

Sunday, December 3, 2023, 11:15am
First Sunday in Advent
Bright Light of Bethlehem...Putting on the Light



Welcome to the season of waiting!

Not only is Advent a period of preparation for Jesus' first coming at Christmas, but this sacred Season readies our hearts for Jesus' ultimate coming: when He, as King of kings and Lord of lords, returns in power and glory on the Last Day, when every knee will bow before Him and every eye will see Him as the One who reigns in sovereign majesty over all things.

Until His ultimate revealing on that Day, we wait for Him in confident faith, strengthened by His Word and Meal, trusting His promise to make us guiltless in His sight.

With the expectant people of old, may our worship together lead us to say: "Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield" (Psalm 33:20).

Opening Song of Praise

P: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: Our soul waits for the Lord;

C: He is our help and our shield.

P: For our heart is glad in Him,

C: because we trust in His Holy name.

P: Let Your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us,

C: even as we hope in You.

P: Confident in His steadfast love, let us confess our sins to God our Father.

C: Most merciful God, I confess that I have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what I do and by what I fail to do. Instead of waiting on You and clinging to Your promises, I impatiently go my own way. Instead of loving my neighbors as myself, I put my wants first and serve my interests instead of Yours, O God. For the sake of my Savior and King, have mercy on me. Forgive me and restore me. Guide me and renew me. Help me to walk in Your ways to the glory of Your Holy name. Amen.

P: You are not lacking in any Spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:7–8). Our faithful God hears your prayers and answers them, taking away your guilt and giving you His righteousness. As a called and ordained servant of Jesus, our Savior and King, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Together, we pray,

C: Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come to us as we wait for Your revealing. Protect us by Your hand that we may be rescued from the guilt of our sins and saved by Your mighty deliverance; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Children's Time

Isaiah 64:1–9

Oh that You would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at Your presence—as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil—to make Your name known to Your adversaries, and that the nations might tremble at Your presence! When You did awesome things that we did not look for, You came down, the mountains quaked at Your presence. From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides You, who acts for those who wait for him. You meet him who joyfully works righteousness, those who remember You in Your ways. Behold, You were angry, and we sinned; in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved? We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls upon Your name, who rouses himself to take hold of You; for You have hidden Your face from us, and have made us melt in the hand of our iniquities. But now, O Lord, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You are our potter; we are all the work of Your hand. Be not so terribly angry, O Lord, and remember not iniquity forever. Behold, please look, we are all Your people.

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Romans 13:11–14 [Sermon Text]

Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 13th chapter.

C: Glory to You, O Lord.

Jesus said, “In those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then He will send out the angels and gather His elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that He is near, at the very gates. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. “But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come. It’s like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the cock crows, or in the morning— lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake.”

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

P: We profess our faith,

C: I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Sermon Praise Song

The Sermon

Putting on the Light

The Gathering of our Gifts and Tithes

The Prayers of His Children

P: We wait in hope for the Lord! **C: He is our help and our shield.**

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

P: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, for the mercy You show us in Jesus, Your Son and our King. As we remember His death and resurrection and await His final coming, prepare our hearts to receive the redemption He provides through His body that is given and His blood that is shed for the forgiveness of sins. For our heart is glad in Him,

C: because we trust in His holy name.

P: Hear us as we pray in Your Holy name,

C: 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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

The Words of our Lord

The Distribution of Holy Communion

P: Together, we pray,

C: Gracious God, our heavenly Father, You have given us a foretaste of the feast to come in the Holy Supper of Your Son's body and blood. Keep us firm in the true faith throughout our days of waiting that, on the Day of His coming, we may rejoice forever as those You have made guiltless in Your sight; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

God's Benediction

Sending Praise Song

Ministry Announcements