



Grace First

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Together – Worshipping, Witnessing, Working



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Marialice Parish, M.M., Organist and Director of Music

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

December 6, 2020

The Second 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

Paul Manz

"Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying"

Call to Worship (Responsive)

John the Baptist said, "Prepare the way." So family of faith, how do we prepare our minds for worship?

We silence the inner critic. We let go of busy thoughts. We make space for God to speak.

How do we prepare our hearts for worship?

We bless all emotions. We feel what we feel.

We open ourselves up to be moved.

How do we prepare our bodies for worship?

We take in the scent, sight, and feel of this space. We breathe in God's mercy. We exhale God's love.

How do we prepare our souls for worship?

We bring our full selves into this space.

We wear our hearts on our sleeves.

We trust that even now, God is here.

Family of faith, what we practice in worship, we must live out in our daily lives. So prepare the way. Let us worship Holy God.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Last week we lit the candle of hope, being reminded that those who keep awake, those who dream, are people who hope.
(Light the candle of hope)

This week we light the candle of peace, the candle that reminds us that as people who dream, those who prepare the way, there is a way that does not include fear, conflict, pain, but instead is a way of peace. (Light the candle of peace)

May we in fact prepare the way for God's peace in this world.

Hymn 88

88 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som
2 O come, thou Wis - dom from on high, who or - derest
3 O come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy
4 O come, thou Root of Jes - se, free thine own from



cap - tive Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile
all things might - i - ly: to us the path of knowl - edge
tribes on Si - nai's height in an - cient times didst give the
Sa - tan's tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell thy peo - ple



here un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
show; and teach us in her ways to go. Re-joice! Re-joice!
law in cloud and maj - es - ty and awe.
save and give them vic - tory o'er the grave.



Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

5 O come, thou Key of David, come,
and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

6 O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

7 O come, Desire of nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind;
bid envy, strife, and discord cease;
fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

One stanza of this paraphrase of the great O Antiphons may be sung on each of the last days of Advent as follows:

Dec. 17: O Wisdom (2)

Dec. 18: O Lord of might (3)

Dec. 19: O Root of Jesse (4)

Dec. 20: O Key of David (5)

Dec. 21: O Dayspring (6)

Dec. 22: O Desire of Nations (7)

Dec. 23: O Emmanuel (1)

These titles of the coming Christ appeared in daily Vesper antiphons sung during the week before Christmas; their roots date at least to the reign of Charlemagne. Both text and tune are the fruit of 19th-century efforts to reclaim Christian treasures from pre-Reformation sources.

TEXT: Latin prose, pre-9th cent.; trans. composite
MUSIC: Plainsong; adapt. Thomas Helmore, 1852; arr. John Weaver, 1988
Music Arr. © 1990 John Weaver

VENI EMMANUEL
LM with refrain

Children's Moment

The Rev. David Slyter

Call to Confession

Let us confess before God and one another the places
where we fall short of who God has created us to be.
Let us pray together the prayer of confession printed in
your bulletin, followed by your own silent prayer.

Prayer of Confession (Unison)

Holy God, we wish that peace was something we could buy. We wish that peace could be ordered in a subscription service, found on a map, downloaded on an app, or voted for in a ballot. We wish that peace was as easy as a one-time choice when we are feeling our best. However, what we have found is that peace involves everyday decisions over and over, whether or not we are feeling our best. So today I confess, in front of this community of faith, that I need your help this Advent season. Prepare the way for greater peace, and teach me to be a part of it...

Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon

May God forgive you. May God's guiding hand surround you. May you know comfort. May you know peace.

Prayer of Illumination

God of Peace, We must admit, there are a million things on our minds. We would like to be as focused as John the Baptist—preparing the way, gathering the crowd, spreading the word of your arrival. Maybe then we'd know peace. However, more often than not, we are a swirling compilation of grocery lists, text messages, e-mails, and over-referenced to-do lists.

So today, we ask for your help in preparing the way. Could you start with our ears, and then maybe move to our hearts? We'd like to hear you more clearly. Maybe then we'll know peace. Gratefully we pray, Amen.

First Reading

Psalm 85:1-2; 8-13

The word of God for the people of God

Thanks be to God

Music Ministry

Robert A. Hobby

“Come, Thou long-expected Jesus”

Sanctuary Choir

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-suffering merit,
raise us to Thy glorious throne.
Rule in all, hope of all. Come,
expected Jesus, Come.

