

*As we unite in worship today, we extend a warm welcome to each one present.
May we together experience the presence of God*

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We Gather to Prepare Our Hearts to Meet Our Lord



Prelude

Welcome

Announcements

Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy

In the midst of our waiting and longing for God to make the world right again, we cling to the truth that God has saved, God is saving, and God will save. So today, we join our voices with the prophet Isaiah, who calls us to live in the joy of the truth of God’s salvation.

Hear these words from Isaiah 35:10...

We choose to believe that the day is coming when “the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away”

Light three candles on the Advent wreath.

If using a rose or pink-colored candle in the wreath, this is the time to light that one.

We light these candles, the candle of joyous hope, of proclaimed peace, and of deep and everlasting joy, as a sign that we are those who walk with a skip in our step because we can see the destination, and it is pure joy. We are ascending to God’s promise.

Advent Hymn

Opening Prayer

We praise you, O God, for being not only the God of history but the God of our story. You have gathered us here today to remind us that although you are the one to whom all power belongs, yet you care for the weak and powerless. You care for us. We praise you for joining your story to ours in such a special way through Jesus, our Lord. He proved his great love for you and for each person in the way he lived—releasing what was captive, lifting up the burdened, empowering the powerless.

God, source of lovingkindness and strength, we worship you.

Jesus, foundation of our faith, we worship you.

Holy Spirit, ground of our very being, we worship you. Amen

***HYMN OF PRAISE UMH**

We Hear God's Word

Gospel Reading.....Luke 1:46b-55

New Revised Standard Version

Mary's Song of Praise

⁴⁶ And Mary^[a] said,
"My soul magnifies the Lord,
⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.
Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed,
⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name;
⁵⁰ indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones
and lifted up the lowly;
⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.
⁵⁴ He has come to the aid of his child Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

The Word of God for the People of God, **Thanks be to God!**

Children's Sermon

FAITH HYMN

"Message"

Joys/Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

Lord of time and hope, we are rushing headlong into the holidays to come. We look at our calendars and our day planners and wonder how we will get everything done in the time allotted to us before the "big Day" arrives. We begin to panic at the thought of projects still to be finished, contacts that need to be made, preparations for festivities that have only just begun. And the darkness of obsessive holiday planning overtakes us and clouds our minds and spirits.

But you are a God of time and Light. You bring hope to us, as you always have through the voices of the great prophets, and now through the One who is to come, Jesus Christ. Remind us again what this season is truly about.....love, hope, peace and joy. Calm us

down. Slow us down. Help us remember that it is in loving relationship that you gave your Son to us and it is in loving relationship that your Word is carried into the hearts of the people. No tinsel, ribbons, tape, cards and convey the eternal message adequately. You have given us the Light, to shine in our path and cut through our darkness.

Shine in the hearts of your people today. Bless those dear ones whom we have named before you today with your healing, reconciling, comforting presence and love. Give strength to all who face difficult situations and let your compassionate light shine on them guiding their decisions and their steps. Bring us at last to your presence, where the light of hope and love continually pour out on us.

These prayers and hopes we offer in confidence and gratitude for your love and presence. As we unite in the prayer of all prayers, Our Father...

Offertory

Doxology

Offertory Prayer

Generous God, as we bring our gifts to you this day, we acknowledge that we have been given so much by your goodness, but we have been tight-fisted and slow in giving to help others. In this Advent season of preparation, we ask you to help us live in a new way, to walk a new highway, to set ourselves on the path that leads to a closer walk with Jesus, our example and redeemer. May this be the season when he finds the highways to our hearts prepared for his coming. In the name that is above all others. Amen. (Isaiah 35:1-10)

***Departing Hymn**

A Joyful Benediction

Be people of joy.

Let joy live in your heart and share the joy of Christ with all you meet.

Share joy by seeing the good in each other.

Share joy by remembering good times and hoping for good times to come.

Share joy by praying for our world.

In this Advent season, we need to see, feel, and share joy.

As you go out into the wonder of God's creations, share joy, peace, and hope with those you meet. Amen.

***POSTLUDE**