

**FAITH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
SERVICE OF WORSHIP
SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT
DECEMBER 6, 2020**

ASSEMBLE IN GOD'S NAME

PRELUDE

A REFLECTION FOR PREPARATION

God of all, grant us peace. When obstacles stand in our path, may we not despair. When we feel like we're in free-fall, may we trust. When life feels chaotic, may we remember to breathe. When everything is going well, may we pause to savor. God of all, we pray: grant us peace. Amen.

WORDS OF WELCOME

SENTENCES OF ADORATION

OPENING HYMN: *THE BAPTIST SHOUTS ON JORDAN'S SHORE*

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 breast from sin; make straight the way for God within;
prepare we in our hearts a home where such a mighty guest may come.
3. For thou art our salvation, Lord, our refuge and our great reward:
without thy grace, we waste away, like flowers that wither and decay.
4. To heal the sick, stretch out thine hand, and bid the fallen sinner stand;
shine forth and let thy light restore earth's own true loveliness once more.

**LIGHTING OF THE SECOND ADVENT WREATH CANDLE
THE PEACE CANDLE**

Introduction

Scripture: Isaiah 9:6 – 7

Lighting of the Peace Candle

Prayer: Eternal God. We thank you that through all the years you have given peace to your people. Help us to have your peace in our lives. We pray that, in this Advent season, we may, by what we do, show your presence to the sick, to the hungry, and to the lonely, so that they too may have peace. Amen.

REJOICING IN GOD'S GRACE

CALL TO AND CONFESSION OF SIN:

Holy God, too often we descend into the deep valleys of this life and find ourselves stuck in their shadows. The hills and mountains around us seem to hem us in as walls in a prison. In our anxiety, it is easy to convince ourselves that there is no way out, no way forward. Forgive us when our fears

tell us to hunker down and turn inwards. Remind us that from the depths, you will lift us. Merciful God, too often we find ourselves balancing in the heights, feeling as though there are no ropes or nets to catch us. The perspective seems solitary, and we feel trapped, afraid of falling. In our anxiety, it is easy to convince ourselves that there is no way down, no way forward. Forgive us when our fears tell us that any move, we make will be disastrous. Remind us that you will not let us fall but will bring us to humility and safety.

Gracious God, from all of the places of fear in our lives, speak comfort to us, call us to prepare our way back to you. Remind us that even in the wilderness moments of our lives, we will find the way back to you. Forgive us when we act out of anxiety, rather than faith. Forgive us when our human reactions of fear, anger, and vengeance close us off from the ways of peace that you desire for us. Open our eyes and open our hearts that the path to you might be revealed before us, guiding us in compassion and mercy to your holy and ever lasting peace. Amen.

ASSURANCE

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON:

Old Testament: Isaiah 40:1 – 11

New Testament: Mark 1:1 – 8

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SPECIAL MUSIC: 24 – Switchfoot

Darin Jellison

SERMON: *Three Different Rs*

DEDICATING OURSELVES TO GOD'S WILL AND WORK

AN AFFIRMATION OF FAITH:

We are a community of faith.

We share a vision of God:

**a God whose spirit is love,
accessible to all yet beyond our knowing,
the source of all being,
the way leading to wholeness,
the spirit which pervades everything.**

**We search for the meaning of God and our own experience
revealed in those sacred stories which have been passed down to us.**

We tell them again and again:

**Of God the Creator, the Almighty,
who made everything that is,
and saw that it was good.**

Of Jesus of Nazareth, who in history lived among us,

healed the afflicted, taught, suffered and died.

He forgave those who crucified him.

In the mystery of the resurrection

he continues to live more profoundly through the ages,

the Incarnation of Love, the Christ,

to whom his disciples have responded “My Lord and my God!”

He shows us the Way which leads

to the reconciliation of all things, saying

“Whatever you do for the least of these, you do for me.”

It is the Way of love, compassion, justice, forgiveness and peace.

