

December 1, 2024
First Sunday of Advent: The Promise of Truth

gathered for a last meal with his friends and promised them his eternal presence. He took bread, gave thanks to you, broke it, and gave it saying:

All people: *“This is my very body given to you. When you eat this, remember me.”*
Pastor: When the supper was finished, Jesus took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to his friends, saying:

All people: *“This is the cup of a new covenant of forgiveness. It is poured out for you and for many. When you drink this, remember me.”*

Pastor: And so, grateful for Jesus, for his witness to love, and for the precious gift of this shared meal, we proclaim the mystery of faith:

All people: *Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.*
Pastor: Pour out your blessing upon this bread, O God. Wheat, grown in the fields, and touched by yeast, becomes life-giving food. This bread is transformed by your love into the living presence of Jesus. Pour out your blessing upon this cup, juice from grapes grown in the sun. May we drink deeply of the forgiveness Jesus offers. Send your Spirit on this community, gathered here around your table. Feed us this very hour, that we may truly become the body of Christ, offering life to the world. Through your beloved child, Jesus Christ, and with the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory are yours, now and forevermore. Amen.

SHARING OF ELEMENTS

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

All people: *Holy One, we have met you at this table. Nourished by your holy food, send us out as one people, full of vision and courage, to prepare the way for your kingdom. Filled with your grace, show us how to live so that all may know your hope, your peace, your joy, and your love. We pray in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, child-king, divine Messiah, and Prince of Peace, Amen.*

HYMN *Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates* Blue Hymnal #129

BENEDICTION

Pastor: Be alert! God’s realm of love and peace is breaking in. Set aside all worries and let joy be yours. God is with you. Go in love. Do justice. Walk humbly in faith.

All people: *Amen.*

CANDLE EXTINGUISHING

POSTLUDE

Acolyte
Mr. Kevin Crone

PREWORSHIP MUSIC

Mr. Kevin Crone

GREETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE & CANDLELIGHTING

Acolyte

CENTERING WORDS

The kingdom of God is close at hand. Be alert and see the signs of hope.

CALL TO WORSHIP & ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING (Based on Jeremiah 33:14)

Pastor: From deep in the past, the prophet Jeremiah calls to us: The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise, I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It is a promise for peace, and I will meet the needs of the earth’s people and all of creation.

Congregation: **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.**

All people: *Thus, 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 kingdom of love, justice, and mercy will reign.* (The first candle of the Advent wreath is lit)

OPENING PRAYER

Pastor: Dear Lord, who comes to us in every season, as we begin our journey through Advent, turn our hearts toward you. Guide us into your realm of peace and joy. Teach us to set aside our worries, as we walk in faithfulness and trust. May the love within us be born anew. Help us remain alert, that we may respond to pain and suffering and notice the signs of abundant life all around us.

All people: *Come, Lord Jesus; come to us now, we pray. Amen.*

HYMN *Christians All, Your Lord is Coming* Blue Hymnal #136

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

All people: *Compassionate God, show us your ways. Guide us in your paths and lead us in your truth for your love is faithful, and your will brings us abundant life. It is easy to be distracted during this busy time of year. The worries of life threaten to overwhelm us. Remind us of who we are meant to be: merciful, faithful, patient, and loving. We will place*

our trust in you, no matter what happens. May we forget our past mistakes and live into a future filled with justice and love. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Pastor: Beloved people of God, even in our moments of doubt, our lack of faith, and the blindness which means we fail to see God amongst us, God is still at work. God is still healing. God is still forgiving. Even when we fail to see God, God still sees us, and still loves us. Sisters and brothers, your sins are forgiven!

Congregation: **This blessed assurance of the Lord's pardon gives us peace. Let us give praise to God for Christ's saving grace.**

HYMN OF PRAISE *Blessed Assurance* (Verse 1, only) **Blue Hymnal #543**

*Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God, born of His spirit, washed in his blood.
This is my story! This is my song! Praising my Savior all the day long!
This is my story! This is my song! Praising my Savior all the day long!*

JESUS SAID, "LET THE CHILDREN COME"

HEBREW READING **Jeremiah 33:14-16**

GOSPEL READING **Luke 21:25-36**

SERMON *The Promise of Truth* **Rev. Laura C. Baker**

PASTORAL PRAYER and THE LORD'S PRAYER

All people: 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 sins, as we forgive those who sin 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.

HYMN *Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus* **Blue Hymnal #125**

OFFERING INVITATION

Liturgist: As God promises to execute justice and righteousness in the world, God invites us to help make this promise a reality. Let us offer our gifts and our lives, with a song and a prayer, that all may be blessed.

(Please stand in body and/or spirit)

DOXOLOGY *Praise God* **Blue Hymnal #46**

(An Offering Collection Box is located on the table in the back of sanctuary, by the exit door)

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

All people: We thank you, God, for the joy we feel this day. We are blessed by this community of love, this sanctuary of acceptance. We place our trust in you, knowing that you care for us. With deep gratitude for all you provide to us, we offer our gifts to you. Center our hearts on you during this season of giving. Amen.

ANTHEM *Unto Thee, O Lord* (Ford) **CHANCEL CHOIR**

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Pastor: God be with you.
Congregation: **And also with you.**
Pastor: Lift up your hearts.
Congregation: **We lift them up to the Lord.**
Pastor: Let us give thanks to God.
Congregation: **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**
Pastor: We thank you, loving God, for your presence in our lives and in our world.

At the beginning of time, you called forth your creation: planets, sun and stars, plants and animals, and all the wonderful, amazing variety of your creatures. We know that you are at work in our world, repairing what is broken and inviting us to join you. You show us the way that leads to life and hope. Yet, we often turn away from you and follow the devices of our hearts. We fail to love you as we should, just as we fail to love your people. Yet, your love was always there, always steadfast. You sent prophets to teach us your ways. When we wandered away from you, they called us back. When we were discouraged, they offered us hope. And so, with your people, in all ages and all places, we join the heavenly chorus, as we proclaim:

All people: Holy, holy, holy, God of power and strength. Creation and heaven are filled with your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is Jesus, the One who comes in your name. Hosanna in the highest!

Pastor: Out of love for us, you sent Jesus to walk with us. He is your Word, your living presence in the world. He taught us to love one another and to extend this love to all creation. He proclaimed that your kingdom was near — a realm of justice and righteousness, where all may find abundant life. He taught us to see signs of your presence in our lives. He reminded us to be alert and ready. The powerful were threatened by his message of love and acceptance, and they sought to destroy him. And so, Jesus