



The First Sunday of Advent

PRELUDE *The Angel Gabriel/Sussex Carol*
- David Little, piano

WELCOME

LIGHTING THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE

From deep in the past, Jeremiah calls to us, "*The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah*" (Jeremiah 33:14).

Beloved, the days are surely coming when the yearning of the land, the longing of the sun, moon, and stars, the desperate need of the people of earth for flourishing and peace will receive their fulfillment.

Congregation:

While fear, anxiety, misinformation, and suspicion surround us, we choose to watch and wait in hope, preparing our hearts to notice and cooperate with God's grace already at work in our midst.

We light this candle of hope as a sign of our commitment to pay attention and prepare for the days that are surely coming, and are already here—the days when God's kin-dom of love, justice, and mercy will reign.

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 prayers and 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*

SPECIAL MUSIC *O Come O Come Emmanuel/
Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*
- Sharon Eddy, soloist

SCRIPTURE READINGS Matthew 11:2-6 and
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

