



THE BEST IS YET TO COME

HOPEFUL MUSINGS FROM MICAH

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 3, 2023

GATHERING

PRAYER FOR MEDITATION: *O Lord: keep us awake and alert, watching for your kingdom. Make us strong in faith, so we may greet your Son when he comes, and joyfully give him praise, with you, and with the Holy Spirit. In the name of Christ Jesus, we pray. Amen.*

RINGING OF THE CHIMES

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE *Chorale Improvisation on HYFRYDOL* Manz
Dr. Terry McRoberts

CHORAL INTROIT *Rejoice and Sing* Page
Chancel Choir

CALL TO WORSHIP | LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE Steve + Pam Bowers

RESPONSE *(all singing, refrain only from Hymn: 88 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel)*
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

***PROCESSIONAL HYMN: 82** *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus* HYFRYDOL

PRAISE GOD AND CONFESS OUR SINS

INVITATION TO CONFESSION Rev. John White

LITANY OF CONFESSION Rev. John White

One: God of light and life, you set before us today the challenges of laying aside the works of darkness; of putting on the light of Christ; of being watchful and prepared for your coming in our midst in the person of Jesus Christ. As the people of God in this place we know that a crucial part of our witness is in revealing Christ to the world through the way we love and care for one another.

ALL: *Forgive us if we do not reveal evidence in us of the One who is to come.*

One: So many people, young and old, grope in the gloom of despair and suffering, yearning for the light of hope to dawn in their lives.

ALL: *Remind us that the light of Christ shines through people like us – people who claim to follow him.*

One: Merciful God, cleanse our hearts and minds of all that hinders us from loving you and loving our neighbor.

ALL: *May our lives radiate faith active in love, as we watch and wait for your breaking into our world once more in the person of Jesus Christ. Amen.*

SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE

*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Rev. John White

One: Salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers: the night is far gone,
the day is near. Let us lay aside the works of darkness and put on the Light of the
World, Jesus Christ, in whom and through whom we are forgiven.
(based on Romans 13:11b, 12,14a)

ALL: *Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Amen!*

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE: 447 *We Are Forgiven*

WE ARE FORGIVEN

We are forgiven. We are forgiven. Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God.

We are forgiven. We are forgiven. Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Rev. John White

One: The peace of Jesus Christ be with you.

ALL: *And, also, with you.*

THE WORD

ANTHEM

Of the Father's Love Begotten
Chancel Choir

DIVINUM MYSTERIUM

TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

Susannah White

MINUTE FOR MISSION: FINAL APPROACH TO STEWARDSHIP

Elder Robert Reeves

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Rev. John White

*HYMN: 372 *O for a World*

AZMON

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Kathelene White

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Micah 5:2-4 (pg. 865)

Kathelene White

One: This is the word of God for the people of God.

ALL: *Thanks be to God.*

NEW TESTAMENT READING

Revelation 21:1-5 (pg. 259)

Rev. John White

One: This is the word of God. The grass withers and the flower fades,
but the word of the Lord endures forever.

ALL: *Thanks be to God.*

SERMON

The Best is Yet to Come: Hopeful Musings from Micah

Rev. John White

RESPONSE

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** (*A Creed from Colossians 1:15-23*)

Kathelene White

One: Who is Jesus Christ?

ALL: *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Once we were alienated from God, but now God has reconciled us by Christ's physical body through death to present us holy in his sight. Thanks be to God!*

(At this time, please find the red friendship pad located toward the center aisle on each pew, sign it, pass it down your row and back again, taking note of those who worship with you.)

OFFERING

Kathelene White

OFFERTORY

Chorale Prelude on Nun komm der heiden heiland

Buxtehude

Dr. Terry McRoberts

*Doxology (Tune: 606)

OLD HUNDREDTH

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.

*Dedicatory Prayer

Kathelene White

SENDING

***HYMN: 384** *Soon and Very Soon*

SOON AND VERY SOON

***CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

Rev. John White

CHORAL BENEDICTION

Go, All Ye Faithful

Huff

Chancel Choir

(We request that you remain seated until after the Postlude and ask that you use the Postlude as a time to reflect upon the scripture that was read in today's service.)

POSTLUDE

Rigaudon

Campra / Bish

Dr. Terry McRoberts