

Liturgy for Word and Sacrament
First Sunday in Advent December 3rd, 2017

Centering Ourselves

Prelude – Improvisation On Today's Hymns - Joel Gary

Welcome and News of Our Life Together

Processional Hymn “Come, O Long-Expected Jesus” #122

Pastor will welcome worshipers

Announcements

Congregation is invited as they are willing and able to greet each other with the peace of Christ.

Passing the peace

Call to Worship:

L: Praise to the Lord, who is able to deliver.

C: We could walk through fire with God at our side.

L: Our God is greater than any earthly king,

C: Let us worship the God of our salvation!

All: Amen

Responsive Psalm

Congregational Response: Lord, make us turn to you, let us see your face and we shall be saved

Lighting the Advent Candle of Hope – Margaret Hawley-Lowry and Lau Beltman

Reader 1: The poet, Emily Dickinson, wrote:

“Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul.”

The psalmist declared: “I put my hope in You all day long.”

Reader 2: Hope is more than wishful thinking. Hope is the Spirit of God dwelling within us, reminding us we are never alone. Hope is our active commitment to be God’s faithful people, whether we walk an easy path or face fiery trials. <light candle 1 as Reader 1 continues>

Reader 1: When we light the candle of Hope, we embrace God’s presence among us, yesterday and today and always.

Reader 2: Whatever we face in life, we will put our hope in God.

Anthem: Advent - C. Lee/D. Wagner

Communion for the Season of Advent:

Invitation:

The prophets foretold it: the desert burst into bloom.

Angelic messengers delivered news:

a priest lost his speech; a young woman found her voice.

In this season of Advent, the scriptures revive old stories and bring new understandings.

In the face of critics and skeptics, our faith cries out, resilient, like a baby from a manger bed.

From that Bethlehem beginning, Jesus, baptized in the Jordan, spent his life serving others that all might know the compassionate attention of a loving God.

Today, Jesus serves us yet again, as we gather at this Table he prepares for us.

Liturgy for Word and Sacrament

Confession:

<chant by pastor>

O Christ Thou Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us (2x)

O Christ Thou Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world, grant us thy peace. Amen

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Faithful God,

All: Your promises have never wavered, and yet we are not always willing to believe them. We descend into our own despair, unable to see past our immediate concerns. We drag others down with us and live to complain and commiserate. We ignore the miracles in front of our face. Forgive us for living such small lives, O Lord, and restore in us the wonder of what it is to be your people. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon:

P: At God's command the heavens open, the mountains quake and love descends as an ever-flowing stream. A light shines in the night and the night cannot endure. Trust that the Power that created you in love now forgives and renews you in the same divine spirit.

Go forth to proclaim the awesome deeds of our loving God! Amen.

Prayer:

P: God be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up to God.

P: Let us give thanks to God Most High.

C: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

P: God of justice and compassion, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us. Pour out your Holy Spirit on us, and on these gifts of bread and cup. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by Christ's blood. By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world until Christ comes with peace, and all your children may feast united together.

With the faithful in every place and time, we praise with joy your holy name:

[sung] Holy, holy, holy God of all 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 our God!

Hosanna in the highest!

Telling the story:

We remember that on the night of betrayal and desertion, Jesus took bread, gave God thanks, broke the bread, and gave it to his disciples saying: "This is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way, Jesus also took the cup, after supper, saying: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

By eating this bread and drinking this cup, we proclaim Christ's death, celebrate Christ's resurrection, and await Christ's coming again.

Prayer of Consecration: Gracious God, we ask you to bless this bread and cup and all of us with the outpouring of your Holy Spirit. Through this meal, make us the body of Christ, the church, your servant people, that we may be salt, and light, and leaven for the furtherance of your will in all the world. Amen

Liturgy for Word and Sacrament

Invitation to Receive: (Those assisting with communion are invited forward)

Your kingdom is not of this world, O Lord, and your ways are not our ways. Your table is big enough for everyone, and your invitation comes with no conditions. Let us gladly come to the feast which feeds us, makes us whole, and sends us forth rejoicing, with your good news on our lips.

We celebrate an open table, where all who hunger and thirst are welcome to this feast. Come of your own choice, and bring your hopes and your history, your deliberation and your doubts. Come as your whole self. We will serve communion by having you come forward and take a piece of bread, dip it in the unfermented grape juice, and then eat it. If you are uncomfortable coming forward, we will come to you.