Of the Spirit, the Breath, the Wind of God,

the Giver of Life, the Holy Wisdom,

who inspires the people of God

to cry out for justice for the powerless and oppressed,

to see the presence of God in every created thing,

and to respond with love.

Of the communion of saints: all the people of God,

living, dead and yet to be born,

who are empowered to recognize that they are,

and always have been,

brothers and sisters,

one family in God.

We are reborn in the Spirit,

followers of that Way shown by Jesus:

to love God with our whole being;

to love our neighbors as ourselves;

to treat others as we would have them treat us;

to strive for justice and peace;

to have respect and compassion for every person

and for the whole of creation;

to forgive those who do us harm;

to love one another as Christ has loved us.

We journey together on this Way

towards reconciliation with the whole creation.

We break bread together and pray together.

We reach out to one another

for strength beyond our own.

This is our community. This is our faith.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Pastor: Merciful God, speak comfort to us. We are waiting...
For situations to change.
For diagnoses.
For treatments to work.
For the start of a new life.
For the end of suffering.
For peace to come into this world.
We are waiting for the one who cries in the wilderness. We are waiting
for the Messiah – for God-with-us to enter this world.

Sometimes it seems the waiting will never end.
Sometimes it seems that we are stuck in this season of our lives:
that the mountains are too high,
the valleys too low,
the road too rough and winding.
We fear that we cannot move forward.

Merciful God, speak comfort to us. Not in the red and green and of shop
windows and clichéd Christmas clothing, but in the blues and purples of
Advent waiting. In the colors that shift the nighttime of our souls to
reveal a brilliant dawn. Speak tenderly to us, in our fear and our pain,
remind us that you stay with us no matter how much we might turn
away.

Call us not merely to wait, but to prepare for the ways that you will
enter anew into our lives. Help us to redefine our situations; to see the
smooth, level path into your presence, rather than the peaks and valleys
of our human lives.

Merciful God, speak comfort to us. For you are here: Our God, our
shepherd. You are here, holding righteousness and peace, steadfast love
and faithfulness. You are here, and from this time of waiting and
preparation, your glory shall be revealed, even to mere mortals.

You are here, and even we shall know peace, through your nurture and
care.

Merciful God, speak comfort to us. We are waiting and preparing for
you.

Pause for private intercessions

Gracious God, as you have promised, may it come to pass.
We pray in Christ's name and offer the prayer He offered;

**Unison: 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 debts as we forgive**

our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

GIVE THANKS TO GOD

THE FELLOWSHIP OF SHARING

SPECIAL MUSIC: *BEAUTIFUL* – MercyMe

Darin Jellison

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Pastor: Prepare the way!

Unison: We offer our gifts, both tangible and spiritual, to level the ground and make smooth the way ahead. We prepare, not just for our individual relationships with God, but for the wider community to find comfort and nurture.

Pastor: Prepare the way!

Unison: We offer ourselves, our minds, and our hearts to reveal the presence of God in our midst.

Pastor: Prepare the way!

Unison: May the glory of God be revealed to us and in us. Amen.

GO IN GOD'S NAME

CLOSING HYMN: *KEEP AWAKE, BE ALWAYS READY*

1. Keep awake, be always ready, God's time approaches sure and steady,
God's strength will keep your heart from blame.
Clouds, the Spirit's light concealing, disperse, God's purest light revealing;
Creation will its Sovereign name.
Dry branches burst forth green, God's advent signs are seen: Hallelujah!
Christ's judgment won, God's will be done; God's new dominion thus begun.
2. Rise and shine for One is coming whose love will quench all nature's thirsting
to be made whole forever more.
On that day to end all weeping, death's swords transformed to tools of reaping,
the God of might will mercy pour.
Incarnate, God appears embracing all our tears; Hallelujah!
God's majesty eternally revealed to set the cosmos free.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

*Special thanks to Darin Jellison for offering special music,
and to Wes Koser for filming today's service.*

Blessings!