

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

November 29, 2020

First Sunday of Advent

We Gather in God's Name . . .

PRELUDE

PRAYER OF PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

(for silent prayer during the prelude)

Eternal God, you taught us that the night is far spent and the day is at hand. Keep us awake and alert, watching for your kingdom, and make us strong in faith, so that when Christ comes in glory to judge the earth, we may joyfully give him praise; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.ⁱ Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GREETING

THE LIGHTING OF THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE

(FROM ISAIAH 2:4)ⁱⁱ

*LITANY FOR ADVENTⁱⁱⁱ

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: "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence" #5

Let all mortal flesh keep silence, And with fear and trembling stand;
Ponder nothing earthly minded, For with blessing in His hand,
Christ our God to earth descendeth, Our full homage to demand.
King of kings, yet born of Mary, As of old on earth He stood, Lord
of lords, in human vesture, In the body and the blood, He will
give to all the faithful His own self for heavenly food.

Rank on rank the host of heaven Spreads its vanguard on the way,
As the Light of Light descendeth From the realms of endless day,
That the powers of hell may vanish As the darkness clears away.
At His feet the six-winged seraph; Cherubim, with sleepless eye,
Veil their faces to the presence, As with ceaseless voice they cry,
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Lord Most High!

*CALL TO CONFESSION

The prophet Isaiah writes that God meets those who do right, those who remember God's ways. But God can also be angry, and we sin. God hides himself when we transgress. We, though, are his clay, and he is the potter. We are the work of his hand. Let us confess our sins and subject ourselves to his transforming work.

*SILENT PRAYER OF CONFESSION

*CORPORATE PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious and merciful God, you are the potter and are working to transform us and ready us for the Kingdom of Heaven. We resist your work at times, though. You work to pull off a part of who we are, and we grasp onto it — grasping to the sin you are working to remove. Continue to be patient with us, and continue to eliminate in us what does not fit the coming kingdom, and place in us that which belongs in that same kingdom. Forgive our sins, and do not give up on us, O Lord. In the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Paul writes that Jesus will strengthen us to the end so that we may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. Continue to allow God to mold you, Jesus to strengthen you, and the Holy Spirit to transform you, and know that you are forgiven. Amen.

THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

. . . *to Proclaim God's Word*

FIRST READING Isaiah 64:1-9 **p. 694**

EPISTLE READING 1 Corinthians 1:3-9 **p. 166**

***GOSPEL READING** Mark 13:24-37 **p. 50**

SERMON "A Long Anticipation" Rev. Andy Smothers

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.

*CONFESSION OF FAITH *Heidelberg Catechism* (Question 59-61)

One: What good does it do you, however, to believe all this [in the Apostles' Creed]?

Many: In Christ I am righteous before God and heir to life everlasting.

One: How are you righteous before God?

Many: Only by true faith in Jesus Christ. Even though my conscience accuses me of having grievously sinned against all God's commandments, of never having kept any of them, and of still being inclined toward all evil, nevertheless, without any merit of my own, out of sheer grace, God grants and credits to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ, as if I had never sinned nor been a sinner, and as if I had been as perfectly obedient as Christ was obedient for me. All I need to do is accept this gift with a believing heart.

One: Why do you say that through faith alone you are righteous?

Many: Not because I please God by the worthiness of my faith. It is because only Christ's satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness make me righteous before God, and because I can accept this righteousness and make it mine in no other way than through faith.

... to Give Thanks to God ...

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (IN UNISON)

Almighty God, your scriptures testify that "from ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him." We continue to wait for our Lord to return and for the miraculous promises contained in scripture. In thankfulness, we offer these tithes in thanks for your many blessings. Amen.

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

CLOSING HYMN: "Watchman, Tell Us of the Night" #20

Watchman, tell us of the night, What its signs of promise are.

Traveler, o'er yon mountain's height, See that glory beaming star. Watchman, does its beauteous ray Aught of joy or hope foretell? Traveler, yes; it brings the day, Promised day of Israel.

Watchman, tell us of the night, Higher yet that star ascends.

Traveler, blessedness and light, Peace and truth its course portends. Watchman, will its beams alone Gild the spot that gave them birth? Traveler, ages are its own; See, it bursts o'er all the earth.

Watchman, tell us of the night, For the morning seems to dawn.

Traveler, darkness takes its flight, Doubt and terror are withdrawn. Watchman, let your wanderings cease; Hasten to your quiet home. Traveler, lo, the Prince of Peace, Lo, the son of God is come!

***BENEDICTION**

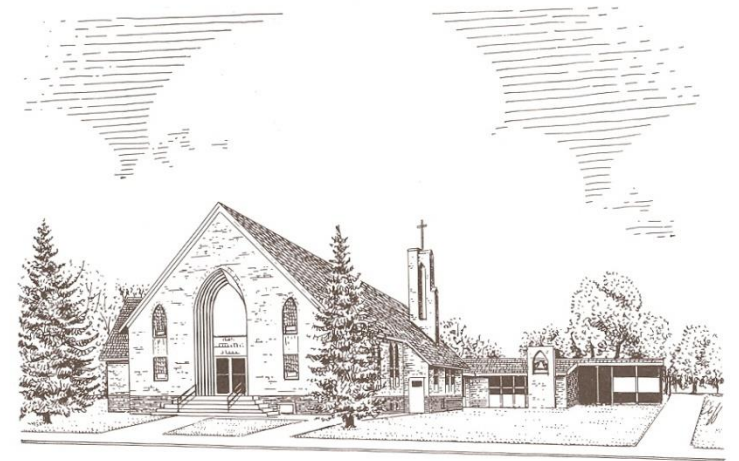
***POSTLUDE**

ⁱ Book of Common Worship, 173.

ⁱⁱ Book of Common Worship, 165.

ⁱⁱⁱ Book of Common Worship, 166-167.

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