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# Grace First

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

*Together – Worshipping, Witnessing, Working*



The Reverend Ashley Drake Mertz, Pastor  
The Reverend David A. Slyter, Associate Pastor  
Marialice Parish, M.M., Organist and Director of Music

# THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

November 29, 2020

## THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

### Welcome and Announcements

In the ancient world, various peoples lit fires to mark the turning of the light into winter's season and to pray for the return of the light. The church has Christianized that practice in the lighting of the Advent wreath. To us, these candles are signs of the growing light of Christ who is coming again in all fullness into the darkness of our world. Until the dawning of that Great Day, we watch and wait in Holy Spirit for Christ's coming into the darkness of our world, lighting candles of hope, peace, joy, and love; and remembering the promises of God with prayer.

### Prelude

J.S. Bach

"Come, Savior of the Nations"

### Call to Worship (Responsive)

The power of dreams lies in waking up.

For when we close our eyes,

**We can see a better world.**

When we close our eyes,

**We can dream a better dream.**

But when we open our eyes,

**We begin the work of faith.**

The power of worship is the same. When we enter this space,

**We can see a better world.**

When we enter this space,

**We dream a better dream.**

But when we leave this space,  
**We begin the work of faith.**  
So, come in. Dream your dream.  
**Find hope here.**  
For in an hour,  
**We will begin the work of faith.**  
Let it be so.

### **Candle Light Liturgy**

We dream to keep awake, because if we don't dream of better days then we might forget that this is not what God imagined.

**So, today we light the candle of hope, for hope is the very thing that keeps dreams afloat.** (*lighting of the hope candle*)

May this light be an invitation to keep awake.

**May this light be our invitation to be Advent people – people who dream. Amen.**

### **Hymn 39**

*Faithfulness*

“Great Is Thy Faithfulness”  
Sanctuary Choir, 2009

### **Children’s Moment     The Rev. Ashley Drake Mertz**

#### **Call to Confession**

There is no greater joy in the heart of God than this moment now. For in this moment, we call upon God to grant us new life in the center of our wounded hearts. Let us come to God, just as we are, and seek God’s grace as we join in one voice and then in our own time of silent confession.

## **Prayer of Confession (Unison)**

**Merciful God, over and over again in scripture, we hear your dream for a beautiful world. We hear your dream for peace and reconciliation. We hear your dream for harmony and togetherness. We hear your dream for community and hope. We hear your dreams, and yet we do not open our eyes. We continue to live with the curtains drawn, the covers pulled tight, eyes shut to the realities of the world. Forgive us. Kindle a hope in us that will burn through the darkest nights. Give us the strength and the will to keep awake in this sleeping world. With hope we pray.**

## **Silent Confession**

### **Assurance of Pardon**

Our hope is sure, and our trust is certain. The signs of God's presence surround us. Our Lord comes to heal, to forgive, and to redeem. Thanks be to God!

### **Prayer of Illumination**

Gracious God, you dreamed up all the things of creation that bring smiles to our faces and warms our hearts. Amid all of that, you dreamed up a dream for your people – a dream of hope and justice. Today, as we read your scripture, we ask that you plant that same dream in us. Pour out your Spirit on our hearts and minds so that we may see what you see, and dream what you dream. Gratefully we pray. Amen.

## First Reading

Isaiah 64:1-9

The word of God for the people of God  
**Thanks be to God**

## Second Reading

Mark 13:24-37

The word of God for the people of God  
**Thanks be to God**

## Sermon

The Rev. David Slyter

## Hymn 83

### 83 Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus



1 Come, thou long - ex-pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo - ple free;  
2 Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art;  
3 Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child and yet a king,  
4 By thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.  
dear de - sire of ev - ery na - tion, joy of ev - ery long - ing heart.  
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king - dom bring.  
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

With its opening "Come," this hymn sounds the note of entreaty and invitation that characterizes the Advent season (from the Latin *adventus* = "coming"). Its blending of memory and hope helps us to give voice to our present faith as we stand between the past and the future.

TEXT: Charles Wesley, 1744  
MUSIC: Witt's *Psalmodia Sacra*, 1715, alt.

