Wesley United Methodist Church

10:00 AM Sunday Worship

December 1, 2024

First Sunday of Advent

At Wesley we foster a sanctuary culture by creating a safe environment where all feel welcomed, loved, accepted, valued, and affirmed for who they are, through intentional practices such as empathy, compassion, generosity, hospitality, and inclusion.

Please let an usher know if you have questions, need assistance, or have a concern about health or safety.			
Prelude	Of the Father's Love Begotten - DIVINUM MYSTERIUM arr Susan Staples Be Medieval Plainsong Cello & Pian		
Greeting			
*Advent Ca	andle Lighting		
One:	From deep in the past, Jeremiah calls to us: The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to my people. In those days and at that time, he shall execute justice and righteousness, and he will be called, "The Lord is our righteousness."		
Many:	While fear, anxiety, misinformation, and suspicion surround us on every side, we choose to watch and wait in hope, preparing our hearts to notice and cooperate with God's grace already at work in our midst.		
One:	We light this candle of hope as a sign of our commitment to pay attention and prepare for the days that are surely coming and are already here – the days when God's kin-dom of love, justice, and mercy will reign.		
	Light the first candle of the Advent wreath.		
*Hymn	"Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates" UMH 21		
	Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates; behold, the King of glory waits; the King of kings is drawing near; the Savior of the world is here!		
	Fling wide the portals of your hearts; make it a temple, set apart from earthly use for heaven's employ, adorned with prayer and love and joy.		
	Redeemer, come, with us abide; our hearts to thee we open wide; let us thy inner presence feel; thy grace and love in us reveal.		

*Please stand in body or in spirit.

Thy Holy Spirit lead us on until our glorious goal is won; eternal praise, eternal fame be offered, Savior, to thy name!

*Praise Songs

God You're So Good

God you're so good. God you are kind. God you are wonderful. My God, you are excellent...

Excellent is Thy name. Excellent is Thy might. God you are wonderful. My God you are excellent...

Me yi N'ayɛ (I Will Praise Him) [Feel free to sing in either language]

Me yi n'ayɛ, Me yi Nyamea' yɛ... Me yi Nyamea' yɛ, Halleluyah, Halleluyah, Halleluyah ...

I will praise God, I will praise my God...

I will praise my God, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah...

Common Prayer (unison)

God of our salvation, you straighten the winding ways of our hearts and smooth the paths made rough by sin. Keep our conduct blameless, keep our hearts watchful in holiness, and bring to perfection the good you have begun in us. We ask this through him whose coming is certain, whose day draws near; your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Children's Time

Prayers of the People & the Lord's Prayer

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

UMH 230, v. 4

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray; cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell; O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

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.

The Offering				
Offertory Anthem	The Son of God is Coming Again	Composer Unknown		
The Son of God is coming again. Let the people sing Alleluia, Sing, Alleluia, sing, sing, Alleluia, Let the people sing, Alleluia.				
*Doxology Rejoi	Praise God, from whom all blessings flow. Praise God, all creatures here below. Praise God above, ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. ce! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O	UMH 94 Israel.		
*Prayer of Dedication				
*Passing of Peace	"Shalom" God's peace be unto you, We wish you Shalom! The peace of God which transcends all understanding be with you forevermore.	Mensah Essilfie		
*Gospel Reading		Luke 3:2b-6		
Anthem	"O Come, Emmanuel"	Merri Lynn Braman, cellist Elaine Hagenberg (b. 1979)		
O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, That mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.				
	come and cheer our spirits by Thine Advent he es of night, and pierce the clouds and bring us			
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to Thee O Israel.				
O come Desire of nations, bind all people in one heart and mind; Bid envy, strife and quarrels cease, and fil the world with Heaven's peace.				
Message				
Holy Communion	"The Great Thanksgiving"	UMH 13-14		
in the love and peo At the directio kneel at the communion rail fo at the rail, you may return t	thodist Church practices Open Communion. All wa ace of Jesus Christ are welcome to the bread and c on of the ushers, come forward using the center ai or distribution of the elements. After consuming th o your seat via the side aisles. Please alert the us served while remaining seated in the sanctuary. olic grape juice is used, and gluten-free wafers are	up of communion. isle to stand or he elements and private prayer hers to anyone wishing to be		
Amouncement				

"Heralds of Christ"

Heralds of Christ, who bear the King's commands, immortal tidings in your mortal hands, pass on and carry swift the news you bring; make straight, make straight the highway of the King.

Through desert ways, dark fen, and deep morass, through jungles, sluggish seas, and mountain pass, build now the road, and falter not, nor stay; prepare across the earth the King's highway.

Lord, give us faith and strength the road to build, to see the promise of the day fulfilled, when war shall be no more, and strife shall cease upon the highway of the Prince of Peace.

An Order of Farewell to Church Members

Congregational Response (unison)

We feel sorrow in your leaving, yet we rejoice with you in anticipation of this new phase of your life. We will miss your love and support, yet we know you will add much to the lives of those who will be your new church family, as you have added much to our lives.

We will pray for you and for the whole family of God.

*Benediction

Contemplative Postlude

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Lewis H. Redner Arr. Fred Bock

MUSIC NOTES

Phillips Brooks (1835-1893) wrote this beloved Christmas hymn for the Sunday school children at his Philadelphia parish, Holy Trinity Church, following a pilgrimage to Bethlehem in 1865, according to British hymnologist J. R. Watson. The hymn was printed on an informal leaflet in December 1868 and then appeared in *The Sunday School Hymnal* in 1871.

In the United States, the hymn is generally sung to its original tune, ST. LOUIS by Louis H. Redner (1931-1908), a wealthy real estate broker who served as a church organist for his avocation. *UM Hymnal* editor Carlton Young notes that Redner "increased Sunday school attendance at Holy Trinity Episcopal, where Phillips Brooks was rector, from thirty-six to over one thousand during his nineteen years as superintendent." According to the story, Brooks traveled on horseback between Jerusalem and Bethlehem on Christmas Eve. "Before dark we rode out of town to the field where they say the shepherds saw the star. It is a fenced piece of ground with a cave in it, in which, strangely enough, they put the shepherds... Somewhere in those fields we rode through, the shepherds must have been. As we passed, the shepherds were still 'keeping watch over their flocks,' or leading them home to fold."

Dr. Watson sums it up well: "Not only does the hymn beautifully describe the little town asleep in the December night; it also gracefully modulates from a description of Christmas into an examination of the meaning of Christmas: first in its encouragement of charity and faith, and then into the coming of Christ into the human heart." --Dr. Hawn is professor of sacred music at Perkins School of Theology, SMU

> Worship Leaders: Gifty Bentum-Asante, Rhianna Burke, Desmond Cheetham, David Dagle, Ronna Davis, Donna Hirtle, Chris Kerns, Byungmoo Lee, Debbie O'Driscoll, David Potts, Jennifer Quansah, Chancel Choir, Ghanaian Choir, Worship Tech Team

Advent Candle Lighting – *Come, Let Us Adore Him: Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy*, by Lisa Hancock, The United Methodist Church Discipleship Ministries Common Prayer – *Book of Common Worship*, Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993, p. 174. OneLicense Reprint + Livestream and Podcast/Recording License A-726657 CCLI Copyright License # 20653706 CCLI Streaming License #20653696