

First Week of Advent Worship on Sun., Nov. 28 and Mon., Nov. 29, 2021

Welcome

Greeting God is good **all the time**. All the time **God is good**.

Question of the Day Advent is how many weeks long? a) 3 b) 4 c) 5 d) 6

Hymn “Holy Is the Lord”

Call to Worship

Listen! Listen for a messenger from God.

The way is being prepared for Christ’s coming.

We are here to listen for a word from God.

We have gathered to prepare for Christ’s advent.

Come with your joys and sorrows, laughter and tears.

There is a place for you in the company of seekers.

We seek to be partners in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We rejoice to offer the hope of Christ to others.

Prayer and Lighting of the Advent Candle

God of the prophets, open our imagination to the scope of the hope you offer. May ancient words hold for us a fresh message that engages us anew. We pray that we will follow your light in the way of righteousness. Amen.

The candle of hope is lit.

Malachi 3:1-4 *New Revised Standard Version*

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight – indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

Luke 1:57-79 *New Revised Standard Version*

Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.

On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. But his mother said, “No; he is to be called John.” They said to her, “None of your relatives has this name.” Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, “His name is John.” And all of them were amazed. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. All who heard them pondered them and said, “What then will this child become?” For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him.

Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy: “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,

for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.

He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David,

as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,
that we would be saved from our enemies
and from the hand of all who hate us.
Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,
and has remembered his holy covenant,
the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,
to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,
might serve him without fear,
in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.
And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins.
By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us,
to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

Response: *The Word of God, for the people of God! Thanks be to God!*

Hymn “Hear My Prayer, O God”

Time of Prayer

How Is It With Your Soul?

Call to Confession

We come before the refiner’s fire, that all falseness and impurities may be burned away. Beneath all the pretense and brokenness of our lives, God helps us to discover pure silver and gold. We are highly valued by our Maker. Let us be fully open to God’s forgiving spirit.

Prayer of Confession

O God, we have tried to cover up our sins, yet you know the disorder we have caused in our lives. You have witnessed our poor choices and our destructive habits, our sins and our self-centeredness. Hear our cries of repentance and turn our lives around, that we may know the wonder of your forgiveness.

Time of Silent Prayer

Assurance and The Lord’s Prayer

Good news! God has done great things for us. We are loved; we are forgiven; we are claimed by God’s grace. With Jesus we pray:

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Answer to the Question of the Day

Time of Offering *Thank you to everyone for your faithful generosity.*

Offering Prayer

God of all righteousness, receive these gifts of gratitude, the offerings of our lives. Purify them with your refining fire so that they may serve your purposes and shine with your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Song of Offering “In His Time”

Sermon “A Hopeful Message” Rev. Joyce Rich

Commission and Blessing

Remember the messengers of faith that you have known;
rejoice and give thanks for their witness of hope.

We, too, will prepare the way of Christ.

God will be with us wherever we go. Amen. **And Amen.**

Hymn “The Time Has Come”

Announcements

Readings For Next Week: Jeremiah 33:14-16; Micah 5:2-5a

*Liturgical resources drawn from: **Gathered by Love: Worship Resources for Year C**, Lavon Bayler © 1994 United Church Press; and **Feasting on the Word: Worship Companion; Liturgies for Year C, Volume 1**, Kimberly Bracken Long, editor © 2012 Westminster John Knox Press.*