STUTTGART  
8.7.8.7  
(alternate tune: HYFRYDOL, 82)

## **Affirmation of Faith (Responsive)**

We believe in God.

**We believe that God has dreams for humanity.**

We believe in the Holy Spirit.

**We believe that the Holy Spirit comforts us when our dreams turn to nightmares.**

We believe in Jesus.

**We believe that Jesus walked this world to wake us up, inviting us to be the church in the world.**

We believe in dreams.

**We believe in the power that dreams have to show us a new way.**

So, in this Advent season,

**We are those who dream and those who wake up. Let it be so. Amen.**

## **Call to Stewardship**

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised. One way we can do that is through our gifts. With them, we can honor God's great name. Through them, we can make a witness that travels around the world. So, let us with glad and joyful hearts receive this morning's offering.

## **Offertory**

Robert Lau

"Prepare the Way, O Zion"

## **Congregational Response** Hymn 606 Old Hundredth

Praise God from Whom all blessings flow;

Praise Him all creatures here below;

Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

## Offertory Prayer

Gracious God, in these tithes and offerings we render to you a small part of what is yours. Bless them to your holy mission, which stretches from our doorsteps to the ends of the world. Amen.

## THE LORD'S SUPPER

### Communion Voluntary

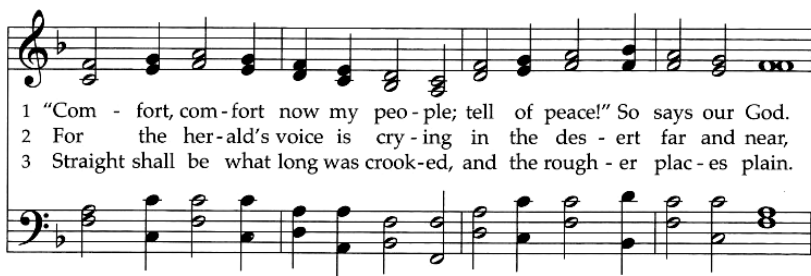
Hymns of Faith

### Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer

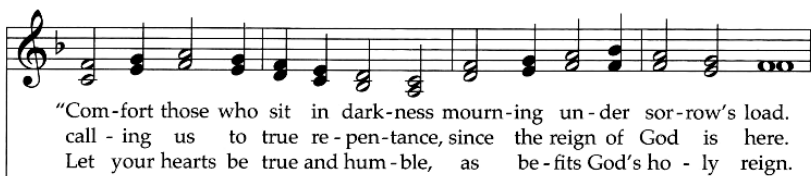
Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

### Hymn 87

## 87 Comfort, Comfort Now My People



1 "Com - fort, com-fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!" So says our God.  
2 For the her-ald's voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,  
3 Straight shall be what long was crook-ed, and the rough - er plac - es plain.



"Com-fort those who sit in dark-ness mourn-ing un-der sor-row's load.  
call - ing us to true re-pen-tance, since the reign of God is here.  
Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be - fits God's ho - ly reign.

To my peo - ple now pro - claim that my par - don waits for them!  
 O, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way.  
 For the glo - ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a - broad,

Tell them that their sins I cov - er, and their war - fare now is o - ver.”  
 Let the val - leys rise in meet - ing and the hills bow down in greet - ing.  
 and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God’s word is nev - er bro - ken.

This 17th-century German paraphrase of Isaiah 40:1–5 was one of the texts translated as part of the 19th-century British interest in German religious poetry. It is set here to one of the most popular Genevan Psalter tunes, probably derived from an earlier French folksong.

TEXT: Johannes Olearius, 1671; trans. Catherine Winkworth, 1863, alt.  
 MUSIC: Genevan Psalter, 1551

GENEVAN 42  
 8.7.8.7.7.7.8.8

## Benediction

There is work to be done, preparations to be made: for the coming of our Lord is at hand. “What I say to you, I say to all: Keep awake my dear friends and continue to dream with our eyes wide open.”

## The Peace of Christ

The peace of Christ be with you  
**And also with you**

## Postlude

J.S. Bach

“Come, Savior of the Nations”

Liturgy taken from Sanctified Art Those Who Dream: for Advent – Epiphany Year B,  
 Adapted from a prayer by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.  
 The Journal of Worship Resources Vol. 13, No. 1 Year B