



PRELUDE Ukrainian Carol
- David Little, piano

WELCOME

LIGHTING THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE

The Advent wreath is a circle with no beginning and no end. It is a symbol of God's unending love and faithfulness.

Its light reminds us of Jesus, the light of the world. In him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

(John 1:4-5)

Today we light the first candle of the Advent wreath. This is the candle of HOPE.

Ancient Israel longed for a savior to come, to set them free from their oppressors and to release them from their captivity to sin and despair.

May we put our hope in God alone as we hear the words of David from Psalm 62:

"For God alone my soul waits, for my hope is in him. God alone is my rock and my salvation."

Let us pray together:

Loving God, as we remember with longing the coming of a Savior, give us patience and trust, as we put our hope in you alone. Help us make room in our hearts, for Jesus is our hope. Amen.

HYMN #88 *O Come, O Come Emmanuel, Verses 1-2, 6-7*

PRAYER OF PRAISE

Gracious God, our hearts desire the warmth of your love, and our minds are searching for the light of your Word. Increase our longing for Christ, our Savior, and give us the strength to walk in hope, that the dawn of his coming may find us rejoicing in his presence and welcoming the light of his presence. We ask this through Christ, the Lord. Amen.

RESPONSE #140 *Once in Royal David's City*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND REFLECTION

**Merciful God, always with us, always coming:
We confess that we struggle with preparing for your Advent.
We have forgotten how to hope in miracles;
we have ignored the promise of your kingdom;**

we get distracted by all the busyness of this season.

Restore us, O God.

Grant us the simple wonder of the shepherds,
the intelligent courage of the Magi,
and the patient faith of Mary and Joseph,
that we may journey with them to Bethlehem
and find the good news of a child born for us.

Now, in the quiet of our hearts,
we ask you to make us ready for his coming.

(time for silent reflection)

WORDS OF ASSURANCE—from Isaiah 40:1

“Comfort, comfort now my people, says your God.”

Beloved, know this:
Your sins are forgiven.
The Lord, Emmanuel, abides with you.
The peace announced by the angels is at hand.

Thanks be to God!

PASSING THE PEACE

HYMN #772 *Live into Hope*

SCRIPTURE READINGS Matthew 11:2-6
Isaiah 11:1-9

MESSAGE Expectation

HYMN #94 *Now the Heavens Start to Whisper*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD’S PRAYER

*Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your 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 yours is the kingdom,
and the power,
and the glory
now and forever. Amen.*

HYMN #105 *People, Look East*

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

“As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”
John 20:21