Second Reading

Mark 1:1-8

The word of God for the people of God

Thanks be to God

Sermon

The Rev. Ashley Drake Mertz

Hymn 93

93 Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates



1 Lift up your heads, ye might - y gates; be - hold the
2 Fling wide the por - tals of your heart; make it a
3 Re - deem - er, come! I o - pen wide my heart to



King of glo - ry waits; the King of kings is
tem - ple, set a - part from earth - ly use for
thee; here, Lord, a - bide. Let me thy in - ner



draw - ing near; the Sav - ior of the world is here.
heaven's em - ploy, a - dorned with prayer and love and joy.
pres - ence feel; thy grace and love in me re - veal.

Beginning as a paraphrase of Psalm 24:7–10, this text then applies the door imagery to the singer's heart, and concludes with the individual's welcome of the approaching Savior. It is set to a very effective anonymous 18th-century English tune that has served many texts.

TEXT: Georg Weissel, 1642; trans. Catherine Winkworth, 1855, 1863
MUSIC: *Musica Sacra*, c. 1778

TRURO
LM

Affirmation of Faith

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers for 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.

Call to Stewardship

God invites us to prepare the way for Jesus through the offering of time, talent, and treasure.

Offertory

Hal H. Hopson

“Blest Be the God of Israel”

Congregational Response Hymn 606 Old Hundredth Doxology

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.

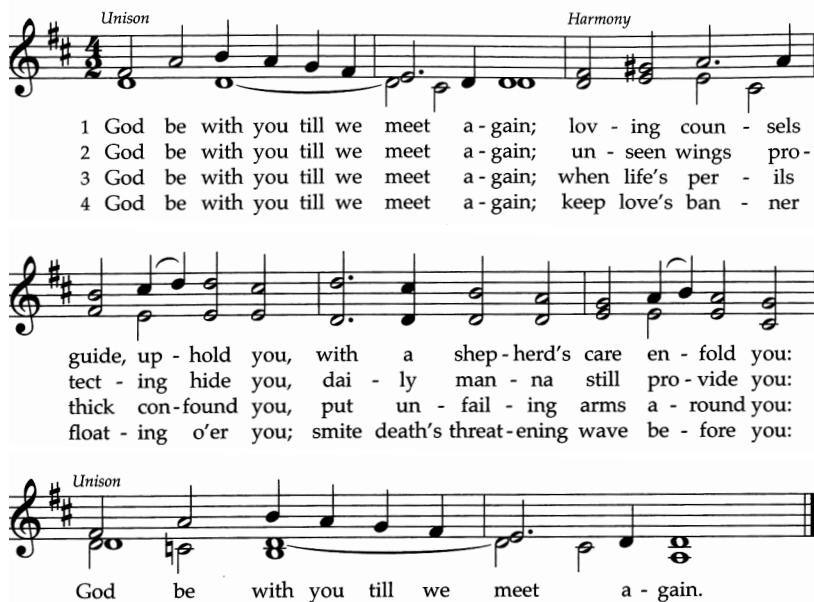
Offertory Prayer

Lord, we give you thanks that in the coming of Christ your steadfast love and faithfulness have met and your righteousness and peace have kissed. May the gifts we offer this day lift up those in need and prepare the way of your salvation.

Hymn 541

541 God Be with You Till We Meet Again

Unison *Harmony*



1 God be with you till we meet a - gain; lov - ing coun - sels
2 God be with you till we meet a - gain; un - seen wings pro -
3 God be with you till we meet a - gain; when life's per - ils
4 God be with you till we meet a - gain; keep love's ban - ner

guide, up - hold you, with a shep - herd's care en - fold you:
tect - ing hide you, dai - ly man - na still pro - vide you:
thick con - found you, put un - fail - ing arms a - round you:
float - ing o'er you; smite death's threat - ening wave be - fore you:

Unison

God be with you till we meet a - gain.

A North American Congregational minister wrote this text as a Christian expansion of the root sense of "good-bye": God be [with] ye/you. The tune, named for a cousin, was composed by one of the few 20th-century British composers to make a major contribution to hymnody.

TEXT: Jeremiah Eames Rankin, 1880, alt.
MUSIC: Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906

RANDOLPH
9.8.8.9
(alternate tune: GOD BE WITH YOU, 542)

Benediction

The Peace of Christ

The peace of Christ be with you
And also with you

Postlude

J.S. Bach

"O Thou of God The Father"

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 and
Feasting on the Word: Worship Companion, Year B, Volume 1.