



ADVENT

A Season of Expectation

ADVENT WORSHIP SERVICE

December 6, 2023 | 6:00 p.m.

GATHERING

OPENING SENTENCES *(Revelation 22:20)*

Rev. Courtney Bowen

Leader: Jesus says: I am coming soon.

People: *Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!*

PRELUDE

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

arr. by Ham

Dr. Terry McRoberts

*LITANY OF THE GREENS

Rev. Courtney Bowen

Leader: How can we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus, the King?

People: *With purple paraments, signifying royalty.*

Leader: How shall we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus, the eternal Christ?

People: *With the cedar tree, whose leaves are ever living, ever green.*

Leader: How shall we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus, our savior?

People: *With candles and lights that pierce the darkness; with songs sung in the midst of sorrow and brokenness.*

Leader: How shall we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus, the Son of God?

People: *By hearing again the words of the prophets who foretold the saving work of God.*

Leader: In these acts of hanging greens and listening to the words of prophets and seers let us make our hearts and this space a place of inward and outward preparation for the One who comes to give us second birth.

People: *All Glory to God in the highest!*

*INVOCATION

Rev. Courtney Bowen

Leader: Holy God, by your mercy guide our outward actions in such ways that our inward being is formed in faith, hope, and love.

People: *May the decorations we offer engage our senses during the days of Advent and enliven our praise and worship, in the name of the child of Bethlehem, our risen and coming savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

*HYMN: 92 *While We Are Waiting, Come*

WAITING

HANGING OF THE GREENS

ADVENT WREATH LESSON

Isaiah 40:3-5

Molly Richardson

The Advent Wreath is a vivid symbol of preparation. The lighting of a new candle each of the four weeks before Christmas reminds us that something is happening, but more is yet to come. The circle of evergreens reminds us of the everlasting covenant offered in the birth of Jesus. The four candles symbolize HOPE, PEACE, JOY AND LOVE.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Leader: Today, we light the first candle as a symbol of Christ, our HOPE.
People: *May the light sent from God shine in the darkness to show us the way of salvation.*

Leader: Let us pray. Faithful God, your promises stand unshaken through all generations.
People: *Renew us in hope, that we may be awake and alert as we watch for the glorious return of Jesus Christ, our judge and Savior, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

PARAMENTS LESSON

Jeremiah 23:5-6

Elder Stacey McAdams

NARRATIVE

We have placed purple Advent Paraments in our sanctuary. In the ancient world, purple dye was extremely rare, and therefore considered to be a royal color. The purple paraments remind us of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who came to be the "Light of the World."

CAROLING LESSON

Psalms 96: 1-4a, 6

Elder Diane Sklensky

NARRATIVE

As the word carol - a joyful song - suggests, carols bring us together and connect us in groups of shared experience and feelings. The singing of carols reminds us that God, in his love for us, sent his son to be one of us. Just as that first Christmas was marked by singing, so Christians through the centuries have celebrated and borne witness through song to the coming of the Messiah.

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

HYFRYDOL

EVERGREEN TREE LESSON

Micah 5:2, 4-5a

Je'Delle Ross

NARRATIVE

In ancient times the cedar was revered as the tree of royalty. It also signified immortality, and was used for purification. We have placed this tree in the sanctuary as a symbol of Christ, who reigns as King forever, and whose coming will purify our hearts.

PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Courtney Bowen

**CHRISMONS
LESSON**

Dana Hardy

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

NARRATIVE

Chrismons, meaning "Christ monograms," traditionally are white and gold designs made from Christian symbols that signify Christ. Often displayed on an evergreen tree during the Christmas season, symbols such as stars, crosses, fish, crowns, and the alpha and omega remind us of Christ's identity, his story, and of the Holy Trinity.

**TREE LIGHTING
LESSON**

Lane Bowen

John 1:1-5, 9-14

NARRATIVE

As our final preparation for the coming of Jesus, the Light of the World, we will light the Chrismon tree. And in this time of Advent, whenever you see a lighted tree, let it call to mind the One who brings light into our darkness, healing in our brokenness, and peace to all who will receive Him. May this tree, arrayed in beauty and splendor, remind us of the life-giving cross of Christ, that we may always rejoice in the new life that shines in hearts.

SPECIAL MUSIC

O Holy Night
Annika Jerge

Cappeau

HOMILY

Be Prepared

Rev. Courtney Bowen

***HYMN: 93** *Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates*

TRURO

***CHARGE & BENEDICTION**

Rev. Courtney Bowen

Leader: We do not leave this sanctuary and leave God behind.

People: God's call to prepare our hearts, our minds, our communities and our world for the coming Christ, is clear.

Leader: May this call be ever before us: guiding us, inspiring us, enabling us to be Christ's body – his hands, his feet, his heart – in this, God's world.

People: Come, Lord Jesus!

Leader: May the grace, hope, peace, and love of God our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, be with us all, now and forever.

People: Amen and Amen.

POSTLUDE

O Come, O Come Emmanuel
Dr. Terry McRoberts

arr. by Alexander