

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2022

First Presbyterian Church of Union, Missouri

2nd SUNDAY of ADVENT

GATHERING

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP *(based on Matthew 3)*

One: Do you hear the voice of one crying out in the wilderness? Will you heed the prophet's call?

All: **We will prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.**

***OPENING HYMN** "Prepare the Way, O Zion" GtG 106

1. **Prepare the way, O Zion,
your Christ is drawing near!
Let every hill and valley
a level way appear.
Greet One who comes in glory,
foretold in sacred story.
O blest is Christ who came
in God's most holy name.**
2. **He brings God's rule, O Zion;
he comes from heaven above.
His rule is peace and freedom,
and justice, truth, and love.
Lift high your praise resounding,
for grace and joy abounding.
O blest is Christ who came
in God's most holy name.**
3. **Fling wide your gates, O Zion;
your Savior's rule embrace,
and tidings of salvation
proclaim in every place.
All lands will bow rejoicing,
their adoration voicing.
O blest is Christ who came
in God's most holy name.**

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UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Prepare us for your coming, O Lord. We say we are ready, but we are not. Our hearts are cold, hardened in response to the need of our neighbors. Our mood is dark, for our lives are over-shadowed with so many things to do. Our hands are tightly clenched, unwilling to open up and receive what you have to offer. Forgive us, gracious God. Melt our hearts with the warmth of your love. Open our hands to receive joyfully the gift of your grace. Free us from the tyranny of busy-ness to the glad tidings of serving you. May we welcome you into our lives even as you come to us in the Child born in Bethlehem. For it is in his name that we pray. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON *(from Mark 1, John 3, & Matthew 1)*

One: “The right time has come, and the Kingdom of God is near! Turn away from your sins and believe the Good News!”
All: **The Good News is this: “God loved the world so much that God gave God’s only Son.”**
One: Friends, let us believe the Good News of the Coming One: his name is “Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”
All: **So let us rejoice and be glad! For in Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Alleluia! Amen!**

THE PEACE

One: The peace of Christ be with you.
All: **And also with you.**

(From your seat, a brief sign of peace may be shared: a wave of the hand, a nod of the head, etc.)

THE WORD

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH: THE CANDLE OF PEACE

One: God’s peace is the wholeness, completeness, and harmony intended for all people, for all creation. God desires reconciliation and healing where there is brokenness and division. We proclaim the Prince of Peace has come to bring God’s peace and reconciliation to our hearts and to our world.

All: **We long for peace between nations and peoples, between families and friends, between you and me. So we pray and work for the day that Isaiah envisioned, when**

**“The Lord shall judge between the nations,
and shall decide for many peoples;
and we shall beat our swords into plowshares,
and our spears into pruning hooks;
and nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall we learn war any more.”**

(Isaiah 2:4)

One: The first candle reminds us of the sure hope we have in Christ. Today we light the second candle to remind us of the peace Christ offers and the peace we are to share.

For “God was in Christ reconciling the world to God ... and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.” *(II Corinthians 5:19)*

Let us pray.

Unison: Dear God, we thank you for the peace you give to us in Christ, for the healing and wholeness he affects in our lives. Make us into his ambassadors in the world, to preach the good news of his peace, to share in the ministry of reconciliation. Amen.

Sing: “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” GtG 88 *(Verse 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.**

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SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 3:1-12

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SERMON “Hung by the Chimney with Care” by Pastor Bill Vincent

***HYMN** “On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry” GtG 96

- 1. On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
announces that the Lord is nigh;
awake and hearken, for he brings
glad tidings of the King of kings!**
- 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.**

- 3. We hail you as our Savior, Lord,
our refuge and our great reward;
without your grace we waste away
like flowers that wither and decay.**
- 4. Stretch forth your hand; our health restore,
and make us rise to fall no more.
O let your face upon us shine
and fill the world with love divine.**

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***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** *(The Apostles' Creed - Contemporary)*

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

(Today's translation of the Apostles' Creed is reprinted by permission from Book of Common Worship, copyright 1993 Westminster/John Knox Press.)

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBER

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

One: Hear us, O God...
All: ...**your mercy is great.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER *(Contemporary)*

**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.**

OFFERING

Invitation

Reflection

**Unison Prayer of Dedication*

Lovingly you give to us, O God. Graciously may we receive. Freely may we give. Turn our offerings to your good will, and turn us always to you in gratitude. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

SENDING

***CLOSING HYMN** "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" GtG 123 (*Verses 1-2, 4-5*)

- 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, good will to all,
from heaven'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 heavenly music floats
o'er all the weary world:
above its sad and lowly plains
they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o'er its Babel sounds
the blessed angels sing.**

4. **And you, beneath life's crushing load,
whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way
with painful steps and slow,
look now, for glad and golden hours
come swiftly on the wing:
O, rest beside the weary road,
and hear the angels sing.**
5. **For lo, the days are hastening on,
by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold,
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world give back the song
which now the angels sing.**

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***CHARGE AND BLESSING**

One: ...And let the gathered people of God say...
All: ...**Amen.**

POSTLUDE

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