

First Sunday of Advent

10:30 a.m.

December 3, 2023

GATHERING

The people of God come together in the Lord's name

Prelude - *Savior of the Nations Come* (Hymn 214) - J. S. Bach

Introit - *An Advent Processional* – Pearson

(Sung: O come, o come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to Thee, O Israel)

Call to Worship

I am looking for the coming of Christ,

I want to be with Jesus.

The Lamb is the light of the City of God.

Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.

Opening Hymn 206** - *I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light*

Invocation

Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may celebrate aright the commemoration of the nativity, and may await with joy the coming in glory of Jesus Christ our Redeemer, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

PROCLAMATION

The Word of God is read and proclaimed for all ages.

Scripture Reading - Psalm 80:1-7 (Old Testament p. 540/511)

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gloria Patri (sung)

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Advent Candle Lighting

In the days of exile and uncertainty, the prophet Isaiah cried out:

"O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence. As when fire sets twigs ablaze and causes water to boil, come down to make your name known to your enemies and cause the nations to quake before you! For when you did awesome things that we did not expect, you came down, and the mountains trembled before you."

In our own encounters with uncertainty and upheaval and our longing for deliverance, Jesus calls to us, "Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come." So we wait; surprised again and again by God who shakes us out of our complacency and wakes us to the work of the Kingdom all around us.

We light this candle as a sign of our shocking hope. May we stay awake to God's activity in the world as we wait in expectation that even now God is with us, working to restore us to fullness of life with God and one another. Amen.

Anthem - *Blessed is the Lord* - Dan Forrest

God's Word for Young Disciples

Scripture Reading - Isaiah 64:1-9 (Old Testament p. 694/652)

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon - *The Promise of Hope*

Pastor Jon Priebe

RESPONSE

The people of God respond to the Word

Discipleship Moment

Offertory - *Wachet auf ruft uns die Stimme* (Hymn 720) - J. S. Bach

(Please fill out the attendance sheet found in the pew.)

Doxology**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayers of the People/The Lord's Prayer

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. Amen.

Communion (Hymnal p. 13)

SENDING FORTH

The people of God are sent forth to serve others and witness to their faith

Closing Hymn 196** - *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

Benediction and Congregational Response (Hymn 211)

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Postlude - *Veni Emmanuel* - Schaeffer



The flowers on the altar are dedicated to the glory of God and given

in loving memory of her brother and sister-in-law, William and Jane Blackham, by Delores Marefka.

Service Music: Chancel Choir; Epworth Choir; Kristen van Dyck, violin; Abigail Bontrager, cello; Neil Lantry, percussion; Phil Lantry, piano

Music: One License A-731491

Clergy and Staff

Jon Priebe, Lead Minister; Howard Pippin, Associate Minister
Forrest Waller and Marvin Brown, Senior Ministers Emeriti
Dean Wagner, Director of Music/Organist; Tim Zuschin, Assistant Chancel Choir Director
Donna Curfman, Director of Children's Ministries
Jennifer Brooks, Director of Weekday Christian Preschool

CHURCH NOTES

The Advent Event will take place tonight after musical rehearsals. We will be in Wesley Hall for dinner and the evening's activities.

Advent Remembrance Service: This Wednesday, December 6, at 7:00 pm we will hold our Advent Remembrance Service in the Sanctuary. This event is a way we can remember those who have lost loved ones, or experienced other loss in the past year. If you plan to attend, please bring an ornament to hang on the Christmas tree in memory of your lost loved ones for the service. You may take the ornament home after the service ends.

Holiday Nuts: The nut sale is back! You may purchase them between and after services on Sundays, in the office during the week, or you may pre-order and pick them up on the Sunday of your choice. We have Deluxe Mixed, whole cashews (both at \$10/lb.) and raw pecans (\$12/lb.) You may drop your order form off at the Welcome Center. Proceeds will benefit Work Camp.

