

Order of Service
December 10, 2023

The advent wreath

The first candle is lit.

Reader 1 Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Those who follow me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

All Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

Advent Wreath Hymn Hope is a Star (VU 7)

**1. Hope is a star that shines in the night,
leading us on till the morning is bright.**

***When God is a child there's joy in our song.
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,
and none shall be afraid.***

**2.. Peace is a ribbon that circles the earth,
giving a promise of safety and worth.**

Reader 2 At that time John the Baptist came to the desert of Judea and started preaching. "Turn away from your sins," he said, "because the kingdom of heaven is near" John was the man the prophet Isaiah was talking about when he said, "Someone is shouting in the desert, 'Prepare a road for the Lord; make a straight path for him to travel'" (Matthew 3:1-3)

Reader 1 We light this candle to remind us of the last of the prophets, John the Baptist, who called all people to prepare for the coming of the Messiah. He asked us all to search our own hearts, and rid ourselves of the dark things that keep us from God and from each other.

The second candle is lit.

Reader 2 Let us pray. Lord, you sent us John the Baptist to prepare the way for the Messiah. Help us to prepare our hearts for Christ to be born in them, and to prepare our world for Christ to come and restore the kingdom.

All Amen.

Welcome & announcements

- * Land Acknowledgment
- * Celebrations & Concerns
- * Birthdays & Anniversaries
- * Lighting the Christ Candle

Carol: See amid the winter's snow

VU 76

1

See amid the winter's snow,
born for us on earth below,
see, the tender Lamb appears,
promised from eternal years.

Refrain:

Hail, thou ever-blessed morn;
hail, redemption's happy dawn;
sing through all Jerusalem,
Christ is born in Bethlehem.

2

Lo, within a manger lies
God who built the starry skies,
who enthroned in height sublime
sits amid the cherubim. R

3

Say, ye holy shepherds, say
what your joyful news today;
wherefore have ye left your sheep
on the lonely mountain steep? R

4

'As we watched at dead of night,
lo, we saw a wondrous light;
angels singing 'Peace on earth'

told us of the Saviour's birth.' R

5

Sacred infant, all divine,
what a mighty love was thine,
thus to come from highest bliss
down to such a world as this! R

Prayer and confession

God most holy, ... (*Minister continues with Prayer*)

God most merciful, we confess that we have failed to love fully or forgive wholly. You offer us freedom but we settle for the familiar. You offer us hope but we prefer knowing what will happen next. Teach us to give up cautious faithfulness, so that we can offer you our whole lives, and commit to following Jesus into the future you are creating. Amen.

Assurance of pardon & 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 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, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Greeting Christ in All of Us - Passing the Peace

The ministry of music

Children's carol: Ding dong! merrily on high

1

Ding dong merrily on high,
In heav'n the bells are ringing:
Ding dong! verily the sky
Is riv'n with angel singing
Gloria Hosanna in excelsis!

2

E'en so here below, below,
Let steeple bells be swungen,
And "Io, io, io!"

By priest and people sungen
Gloria Hosanna in excelsis!

3

Pray you, dutifully prime
Your matin chime, ye ringers,
May you beautifully rhyme
Your eve'time song, ye singers
Gloria Hosanna in excelsis!

A time for all God's children

The offering: "In gratitude & humble trust"
(tune: VU 518 "Forest Green")

**In gratitude and humble trust
we bring our best today
to serve your cause and share your love
with all along life's way.
O God, who gave yourself to us
in Jesus Christ, your Son,
teach us to give ourselves each day
until life's work is done.**

Dedication of the Offering

Pastoral prayer

Scripture: Isaiah 9: 1-7 (English Standard Version)

But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to

establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

May God bless to our understanding this reading of Holy Scripture
Amen

Gospel hymn: The race that long in darkness pined
VU 879

1

The race that long in darkness pined
have seen a glorious light;
the people dwell in day, who dwelt
in death's surrounding night.

2

To hail you, Sun of Righteousness,
the gathering nations come,
rejoicing as when reapers bear
their harvest treasures home.

3

To us a child of hope is born,
to us a Son is given;
*him shall the people all obey,
him all the hosts of heaven.

4

His name shall be the Prince of Peace,
for evermore adored,
the Wonderful, the Counsellor,
the great and mighty Lord.

5

His power increasing still shall spread,
his reign no end shall know;
justice shall guard his throne above,
and peace abound below.

or 'whom all people shall obey, and all the hosts of heaven.'

Sermon: *“But I know, somehow, that only when it is dark enough can you see the stars.” — Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Benediction

Carol: Joy is now in every place

VU 45

1

Joy is now in every place,
Christmas lightens every face;
now be with us, in your grace,
O hear us, bless us, holy Jesus.

2

May the star that shone that night,
making your poor stable bright,
fill our hearts with love and light, R

3

Through the New Year let it stay,
leading us upon your way,
making Christmas every day, R

4

Now and ever may we find
your good news to fill our mind:
peace and love to humankind, R