

Sunday, December 31, 2023
Waiting
First Sunday after Christmas



As you gather tonight for a grand celebration, what are you celebrating? Is the advancing of a digit on the calendar necessarily such a happy thing?

Behind all the noise, God has something to say, and it's relevant no matter the date. But who's listening?

Through Isaiah, God calls us to awaken and listen to His Word, to hold it sacred, and to gladly hear and learn it. For only then can we be assured of the love of God in Jesus.

In God's Word alone do we remain awake and dressed for action, our lamp of faith burning, awake and ready for our entrance into the eternal joy of the day of resurrection and eternal life.

Prelude

9:00am: #891, O Light Whose Splendor

1 O Light whose splendor thrills and gladdens With radiance brighter than the sun,

Pure gleam of God's unending glory, O Jesus, blest Anointed One;

2 As twilight hovers near at sunset, And lamps are lit, and children nod,

In evening hymns we lift our voices To Father, Spirit, Son: one God.

3 In all life's brilliant timeless moments, Let faithful voices sing Your praise,

O Son of God, our Life-bestower, Whose glory lightens endless days.

Text: Carl P. Daw, Jr., 1944

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11:15am: Opening Praise Song

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

C: Amen.

P: I will go to the altar of God,

C: to God my exceeding joy.

P: Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C: who made heaven and earth.

P: I confess to Almighty God,

C: before all the company of heaven, and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed through my fault, through my own fault, through my own most grievous fault; wherefore I pray Almighty God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, His Son, to have mercy on me, forgive me my sins, and bring me to everlasting life.

P: Upon this, your confession, I, by virtue of my office as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God to all of you. In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus, 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: O God, all our times are in Your hands. You have created us and given us the gift of life and every day the gifts of health and daily bread. Above all, by water and Your mighty Word, You give us the forgiveness of sins and the new birth of the Spirit by which we call you Father. Father in heaven, grant to us peace in our day and keep us steadfast in Your Word; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever, Amen.

Children's Time

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall exult in my God, for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation; He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations. For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch. The nations shall see Your righteousness, and all the kings Your glory, and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give. You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

L: This is the Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

9:00am: *Dancing into the Promise*

Voice Choir

Romans 8:31b–39

If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure 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.

L: This is the Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the twelfth chapter.

C: Glory be to You, O Lord.

Jesus said, "Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them. If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants! But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise be 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.

9:00am: #832, Jesus Shall Reign

1 Jesus shall reign where'er the sun Does its successive journeys run;

His kingdom stretch from shore to shore Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

2 To Him shall endless prayer be made, And endless praises crown His head;
His name like sweet perfume shall rise With ev'ry morning sacrifice.
3 People and realms of ev'ry tongue Dwell on His love with sweetest song;
And infant voices shall proclaim Their early blessings on His name.
4 Blessings abound where'er He reigns: The pris'ners leap, unloose their chains,
The weary find eternal rest, And all who suffer want are blest.
5 Let ev'ry creature rise and bring Honors peculiar to our King;
Angels descend with songs again, And earth repeat the loud amen.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748, alt.
Text: Public domain

11:15am: Sermon Praise Song

The Sermon *Waiting*

The Gathering of our Gifts and Tithes

The Prayers of His Children:

P: Lord, in Your mercy. **C: hear our prayer.**

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: It is truly meet, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, Holy Lord, Almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end, in whom all our days are made holy by His abiding presence. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying,

C: Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross.

The Words of our Lord

P: As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

C: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

P: Jesus, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray,

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.

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

The Distribution of Holy Communion

9:00am: #719, *I Leave All Things to God's Direction*

1 I leave all things to God's direction; He loves me both in joy and woe.

His will is good, sure His affection; His tender love is true, I know.

My fortress and my rock is He: What pleases God, that pleases me.

2 God knows what must be done to save me; His love for me will never cease.

Upon His hands He did engrave me With purest gold of loving grace.

His will supreme must ever be: What pleases God, that pleases me.

3 My God desires the soul's salvation; My soul He, too, desires to save.

Therefore with Christian resignation All earthly troubles I will brave.

His will be done eternally: What pleases God, that pleases me.

4 My God has all things in His keeping; He is the ever faithful friend.

He gives me laughter after weeping, And all His ways in blessings end.

His love endures eternally: What pleases God, that pleases me.

Text: Salomo Franck, 1659–1725; tr. August Crull, 1845–1923, alt.

Text: Public domain

9:00am: #733, *O God, Our Help in Ages Past*

1 O God, our help in ages past, Our hope for years to come, Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home:

2 Under the shadow of Thy throne Thy saints have dwelt secure; Sufficient is Thine arm alone,
And our defense is sure.

3 Before the hills in order stood Or earth received her frame, From everlasting Thou art God,
To endless years the same.

4 A thousand ages in Thy sight Are like an evening gone, Short as the watch that ends the night
Before the rising sun.

5 Time, like an ever-rolling stream, Soon bears us all away; We fly forgotten as a dream
Dies at the op'ning day.

6 O God, our help in ages past, Our hope for years to come, Be Thou our guard while troubles last
And our eternal home!

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748, alt.

Text: Public domain

9:00am: #735, *Have No Fear, Little Flock*

- 1 Have no fear, little flock; Have no fear, little flock, For the Father has chosen
To give you the Kingdom; Have no fear, little flock!
- 2 Have good cheer, little flock; Have good cheer, little flock, For the Father will keep you
In His love forever; Have good cheer, little flock!
- 3 Praise the Lord high above; Praise the Lord high above, For He stoops down to heal you,
Uplift and restore you; Praise the Lord high above!
- 4 Thankful hearts raise to God; Thankful hearts raise to God, For He stays close beside you,
In all things works with you; Thankful hearts raise to God!

Text (st. 1): Heinz Werner Zimmermann, 1930; (sts. 2-4): Marjorie A. Jillson, 1931-2010
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P: Together, we pray,

C: O Lord, mercifully hear the prayers of Your Church throughout the fast-fleeting years that we, being delivered from all adversities and serving You with a quiet mind, may enjoy Your peace all the days of our life; 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

9:00am: #366, It Came upon the Midnight Clear

- 1 It came upon the midnight clear, That glorious song of old, From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold: "Peace on the earth, goodwill to all,
From heav'n's all-gracious king." The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.
- 2 Still through the cloven skies they come With peaceful wings unfurled, And still their heav'nly
music floats O'er all the weary world. Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hov'ring wing, And ever o'er its babel sounds
The blessèd angels sing.
- 3 All you, beneath your heavy load, By care and guilt bent low, Who toil along a dreary way
With painful steps and slow: Look up, for golden is the hour,
Come swiftly on the wing, The Prince was born to bring you peace;
Of Him the angels sing.
- 4 For lo, the days have come to pass By prophets seen of old, When down into the circling years
Came Christ as was foretold. His word of peace shall to the earth
God's ancient promise bring, And all who take this gift will hear
The song the angels sing.

Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810-76, alt.
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11:15am: Sending Praise Song **Postlude**