew coming back into view, like a child born anew, Jesus comes.

3. Like a child born to pray and to show us the way, like a child here to stay, Jesus come.
Like a child we receive all that love can conceive, like a child we believe, Jesus comes.

OFFERTORY — Betsy Foushee and Rae Ann Norell

***DOXOLOGY** UMH #94

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** — Suzanne Gallagher

ALL: Ever-Watchful God, you call us to live not in fear, but with hope and faithful anticipation. As we offer these gifts, we do so as people preparing our hearts, our hands, and our world for your coming reign. Let these offerings be signs of readiness, trust, and joy as we wait—and work—for your future to break into our present. In the name of the one who comes, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PASTORAL PRAYER & LORD’S PRAYER — Lin

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.

***CLOSING HYMN** TFWS #2091 “The King of Glory Comes” (vs 1 & 3)

REFRAIN: The King of glory comes, the nation rejoices.

Open the gates before him, lift up your voices.

1. Who is the King of glory; how shall we call him? He is Emmanuel the promised of ages. **REFRAIN**

3. Sing then of David’s son, our Savior and brother; in all of Galilee was never another. **REFRAIN**

***BENEDICTION** — Lin

POSTLUDE — Betsy Foushee

Prelude/Postlude—Betsy Foushee

Offertory— Betsy Foushee and Rae Ann Norell

Organ —

Special Music —

Introit: Scott Anderson — Recitative from Elijah

Hymn: Choir Lead Hymn — Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus

After Children’s Message: Scott Anderson — If With All Your Hearts

Liturgist — Suzanne Gallagher

Accomp.—Betsy Foushee

Song Leader— Bonnie Clark

Violin — Rae Ann

Children’s Message— Sharon Goldade