

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

December 20, 2020

Fourth Sunday of Advent

We Gather in God's Name . . .

PRELUDE

PRAYER OF PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

(for silent prayer during the prelude)

God of grace, your eternal Word took flesh among us when Mary placed her life at the service of your will. Prepare our hearts for his coming again; keep us steadfast in hope and faithful in service, that we may receive the coming of his kingdom, for the sake of Jesus Christ the ruler of all, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.¹ Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GREETING

THE LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE

*LITANY FOR ADVENTⁱⁱ

One: O Wisdom, coming forth from the mouth of the Most High, pervading and permeating all creation, you order all things with strength and gentleness: Come now and teach us the way to salvation.

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

One: O Adonai, Ruler of the house of Israel, you appeared in the burning bush to Moses and gave him the law on Sinai: Come with outstretched arm to save us.

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

One: O Root of Jesse, rising as a sign for all the peoples, before you earthly rulers will keep silent, and nations give you honor: Come quickly to deliver us.

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

One: O Key of David, Scepter over the house of Israel, you open and no one can close, you close and no one can open: Come to set free the prisoners who live in darkness and the shadow of death.

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

One: O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light, Sun of justice: Come, shine on those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death.

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

One: O Ruler of the nations, Monarch for whom the people long, you are the Cornerstone uniting all humanity: Come, save us all, whom you formed out of clay.

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

One: O Immanuel, our Sovereign and Lawgiver, desire of the nations and Savior of all: Come and save us, O Lord our God.

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

One: God of grace, ever faithful to your promises, the earth rejoices in hope of our Savior's coming and looks forward with longing to his return at the end of time. Prepare our hearts to receive him when he comes, for he is Lord forever and ever. Amen.

OPENING HYMN: "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" #2

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 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.

. . . *to Proclaim God's Word*

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM OUR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND MEMBERS

WORD WITH CHILDREN

PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S SUPPERⁱⁱⁱ

GREAT THANKSGIVING

One: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them up to the Lord.

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give our thanks and praise

One: It is truly right and our greatest joy to give you thanks and praise, O Lord our God, creator and ruler of the universe. You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. You set us in this world to love and serve you, and to live in peace with all that you have made. When we turned from you, you did not turn from us. When we were captives in slavery, you delivered us to freedom, and made covenant to be our sovereign God. When we were stubborn and stiff-necked, you spoke to us through prophets who looked for that day when justice shall triumph and peace shall reign over all the earth. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with the celestial choirs and with all the faithful of every time and place, who forever sing to the glory of your name:

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

One: You are holy, O God of majesty, and blessed is Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. You sent him into this world to satisfy the longings of your people for a Savior, to bring freedom to the captives of sin, and to establish justice for the oppressed. He came among us as one of us, taking the lot of the poor, sharing human suffering. We rejoice that in his death and rising again, you set before us the sure promise of new life, the certain hope of a heavenly home where we will sit at table with Christ our host. Remembering your gracious acts in Jesus Christ, we take from your creation this bread and

this wine and joyfully celebrate his dying and rising, as we await the day of his coming. With thanksgiving we offer our very selves to you to be a living and holy sacrifice, dedicated to your service. Praise to you, Lord Jesus:

All: Dying you destroyed our death, rising you restored our life. Lord Jesus, come in glory.

One: Strengthen us, O God, in the power of your Spirit to bring good news to the poor and lift blind eyes to sight, to loose the chains that bind and claim your blessing for all people. Keep us faithful in your service until Christ comes in final victory, and we shall feast with all your saints in the joy of your eternal realm. Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, almighty God, now and forever. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

... to Give Thanks to God ...

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (IN UNISON)^{iv}

On the original Christmas that we celebrate through this pageant today, You, God, broke forth from the heavens and came to earth to lie in a manger in human form. You came that we might know God, understand better your ways, and be offered forgiveness and eternal life. What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb. If I were a wise man, I would do my part. Yet what I can, I give him, give him my heart. Thank you, Lord Jesus. Use these gifts for your work on earth. Amen.

... and to Be Sent in God's Name.

CLOSING HYMN: "O Little Town of Bethlehem" #44

O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie! Above thy deep and dreamless sleep The silent stars go by. Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting light; The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary; And gathered all above, While mortals

sleep, the angels keep Their watch of wondering love. O morning stars, together Proclaim the holy birth! And praises sing to God the King, And peace to all on earth.

How silently, how silently, The wondrous gift is given! So God imparts to human hearts The blessings of His heaven. No ear may hear His coming, But in this world of sin, Where meek souls will receive Him, still The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, Descend to us, we pray; Cast out our sin and enter in, Be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell; O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Emmanuel!

*BENEDICTION

*POSTLUDE

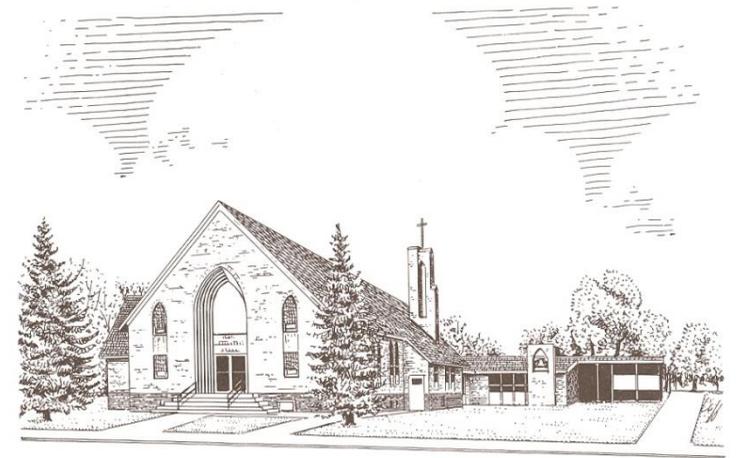
ⁱ Book of Common Worship, 177.

ⁱⁱ Book of Common Worship, 166-167.

ⁱⁱⁱ Book of Common Worship, 168-171.

^{iv} Includes content from Worship Sourcebook, 465.

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