These are the gifts of God for all people of God. The table is set, come, for all is ready.

Communion is distributed. (The Communion Hymn is sung during the distribution, after the choir has been served.)

Communion Hymn: “Come, Gather In This Special Place” #335

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

Holy Creator, Bread of Life, Everlasting Salvation,

A light shines in the night and the night will not overcome it.

In this meal we have been replenished and strengthened, the light of your love rekindled within.

We will be bold to carry this light into the world.

Thank you for recharging our batteries and reviving your ambient glow within us.

You are the power source that never gives out- eternally renewable and sustainable.

Thank you God Thank you Christ Thank you Spirit Amen.

Morning Text: Daniel 3:1,8-30

King Nebuchadnezzar made a golden statue whose height was sixty cubits and whose width was six cubits; he set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.

⁸Accordingly, at this time certain Chaldeans came forward and denounced the Jews. ⁹They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “O king, live forever! ¹⁰You, O king, have made a decree, that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, drum, and entire musical ensemble, shall fall down and worship the golden statue, ¹¹and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire. ¹²There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These pay no heed to you, O King. They do not serve your gods and they do not worship the golden statue that you have set up.” ¹³Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought in; so they brought those men before the king. ¹⁴Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods and you do not worship the golden statue that I have set up? ¹⁵Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, drum, and entire musical ensemble to fall down and worship the statue that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire, and who is the god that will deliver you out of my hands?” ¹⁶Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to present a defense to you in this matter. ¹⁷If our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire and out of your hand, O king, let him deliver us. ¹⁸But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods and we will not worship the golden statue that you have set up.”

¹⁹Then Nebuchadnezzar was so filled with rage against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that his face was distorted. He ordered the furnace heated up seven times more than was customary, ²⁰and ordered some of the strongest guards in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and to throw them into the furnace of blazing fire. ²¹So the men were bound, still wearing their tunics, their trousers, their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the furnace of blazing fire. ²²Because the king’s command was urgent and the furnace was so overheated, the raging flames killed the men who lifted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. ²³But the three

Liturgy for Word and Sacrament

men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down, bound, into the furnace of blazing fire. ²⁴Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up quickly. He said to his counselors, “Was it not three men that we threw bound into the fire?” They answered the king, “True, O king.” ²⁵He replied, “But I see four men unbound, walking in the middle of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the fourth has the appearance of a god.” ²⁶Nebuchadnezzar then approached the door of the furnace of blazing fire and said, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!” So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. ²⁷And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king’s counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men; the hair of their heads was not singed, their tunics were not harmed, and not even the smell of fire came from them.

²⁸Nebuchadnezzar said, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him. They disobeyed the king’s command and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. ²⁹Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that utters blasphemy against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins; for there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way.” ³⁰Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

Children’s Circle

Sermon: The Hope of The Few

Singing together - “If You But Trust In God To Guide You” #410

Praying together: *The pastor will request the congregation share its joys and concerns*

...we ask all these things in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray.

All: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

Honoring Our Covenants:

Leader: Sometimes the miracles in our lives are as unbelievable as being saved from a fiery furnace, and sometimes they are as small as finding a quarter on the sidewalk. Whether are miracles are great or small, we come together to offer you what we can in recognition of our thankfulness for all that God does for us.

Ushers will come forward to receive the offering

Offertory: “Pastorale” – Gilbert M. Martin

Ushers will bring the offering plates forward during the singing of the doxology

Bringing forward our gifts: Doxology

O come in adoration.

O come in adoration.

O come in adoration: Christ is Lord!

Prayer: God, whose faithfulness exceeds the limits of the earth, accept these gifts of our hearts and hands. May they be multiplied and magnified as the living presence of hope in the world as seen through the promise of Jesus. Amen

Liturgy for Word and Sacrament

Singing together (Recessional Hymn): “My Hope Is Built On Nothing Less” #403

Benediction:

Go from this place in the spirit of God’s hope. In chaos or in clarity, we let God’s faithfulness shine through us.

Go from this place in the spirit of God’s peace. Through deserts or valleys, we take God’s message of peace to the world.

Go from this place in the spirit of God’s joy. On good days or bad, God’s abundant joy lives in us.

Go from this place in the spirit of God’s love. Over high mountains or level plains, we spread the compassionate love of God

Postlude: Psalm XIX – Benedetto Marcello