



THE BEST IS YET TO COME

HOPE FROM ANGRY AMOS

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 10, 2023

GATHERING

PRAYER FOR MEDITATION: *As the voice cried out in the wilderness, O God, you enter our lives and call to us to be open to hearing the cries of people who feel lost and alienated, who feel that no one cares or ever will care about them. We have been given that opportunity to reach out through the ministries and mission of our church bringing hope and peace to all. Make us ready to become pathways of peace and life-transforming love in your name. It is in the spirit of Jesus' name that we pray. Amen.*

RINGING OF THE CHIMES

OPENING SENTENCES *(Isaiah 40:3-5)*

Rev. Courtney Bowen

One: A voice cries in the wilderness:

ALL: *Prepare the way of the Lord; make God's way clear.*

One: Lift up every valley; lower every mountain.

ALL: *For the glory of the Lord shall be revealed.*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

Prelude on HYFRYDOL

Westenkuehler

Dr. Terry McRoberts

CHORAL INTROIT

Rejoice and Sing

Page

Chancel Choir

CALL TO WORSHIP | LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

Randy, Vivian, Easton

Logan + Caleb Jones

RESPONSE *(all singing, refrain only from Hymn: 88 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel)*

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

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN: 94 *Now the Heavens Start to Whisper*

JEFFERSON

PRAISE GOD AND CONFESS OUR SINS

CALL TO CONFESSION *(based on 2 Peter 3:9)*

Rev. John White

God does not want anyone to perish, but rather for all to come to repentance. Therefore, let us confess our sins, for God's salvation is at hand.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Rev. John White

One: Into the dark depths of our fear and anguish, you, O Lord, reach out to us. We need your guidance this day, for we have found it far too easy to stray into selfish pathways.

ALL: *We seek first our own comfort; we gather our toys and trinkets and proclaim that all is right with the world, yet our hearts feel strangely discomforted.*

One: Guide us and gather us, Lord. Teach us again to be people of peace and hope. Help us to cast off the mantle of greed and hatred. Forgive us for the many times when we have ignored the cries of those in need; when we have turned our backs on opportunities to help others.

ALL: *Forgive us, Lord. Touch our hearts and bring your bright light of salvation to them that we might turn again to you and in your love may be part of ministries of peace and justice. Help us again to hear the voice of one who cries in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord. Make straight in the desert a highway for our God." In the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, we offer this prayer. Amen.*

SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE

***ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

Rev. John White

One: Sisters and brothers, by the mercy of Christ, our sins are forgiven, for salvation is at hand for all who turn to God.

ALL: *Thanks be to God. 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.

THE WORD

RECOGNITION OF TAMARA HAYNES

Rev. John White

TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

Laura Byrd

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Rev. John White

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Rev. Courtney Bowen

SCRIPTURE READING

Amos 9:11-15 (pg. 857-858)

Rev. Courtney Bowen

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

ALL: *Thanks be to God.*

HOMILY

The Best is Yet to Come: Hope from Angry Amos

Rev. Courtney Bowen

RESPONSE

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** (from *A Brief Statement of Faith*)

Rev. John White

We trust in God the Holy Spirit, everywhere the giver and renewer of life. The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith, sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor, and binds us together with all believers in the one body of Christ, the Church...

In a broken and fearful world the Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior, to unmask idolatries in Church and culture, to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.

In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth, praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

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

OFFERING

Rev. John White

OFFERTORY

Pastorale from "Christmas Concerto"

A. Corelli

Tere Ervin, flute | Penny Kendall, cello | Helen Redding, piano

*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

Rev. John White

SENDING

***HYMN: 100** *My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout*

STAR OF THE COUNTY DOWN

***CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

Rev. Courtney Bowen

CHORAL BENEDICTION

Go, All Ye Faithful

Huff

Chancel Choir

POSTLUDE

Allegro Moderato

Handel / Bish

Dr. Terry McRoberts

(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.)