

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

GATHERING AND PRAISE

Focus your minds on worshipping God.

With the words of this Psalm, God calls you to worship him:

Psalm 33:1, 20-22 (NIV)
Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous;
it is fitting for the upright to praise him.
We wait in hope for the LORD;
he is our help and our shield.
In him our hearts rejoice,
for we trust in his holy name.
May your unfailing love be with us, LORD,
even as we put our hope in you.

Pray this prayer:

God of Israel,
with expectant hearts
we your people await Christ's coming.
As once he came in humility,
so now may he come in glory,
that he may make all things perfect
in your everlasting kingdom.
For he is Lord for ever and ever. Amen.

**Praise God with the words of this
Advent song:**

"Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus"
(You can find a recording of our church
singing this song on YouTube.)

Verse 1

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.

Verse 2

Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art:
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

Verse 4

By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.

CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE

Pray this prayer of confession:

Lord, we have not kept watch for you.
We have occupied ourselves with our
own concerns.
We have not waited to find your will for
us.
We have not noticed the needs of the
people around us.
We have not acknowledged the love that
has been shown to us.
Forgive us for our lack of watchfulness.
Help us to wait to know your will.
Help us to look out for the needs of
others.
Help us to work and watch for your
coming. Amen.

God gives you hope with these words:

1 Corinthians 15:22-26

For as in Adam all die,
so in Christ all will be made alive.
But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits;
then, when he comes, those who belong to
him.
Then the end will come,
when he hands over the kingdom to God
the Father
after he has destroyed all dominion,
authority and power.
For he must reign
until he has put all his enemies under his
feet.
The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Give thanks to God with this Song:
"King of Kings"
(You can find a recording of our church
singing this song on YouTube.)

Verse 1

In the darkness we were waiting
Without hope without light
Till from Heaven You came running
There was mercy in Your eyes

To fulfil the law and prophets
To a virgin came the Word
From a throne of endless glory
To a cradle in the dirt

Chorus

Praise the Father
Praise the Son
Praise the Spirit three in one
God of Glory
Majesty
Praise forever to the King of Kings

Verse 2

To reveal the kingdom coming
And to reconcile the lost
To redeem the whole creation
You did not despise the cross

For even in Your suffering
You saw to the other side
Knowing this was our salvation
Jesus for our sake You died

Verse 3

And the morning that You rose
All of heaven held its breath
Till that stone was moved for good
For the Lamb had conquered death

And the dead rose from their tombs
And the angels stood in awe
For the souls of all who'd come
To the Father are restored

Verse 4

And the Church of Christ was born
Then the Spirit lit the flame
Now this Gospel truth of old
Shall not kneel shall not faint

By His blood and in His Name
In His freedom I am free
For the love of Jesus Christ
Who has resurrected me

SERMON

Watch the sermon on YouTube or listen
to the audio recording on CD.

SENDING

Prayer

Tell each other what your hopes are.

- What hopes do you have for your own heart?
- What hopes do you have for the church?
- What hopes do you have for your community?
- What hopes do you have for the world?

Brings these hopes to God in prayer,
remembering that one day, Jesus will
suddenly return to fulfill all our true
hopes.

Offering:

You can contribute to the ministry of the
church
and this month's special offering
online or by mailing a check to PO Box
9339, Fresno, CA, 93791.

Closing Song of Praise

“My Soul Cries Out”

(You can find a recording of our church singing this song on YouTube.)

Verse 1

My soul cries out with a joyful shout
that the God of my heart is great,
and my spirit sings of the wondrous things
that you bring to the ones who wait.

You fixed your sight on your servant’s
plight,
and my weakness you did not spurn,
so from east to west shall my name be
blest.
Could the world be about to turn?

Verse 2

Though I am small, my God, my all,
you work great things in me,
and your mercy will last from the depths
of the past
to the end of the age to be.

Your very name puts the proud to shame,
and to those who would for you yearn,
you will show your might, put the strong
to flight,
for the world is about to turn.

Verse 4

Though the nations rage from age to age,
we remember who holds us fast:
God’s mercy must deliver us
from the conqueror’s crushing grasp.

This saving word that our forebears
heard
is the promise which holds us bound,
till the spear and rod can be crushed by
God,
who is turning the world around.

Chorus

My heart shall sing of the day you bring.
Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws
near,
and the world is about to turn!

Read these words:

May the God of hope fill you with all joy
and peace as you trust in him, so that you
may overflow with hope by the power of
the Holy Spirit.
(Romans 15:13)

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