

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

of Wausau, Wisconsin

Second Sunday of Advent

December 5, 2021

GATHERING

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

Savior of the Nations, Come

arr Douglas E. Wagner

*OPENING WORDS

The Advent Candle of Peace

*Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then it was said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them."*

In the beginning was the Word - spoken and breathed, a promise made and kept.

Speak it loud and clear - God's promise is true!

The Word was in the beginning, and through him all things come into being.

Eternal and near at hand, Already and not-yet,

God's promise is the foundation of all life.

Do not hold back! Speak out, giving voice to God's peace that passes all understanding.

~the candle of peace is lit~

RESPONSE

Watching and Waiting

Joy Patterson

Watching and waiting to welcome the Christ child

Counting the days till the time of his birth;

We light a candle for peace he is bringing,

Peace for all people who live on the earth.

*OPENING PRAYER

How good it is to gather where we are wrapped in the beauty of God's glory and welcomed to life at its fullest. Make a difference within and among us today so that we can work for a better tomorrow. **Amen.**

*HYMN

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

88, v 1,2,6,7

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

2 O come, thou Wisdom from on high, who orderest all things mightily:

to us the path of knowledge show; and teach us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

6 O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

7 O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;
bid envy, strife, and discord cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

CALL TO CONFESSION

We come before the refiner's fire, so that all falseness and impurities may be burned away. Beneath all the pretense and brokenness of our lives, God helps us to discover our true worth. Let us be fully open to God's forgiving Spirit.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O God, we have tried to cover up our sins, yet you know the disorder we have caused in our lives. You have witnessed our poor choices and destructive habits. The good we do is often self-serving. Hear our cries of repentance, and turn our lives around, that we might know the wonder of your forgiveness. Amen.

Please continue in silent reflection and prayer

RESPONSE *On Jordan's Banks the Baptist's Cry* # 96, v. 2
**Then cleansed be every life from sin; make straight the way for God within,
And let us all our hearts prepare for Christ to come and enter there.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Good news! God has done great things for us. We are loved; we are forgiven; we are claimed by God's grace. The one who began a good work in us will bring it to completion.

Thanks be to God, we are forgiven.

SUNG RESPONSE *Creator of the Stars of Night* # 84, v. 4
**To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit, Three in One,
praise, honor, might, and glory be from age to age eternally. Amen**

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Holy One, through your Holy Spirit instruct us by the light of your prophets.
Illumine our hearts, that we may hear your call to become your path into the world.
In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. **Amen.**

FIRST SCRIPTURE LESSON

Malachi 3:1-4

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

ANTHEM

Every Valley

Victor C. Johnson

SECOND SCRIPTURE LESSON

Luke 1:67-80

Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy:

'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,

for he has looked favourably on his people and redeemed them.

He has raised up a mighty saviour for us

in the house of his servant David,

as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,

that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.

Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,

and has remembered his holy covenant,

the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,

to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,

might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness

before him all our days.

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;

for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

to give knowledge of salvation to his people

by the forgiveness of their sins.

By the tender mercy of our God,

the dawn from on high will break upon us,

to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,

to guide our feet into the way of peace.'

The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.

MESSAGE

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

*HYMN

Blest Be the God of Israel

109

1 Blest be the God of Israel, who comes to set us free;
who visits and redeems us, who grants us liberty.
The prophets spoke of mercy, of freedom and release;
God shall fulfill that promise and bring the people peace.

2 God from the house of David a child of grace has given;
a Savior comes among us to raise us up to heaven.
Before him goes the herald, forerunner in the way,
the prophet of salvation, the harbinger of day.

3 On those who sit in darkness the sun begins to rise,
the dawning of forgiveness upon the sinner's eyes.
God guides the feet of pilgrims along the paths of peace.
O bless our God and Savior with songs that never cease!

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

May the God of every mercy be with you.

May you be filled with the tenderness of our God.

Lift up your hearts to the One who looks with grace upon us.

Confident of God's love, we open our hearts to the One who comes to us.

Sing glad songs of praise in this moment.

We join our siblings in joyful thanksgiving.

(prayer begins...)

With those who long for hope, with those who cry out for justice, we lift our joy to You:

Holy, holy, holy are You, Melter of our frozen hearts.

All creation waits for Your Advent once again. Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is the Dawn from on high. Hosanna in the highest!

(prayer continues...)

As we draw ever closer to Bethlehem, as we prepare to journey with Jesus from birth to new life, we declare that mystery we know as faith:

**Christ died, preparing the way for salvation;
Christ was raised through the baptism of the resurrection;
Christ will come, Dawn from on high of every time and place.**

(prayer continues...)

THE LORD'S PRAYER

. . .Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name; your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

PARTAKING OF THE ELEMENTS

Tear off the cellophane piece to receive the bread. Next, tear off the foil wrap to receive the juice.

SENDING FROM THE TABLE

God is sending you to be messengers of this holy season.

We will go to share God's grace in the shadowed places of our world.

Jesus is sending you to be messengers of his gospel.

We will go to share the good news of justice in every way we treat each person.

The Spirit is sending you to be messengers of peace.

We will go to share the gifts of hope and reconciliation which have been placed in our hearts.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

We are called by God to present a harvest of righteousness – not by virtue of our own works, but by the grace of the one who began a good work in us, and is even now bringing it to completion. Let us bring the offerings of our lives to the Lord.

OFFERTORY

*DOXOLOGY

606

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

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

God of all righteousness, receive these gifts of gratitude, the offerings of our lives. Purify them with your refining fire so that they may serve your purposes and shine with your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

SENDING OUT

*HYMN

The Days Are Surely Coming

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1 The days are surely coming, says God to all the earth,
when you will see my promise: salvation come to birth.
My righteousness and justice will spread throughout the land
and you will be delivered by my almighty hand.

2 The days are surely coming, says Christ, the promised one,
when you will read my warning in moon and stars and sun.
Though earth and heaven tremble, stand up and do not fear,
for I am your redeemer, and I am drawing near.

3 The days are surely coming when we will know at last
the fullness of God's presence, God's promise, come to pass.
Then righteousness and justice will spread throughout the land
and we will be delivered by God's almighty hand.

*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

** Please stand in body or spirit where indicated.
Text in **bold type** is to be spoken or sung in unison.*

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