
The Fourth Sunday of Advent

HARVEST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

December 20, 2020

The season of Advent covers the month of Sundays before Christmas. Traditionally, Christians have used this season as a time of preparation for Christ's coming. Yes, Jesus has already come, died for our sins, been raised from the dead and ascended into heaven. But, this intentional observance of Advent can be a help to us as we remember the reasons for Jesus' coming – his love for us & our need of rescue – and are reminded that he is coming again – to consummate his kingdom.

Advent is a chance for followers of Christ to be reminded of the gospel narrative, to willingly enter into the watching & waiting of Christian discipleship and to better prepare themselves for another year of seeking to follow Jesus in faithfulness. In these ways, Advent is a season of longing, inviting the Christian to join his or her voice with all the saints, as together we cry, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus."

In addition to an emphasis on these themes during normal Sunday morning worship, Christians have often added an additional worship service on Christmas Eve. That service of 'Lessons & Carols' is a series of Scriptures readings (Lessons) which are each followed by a musical reflection (Carol) that relates to the particular passage – all of which is designed to draw us into the drama of redemption.

a liturgy for corporate worship on

THE 4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

~ December 20, 2020 ~

*Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Immanuel
(which means, God with us).*

~ Matthew 1.23

Corporate Invocation

Come Thou Redeemer of the Earth

Come, Thou Redeemer of the earth, and manifest Thy virgin birth:
Let every age adoring fall; such birth befits the God of all.

Begotten of no human will, but of the Spirit, Thou art still
The Word of God in flesh arrayed, the promised fruit to man displayed.

O equal to the Father, Thou! Gird on Thy fleshly mantle now;
The weakness of our mortal state with deathless might invigorate.

Thy cradle here shall glitter bright, and darkness breathe a newer light,
Where endless faith shall shine serene, and twilight never intervene.

O Jesu, virgin-born, to Thee eternal praise and glory be,
Who with the Father we adore, and Holy Spirit evermore.

Words: Ambrose of Milan, d. 397

Trans. by J.M. Neale, d. 1866

Music: Michael Praetorius, d. 1609

Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?

O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven or on earth, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart.

Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance?

He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love. He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot.

You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.

Who is a God like you?

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming, no. 221

In you, O LORD, do I take refuge; let me never be put to shame! In your righteousness deliver me and rescue me; incline your ear to me, and save me! Be to me a rock of refuge, to which I may continually come.

O God, from my youth you have taught me, and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds. So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all those to come. Your righteousness, O God, reaches the high heavens. You who have done great things, O God, who is like you?

~ Psalm 71.1-3 & 17-20

Pastoral Prayer

*Rev. Ken Counts,
director of men's discipleship*

The Offering

In addition to passing the plate during the 10:45 service, there is a secure box at the back of the sanctuary in which you can place offerings OR you can contribute online through the 'Resources' page on the church website (harvestpres.com).

The Preaching of God's Word
"besides me there is no god"

BEHOLD YOUR GOD! *The Gospel in Isaiah*
Grant Beachy, pastor

Isaiah 44.1-8
(p604 in pew Bible)



Of what advantage to us is Christ's ascension?

Christ physically ascended on our behalf, just as he came down to earth physically on our account, and he is now advocating for us in the presence of his Father, preparing a place for us, and also sends us his Spirit.

He 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?

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.

He is the one who ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.

For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

Arise, My Soul, Arise

Arise, my soul, arise, shake off your guilty fears;

The bleeding Sacrifice in my behalf appears:

Before the throne my Surety stands.

Before the throne my Surety stands.

My name is written on His hands.

(song continues on the next page ...)

He ever lives above, for me to intercede,
His all redeeming love, his precious blood to plead;
His blood atoned for ev'ry race.
His blood atoned for ev'ry race.
And sprinkles now the throne of grace.

Five bleeding wounds he bears, received on Calvary;
They pour effectual prayers, they strongly plead for me.
"Forgive him, O forgive," they cry.
"Forgive him, O forgive," they cry.
"Nor let that ransomed sinner die!"

The Father hears him pray, his dear anointed One;
He cannot turn away the presence of his Son;
The Spirit answers to the blood,
The Spirit answers to the blood
And tells me I am born of God.

My God is reconciled; his pardoning voice I hear;
He owns me for his child, I can no longer fear;
With confidence I now draw nigh,
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And "Father, Abba, Father!" cry.

Words: Charles Wesley, 1742

Music: Kevin Twit, 1996

The Covenant Meal

There are four tables around the sanctuary that are supplied with individual, pre-packaged communion elements. To reduce the amount of movement and allow plenty of space between people, please send one person to get the elements for those partaking of communion in your household. Please hold the elements until all have received and then we will partake together.

To help with a more sanitary clean-up, please take used communion cups and place them in the trash cans by the exit doors as you leave.

Parting Hymn

Why Do Gentile Nations Rage?

Why do Gentile nations rage, and their useless plots design?
Kings of earth in schemes engage, rulers are in league combined.

They speak out against the LORD; his Messiah they defy:
“Let us break their chains and cords, let us cast them off,” they cry.

He who sits in heaven laughs, for the Lord views them with scorn.

He will speak to them in wrath, and in anger he will warn:

“Yet according to my will, I have set my King to reign;
And on Zion’s holy hill, my anointed will remain.”

“I the LORD’s decree make known; this is what he had to say:
He declared, ‘You are my Son; I have brought you forth this day.

Ask of me, and you I’ll make heir to earth and nations all.
Them with iron rod you’ll break, smashing them in pieces small.”

Therefore kings now heed this word; earthly judges, come and hear:

Rev’rent worship give the LORD; with your joy mix trembling fear.

Honor him, his wrath to turn lest you perish in your stride,
For his anger soon may burn. Blessed are all who in him hide.

~ Psalm 2B
(Book of Psalms for Worship)

Benediction

Numbers 6.24-26

The LORD bless you and keep you.

The LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

The LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

Through Jesus, our King and our Savior. Amen.

HARVEST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Reminders:

Covid Policies

- Please wear your mask and be mindful of social-distancing. Masks may be removed when you are seated in your pew.
- The Fellowship Hall may be utilized during the service as overflow.
- The nurseries & classrooms may be used as family / cry rooms. Note, they are not staffed and parents must be with their children.
- After the service, please do not congregate in the Foyer, but move beyond the fireplace into the Fellowship Hall or directly outside.

Christmas Eve Service

We will hold our annual service of *Lessons & Carols* in-person on Thursday, December 24, at 6pm. We will also livestream the service to our Facebook page. This is a traditional Christmas Eve service in which there is a series of Scriptures read (*Lessons*), each of which is followed by a musical reflection (*Carol*) that relates to that passage. All of our current Covid protocols will be in place. While in the past we have had a meal together immediately following the service, we will *not* be doing that this year.

Deployed Personnel & Their Families

Caleb & Lauren Smith (Juliet & Noelle)

Chris & Aubrey Maldonado

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