



Order of Worship

First Sunday of Advent

December 3, 2023

Gathering and Welcome *What Wondrous Love is This*

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Prelude *Sing We Now of Christmas* – arr. Larry Shackley

Jessye Whitis, pianist

***Call to worship**

Christ is coming!

We will keep awake!

Christ is coming!

We will be ready!

Christ is coming! He will gather his people from the ends of the earth.

Praise be to God! We will worship and prepare.

***Opening Hymn # 83** *Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus*

***Call to Confession**

Preparing for Christ's coming requires honest examination of our lives and our hearts. Let us turn to God in prayer to confess our sins.

***Prayer of confession (unison)**

Merciful God, always with us, always coming, we confess that we do not know how to prepare 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. Forgive us, God.

***Assurance of Pardon** (*Book of Common Worship*)

Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The old life has gone; a new life has begun. Know that you are forgiven and be at peace. Amen.

Choral Anthem *Comfort My People* – Lloyd Larson

Prayer for illumination

Savior God, guide us by your Word and Spirit that we might hear your truth, heed your call and be prepared for Christ's coming this Christmas. Amen.

Scripture readings Mark 13: 24-37

Sermon *Giving Is Living*

Rev. Kathy Vineyard, H.R.

***Affirmation of faith** (*Book of Common Worship*)

**We believe there is no condemnation
for those who are in Christ Jesus;
for we know that all things work together for good
for those who love God,
who are called according to God's purpose.
We are convinced that neither death, nor life,
nor angels, nor rulers,
nor things present, nor things to come,
nor powers, nor height, nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.**

***Hymn of Response # 97** *Watchman, Tell Us of the Night*

Call for the offering (2 Peter 3:8-15)

“All things in heaven and earth belong to God, who is coming in glory to reveal a new creation.” Let us present our tithes and offerings to the Lord.

Offertory *The First Noel* – arr. Larry Shackley Jessye Whitis, pianist

***Doxology #606** *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow*

***Dedication of 2024 Pledges (unison)**

Loving God, I come to you in thanksgiving, knowing that all I am and all that I have is a gift from you. In faith and love, help me to do your will. I am listening, Lord God. Speak your words into the depth of my soul, that I may hear you clearly. I offer to you this day all the facets of my life, whether it be at home, at work, or at school—to be patient, to be merciful, to be generous, to be holy. Give me the wisdom and insight to understand your will for me and the fervor to fulfill my good intentions. I offer my gifts of time, talent and possessions to you as a true act of faith, to reflect my love for you and my neighbor. Help me to reach out to others as you, my God, have reached out to me. Amen.

***Communion Hymn # 526** *Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ*

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise!

The Lord's Prayer (*unison*)

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors;

and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

Amen.

The Communion and Prayers of the People

Prayer after Communion (*unison*)

God, as we prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ, we thank you for preparing our spirits through these gifts of the bread and cup. As we go out into the world this week, help us to look to the future before us and live as people of hope.

Amen.

***Hymn of Sending # 134** *Joy to the World*

Charge and benediction

We do not leave this sanctuary and leave God behind.

God's call to prepare our hearts, our minds, our communities and our world for the coming Christ, is clear.

May this call be ever before us: guiding us, inspiring us, enabling us to be Christ's body – his hands, his feet, his heart – in this, God's world.

May the grace, hope, peace, and love of God our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, be with us all, now and forever. Amen.

Postlude *Come Thou, Long Expected Jesus* Jessye Whitis, pianist