

Celebration of Worship

December 15, 2024
3rd Sunday of Advent

Prelude

The Prelude is a time to begin transitioning from fellowshiping with our neighbors to preparing our hearts to worship God.

Please adjust all electronic devices so as not to interrupt the service.

Welcome and Announcements

Welcome to all our visitors. Please fill out the guest registration to let us know of your visit.

Reflections on Advent

During the four weeks of Advent, we prepare for the celebration of Christ's birth through prayer and reflection. We contemplate the First Coming of Jesus as Savior, and anticipate his promised Second Coming. And amid the flurry of Christmas preparations, let us look for practical ways to share the message of the Jesus we celebrate.

A Song of Gathering

O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him,
O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

For He alone is worthy, For He alone is worthy,
For He alone is worthy, Christ the Lord!

GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

Call to Worship

from Isaiah 9

Minister: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders.

All: **And He will be called Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

* Indicates please stand if able.

[2]

Minister: Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over His kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness.

All: **The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will do this thing.**

***Invocation and Adoration**

The invocation should acknowledge that our worship is in vain if it is not Spirit-inspired. Often, the invocation will also employ the language of adoration and praise, which is very fitting in light of the vertical, God-focused dimension of this prayer.

***Worship in Song**

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Angels We Have Heard on High

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Jesus is coming, shout for joy! Joy is a word we see and hear everywhere at Christmas. Joy to the world is the message of the season. Joy is the theme of this day.

Two weeks ago we lit the ***Prophecy candle*** and remembered those who first spoke the promise of the coming Christ child.

Last week we lit the ***Bethlehem candle***, a symbol of the preparations being made to receive and cradle the Christ child.

The **third** candle on the Advent wreath is called the ***Shepherds' candle***. It is also known as the candle of **joy**. It remembers the first in a long line of people who joyfully shared the good news of the Savior's birth. The candle is a **different color**, reminding us that our period of waiting is half over.

Psalm 146 praises the Lord as the Creator of the world and the Provider for his people. The psalm contains a wonderful "catalog" of the loving deeds of God, who gives food to the hungry and raises

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up those who are bowed down. The words remind us of the answer Jesus gave when John the Baptist asked him if he was the Messiah.

Hear the Word of the Lord: (Psalm 146:5-10)

Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God,⁶ who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever;⁷ who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets the prisoners free;⁸ the LORD opens the eyes of the blind. The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous.⁹ The LORD watches over the sojourners; he upholds the widow and the fatherless, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.¹⁰ The LORD will reign forever, your God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the LORD!

***Worship in Song with Carols of Christmas 215**

Once in Royal David's City

PETITIONING GOD'S PROVIDENCE

Corporate Confession of Sin

ALL: God of grace, you love us, but we have not loved you. You call, but we have not listened. We walk away from neighbors in need, wrapped up in our own concerns. By our actions and our attitudes we praise what you condemn. Help us to admit our sin, so that as you come to us in mercy we may repent, turn to you, and receive forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

Silent Prayer of Confession

Comfort and Assurance of the Gospel

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, ~ Luke 1:68-69

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The Prayers of God's People

(The pastor will lead us in prayer, taking praises and requests from individuals)

ADORING GOD'S GLORY

The Giving of First Fruits

***The Doxology**

(Tune: Veni Emmanuel)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
praise Him all creatures here below;
praise Him above ye heavenly hosts;
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Amen! Amen! A – men!

Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

***Prayer of Thanks and Dedication**

***Worship in Song with Carols of Christmas**

What Child is This? (213)

While By the Sheep We Watched at Night (215)

PROCLAIMING GOD'S WORD

Scripture Reading & Prayer of Illumination

Sermon Text:

Matthew 2:1-12

Preaching of the Word

There Are Strangers in this Place

*** Closing Hymn**

We (Three) Kings

Verse 1

* Indicates please stand if able.

[5]

We-e kings of Orient are,
Bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain,
Moor and mountain,
Following yonder star.

Verse 2

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain,
Gold I bring to crown him again,
King for ever,
Ceasing never
Over us all to reign.

Chorus

***O star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright;
Westward leading,
Still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect light.***

Verse 3

Frankincense to offer have I,
Incense owns a Deity nigh,
Prayer and praising,
All men raising,
Worship him, God on high.

Verse 4

Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume
Breathes a life of gathering gloom;
Sorrowing, sighing,
Bleeding, dying,
Sealed in the stone-cold tomb.

Chorus

***O star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright;
Westward leading,
Still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect light.***

Verse 5

Glorious now behold him arise,
King, and God, and Sacrifice,
Alleluia, Alleluia
earth to heav'n replies.

Chorus

***O star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright;
Westward leading,
Still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect light.***

John Henry Hopkins Jr.

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***Benediction**

Just as God has the first word in worship, he also has the last word. For those who are in Christ Jesus, these are always words of blessing. We look up and extend our hands out in a posture of receiving the blessing of God.

Postlude

* Indicates please stand if able.

Matthew 1:23 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

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