St. Nicholas Brunch: All are invited to the St. Nicholas Brunch next Sunday, December 10, from 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. in Wesley Hall. Food will be served the entire morning, but from 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., there will be crafts and pictures with Santa. The cost of the breakfast is free but there will be a donation taken. For a photo, you are requested to bring a winter hat and gloves or pay \$5.00. Registration is due tomorrow.

Are you new to First Church? Not new, but thinking about joining? We want to help you get connected through our Discipleship Pathway. Please let Pastor Pippin know you are interested and mark your calendar for an initial gathering on Sunday, December 10, at 9:45 in Asbury Hall. You may reach him through the church office, or at fallsfirstpippin@gmail.com.

Did You Know? Your pledges aren't automatically renewed from year to year. That's one reason it's important to return your pledge card. We appreciate everyone's giving throughout the year, but it helps us to have the pledge cards when it comes time to do the yearly budget and to make plans for programs, worship, and other opportunities for the coming year.

Chancel Ringers Christmas Concert: Our church's big Christmas program this year will be different in 2 ways. First, it will be presented not by our vocal choirs, but our own Chancel Ringers Handbell Ensemble. This talented group of ringers is one of Ohio's finest ringing choirs, but we actually have never played a full concert here. And the second difference is that this will occur on a Friday instead of a Sunday evening. In addition to the handbell selections, the audience will sing verses of favorite carols in between each of the songs. The program will feature sacred and secular Christmas music.

Epworth Alumni: You are invited to come sing at the 8pm service on Christmas eve with the Epworth Choir. We will sing All is Well and Were You There on that Christmas Night. If you were part of the Epworth choir in 2019 and you sang O Little Town of Bethlehem with Dan Forrest when he was here, you are invited to join the Chancel Choir for that anthem as well.

ANTHEM

Blessed is the Lord - Dan Forrest

Benedictus, Benedictus, Blessed is our Lord Benedictus, Benedictus, Welcome His Incarnate Word Chosen first among the priests to serve within the temple walls, Zacharias stood in awe when he heard the angel call: Benedictus, Benedictus, Blessed is our Lord Benedictus, Benedictus, Welcome His Incarnate Word Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, will come to raise salvation's horn. God Incarnate, Word made flesh to a virgin shall be born. Benedictus, Benedictus, Blessed is our Lord Benedictus, Benedictus, Welcome His Incarnate Word Christ brings light to sin's dark night: our Dayspring, Jesus, from on high. Saints and angels sing God's praise. All the earth and heav'ns reply: Benedictus, Benedictus, Blessed is our Lord Benedictus, Benedictus, Welcome His Incarnate Word

DECEMBER WORSHIP

Dec. 6 7 p.m. - Advent Remembrance Service

Dec. 10 8:30 & 10:30 a.m. - Regular Worship
 9:45 a.m. - Sunday School/Confirmation

Dec. 17 8:30 & 10:30 a.m. - Regular Worship
 9:45 a.m. - Sunday School/Confirmation

Dec. 24 8:30 & 10:30 a.m. - Regular Worship
No Sunday School/Confirmation

6:00 - Candlelight Worship

8:00 - Candlelight Worship

Dec. 31 10:30 a.m. - One Worship service only
No Sunday School/Confirmation

NEXT STEPS

The Heavens Torn

vs. 4 – Jerusalem was still hoping for a mighty show of God’s presence
What might be different in our world if God did this today?

Prone To Wander, Lord I Feel It

vs. 6 – to begin returning home, we must admit we are lost
the season of Advent calls for the humble return of God’s people

Questions for Reflection: What would you ask God to come down and take care of if the heavens tore open tonight? How else might God be answering your prayer for this issue already? What did Isaiah assume was the appropriate response of the people when God does come down to us and we experience the divine presence?

Question for Discussion: When have you witnessed God move in ways that defied expectations?

Memory Verse: *Isaiah 64:4* – “From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him.”

Readings for this Week: Luke 2:8-14, Isaiah 2:1-5, Revelation 21:1-5