

St. Mark's Presbyterian Church
First Sunday of Advent – December 3, 2023

Responsive Call to Worship (from PWS&D)

The prophets call and the psalmist sings to announce that hope comes from God.

“O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence.”

“We shall see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.”

The world cries for justice and transformation. Advent summons us to watch, to wait and to hope. In the destruction of the current order is the promise of a new order beyond our imagination. Signs of hope are all around us if we have the patience to wait and to see them.

Holy are you, Source of all new life among us. Jesus Christ comes as the hope of the world.

We join with all creation and lift our hearts in joyful praise.

We light this candle to bear witness to hope.
[while lighting the candle of hope]

Hymn 517 See Israel's gentle Shepherd stand

**1. See Israel's gentle Shepherd stand
with all engaging charms;
hark how he calls the tender lambs,
and folds them in his arms.**

**2. 'Permit them to approach,' he cries,
'nor scorn their humble name,
for 'twas to bless such souls as these
the Lord of angels came.'**

**3. We bring them, Lord, in thankful hands,
and yield them up to thee;
joyful that we ourselves are thine;
thine let our children be.**

Prayer of Praise *(minister)*

Hymn 110 Come, Thou long-expected Jesus

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

2. 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 sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.

Prayer of Confession (congregation)

Surprising God, forgive our sleepiness in the presence of your splendour. Forgive us if we yawn when you present us with life-changing possibilities. Forgive us for abandoning hope so quickly and expecting the same old thing in the same old way.

Forgive us for underestimating your power to do a new thing. Awaken us to your holy, hopeful presence. Awaken us so we may watch and wait for you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Come, Lord Jesus, come.

- silent confession -

The Lord's Prayer (Debts/Debtors)

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, the power, and the glory. For ever
and ever. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon *(minister)*

Hymn 122 O come, O come Emmanuel

1. Oh come, oh come, Emmanuel,

and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lowly exile here,
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain:

Rejoice, rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee,
O Israel.

2. Oh come, oh come, thou Lord of might,
who to thy tribes on Sinai's height,
in ancient times didst give the law
in cloud and majesty and awe.

Refrain:

Rejoice, rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee,
O Israel.

3. Oh come, thou Wisdom from on high,
and order all things far and nigh;
to us the path of knowledge show,
and cause us in her ways to go.

Refrain:

Rejoice, rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee,
O Israel.

4. Oh come, thou Branch of Jesse, free
thine own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell thy people save,
and give them victory o'er the grave.

Refrain:

Rejoice, rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee,
O Israel.

5. Oh 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.

Refrain:

**Rejoice, rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee,
O Israel.**

Responsive Reading Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 p. 530 NT & Psalms

¹Please listen, O Shepherd of Israel,
you who lead Joseph's descendants like a flock.

O God, enthroned above the cherubim,
display your radiant glory

²to Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh.

Show us your mighty power.

Come to rescue us!

³Turn us again to yourself, O God.

Make your face shine down upon us.

Only then will we be saved.

⁴O Lord God of Heaven's Armies,

how long will you be angry with our prayers?

⁵You have fed us with sorrow

and made us drink tears by the bucketful.

⁶You have made us the scorn[a] of neighboring nations.

Our enemies treat us as a joke.

⁷Turn us again to yourself, O God of Heaven's Armies.

Make your face shine down upon us.

Only then will we be saved.

¹⁷Strengthen the man you love,

the son of your choice.

¹⁸Then we will never abandon you again.

Revive us so we can call on your name once more.

¹⁹Turn us again to yourself, O Lord God of Heaven's Armies.

Make your face shine down upon us.

Only then will we be saved.

New Living Translation (NLT)

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Scripture Lessons

Isaiah 64:1-9

p. 609 pew Bible

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

p. 283 NT & Psalms

Mark 13:24-37

p. 89 NT & Psalms

Reader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

Sermon Can I be hopeful?

Prayers of the People *(minister)*

Offering & Offertory

Doxology 830 Praise God from whom all blessings flow

**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.**

Prayer of Dedication *(congregation)*

**Gracious and generous God, we offer you our gifts with
humble thanks for all you have provided. Bless them with
your Spirit and use them to bless those in deepest need with
love they can taste and justice they can celebrate in Jesus'
name. Amen.**

Communion Hymn 507 Break now the bread of life

**1. Break now the bread of life, dear Lord, to me,
as once you broke the loaves beside the sea:
beyond the sacred page I seek you, Lord:
my spirit longs for you, O living Word.**

**2. You are the bread of life, dear Lord, to me;
your holy word is truth redeeming me.
Give me to eat and live with you above;
teach me to love your truth, for you are love.**

**3. Oh send your Spirit now, dear Lord, to me;
touch now my blinded eyes and make me see:
then shall all bondage cease, all fetters fall,
and I shall find my peace, my all in all.**

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Invitation

The table we celebrate is for all; around it there are no divisions. A loaf is made from many grains, and a cup is filled from the fruit of many grapes, so, we, though many, are made one in Christ, nourished by him to nourish the world. Jesus calls us to this table, and all are welcome here. Taste and see that the Lord is good.

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you;

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts;

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God;

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Lord God, Creator and Sustainer of heaven and earth, it is our great calling and joy to give you thanks and praise. You spoke, and all things came into being: the sun, moon and stars, the sky, earth and waters and all they contain. Holy Mother Spirit you swept over creation, and brought order out of chaos, life from the formless void. From the elements of the earth, you created humankind, each unique, all made in your holy image. Your breath gave us life and called us to live with you in loving service to neighbour and stranger alike.

When we turned from you, you never turned from us. Through the prophets, you called us back. You sent Jesus, born of a mother's flesh, to reveal the full extent of your grace and love. Again and again, you welcome us to your side with the open arms of a loving parent.

Therefore, we join our voices with those from every time and place, to proclaim your glory in the unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Holy is Jesus the Christ, O God. Walking this earth, feeding the hungry, calling the lost and lonely, caring for the outcast and downtrodden, he brought healing and wisdom to those who sought him out, and revealed your kingdom taking shape in this world.

As we break this bread and share this cup in Jesus' name, with your people here and in every place, we recall the mystery of our faith:

Christ has died;

Christ is risen;

Christ will come again.

Pour out your Spirit upon us and these gifts of bread and cup. Gather your church together, scattered to the ends of the earth into your kingdom where peace and justice are realized. Show us the hope that joy will be shared at the banquet you prepare for us when heaven and earth join hands. Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity

of the Holy Spirit all honour and glory are yours, Tender and Mighty God, now and forever.

The Breaking of the Bread

The Pouring of the Cup

The Revelation

Partaking of the Bread

Partaking of the Cup

Prayer after Communion

Hymn 368 Let Christian faith and hope dispel

- 1. Let Christian faith and hope dispel
the fears of guilt and woe;
the Lord Almighty is our friend,
and who can prove a foe?**
- 2. The Saviour died, but rose again
triumphant from the grave,
and pleads our cause at God's right hand,
omnipotent to save.**
- 3. Who then can e'er divide us more
from Jesus' saving love,
or break the sacred chain that binds
the earth to heaven above?**
- 4. Let troubles rise and terrors frown,
and days of darkness fall;
through Christ all dangers we'll defy,
and more than conquer all.**
- 5. Nor death, nor life, nor earth, nor hell,
nor time's destroying sway
can e'er erase us from his heart,
or make his love decay.**
- 6. Each future period that will bless
as it has blessed the past;
Christ loved us from the first of time;
Christ loves us to the last.**

***Benediction**

Three-fold Amen

Piano Postlude