

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

On Bulletin Insert

HYMN

Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates

Chalice, #129

BENEDICTION

Pastor:

Beloved of God, be people of hope.
Let hope live in your heart
and share the hope of Christ with all you meet.
Share hope by noticing someone else's humanity.
Share hope by listening to someone's story.
Share hope by praying for our world.

Congregation:

In this Advent season, we need to see, feel, and share hope.

Liturgist:

As you go out into the wonder of God's creations,
share hope with all whom you meet.

All people:

Amen.

POSTLUDE

December 3, 2023
First Sunday of Advent
Sacrament of Holy Communion

GREETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

Mr. Kevin Crone

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING (Based on Isaiah 64:3)

Pastor:

Today we begin the Advent journey in search of HOPE. We search for hope in the trees and the bare branches of our lives. We look for that moment where we might proclaim as the prophet Isaiah did:

Liturgist:

When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.

Congregation:

**O God, we light the first candle of Advent.
We light the candle of HOPE.**

The HOPE Candle is lit.

Pastor:

We light the hope candle to illuminate those moments where we've already seen the mountains quake.

Liturgist:

Turn to a church neighbor, sitting in front, behind, or beside you and tell them about a vision of HOPE you've recently seen in your daily life, in your relationships, or in the news.

Sharing Visions of Hope

Pastor:

May you find encouragement in your sharing your stories of hope with one another. Let us now call ourselves into worship, using the words of Isaiah, chapter 64. Please stand, as you are comfortable.

(Please stand in body and/or spirit)

CALL TO WORSHIP (Isaiah 64:1-4, New Living Translation)

Pastor:

Oh Lord, that you would burst from the heavens and come down!
How the mountains would quake in your presence!
As fire causes wood to burn and water to boil,
your coming would make the nations tremble.

Congregation:

**When you came down long ago,
you did awesome deeds beyond our highest expectations.
And oh, how the mountains quaked!**

All people:

*For since the world began,
no ear has heard
and no eye has seen a God like you,
who works for those who wait for him!*

CALL TO CONFESSION

Pastor: Let us continue reading from Isaiah 64, confessing our sin.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Isaiah 64:5-9, NLT)

Pastor: O Lord, you welcome those who gladly do good,
who follow godly ways.

**Congregation: But you have been very angry with us,
for we are not godly.
We are constant sinners.**

How can people like us be saved?
Pastor: We are all infected and impure with sin.
When we display our righteous deeds,
they are nothing but filthy rags.

**Congregation: Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall,
and our sins sweep us away like the wind.
Yet we do not call on your name
or plead with you for mercy.**

**All people: Therefore, you have turned away from us
and turned us over to our sins.**

Pastor: And yet, the Lord, our God, is our Father.
We are the clay, and God is the potter.
We all are formed by God's hand.

**Congregation: Don't be so angry with us, Lord.
Please don't remember our sins forever.
Look at us, we pray,
and see that we are all your people.**

MOMENT OF SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS (1 Corinthians 1:8-9, 1)

Pastor: God will keep you strong to the end
so that you will be free from all blame
on the day when our Lord Jesus Christ returns.

**Congregation: God will do this, for God is faithful to do what God says,
and God has invited us into partnership
with the Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Pastor: May God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ,
give you grace and peace.

All people: Amen.

(The congregation may be seated, as the children & youth come forward)

JESUS SAID, "LET THE CHILDREN COME"

GOSPEL READING – Mark 13:24-37

SERMON

The Signs of the Times

Rev. Laura Baker

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & 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.*

SPECIAL MUSIC

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

OFFERING INVITATION

Liturgist: During this late harvest time, when fruit and grain are gathered in and many are preparing for the cold of winter, God invites us to share what we have gathered so others may have enough. The Holy One, the gracious, giving source of comfort, shapes us into vessels of compassion and invites us to give of our bounty so that others may be fed and clothed and healed and loved. Let us be generous and joyful in our giving, dedicating it all with a song of praise and prayer.

(Please stand in body and/or spirit)

DOXOLOGY

We Give Thee But Thine Own

Red Hymnal, #258

(Verse 1, only)

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

All people: *Holy God, triumphant liberating savior of all, receive these gifts and the hopeful hearts that offer them as part of your bountiful harvest. Strengthen and sustain us through our hungers and our fears until your unexpected advent. Help us as we wait to know each day that we are a part of your generous, expectant household, the body of Christ. Amen.*

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Pastor: The hope and peace of God be with you.
Congregation: And also, with you.
Pastor: Lift up your hearts.
Congregation: We lift them to the Lord.
Pastor: Let us give thanks to God Most High.
Congregation: It is right to give God thanks and praise.
Pastor: Loving God, in many and various ways you have visited and redeemed your people.
Congregation: You sent prophets and messengers with promising messages of peace and justice.
Liturgist: Then, you came to a young woman named Mary and laid out the promise in a new way.
Congregation: You promised her a son who would change the world forever. You told her to name him Jesus. We thank you, Lord, for sending him to us: As one of us he came, at first a tender infant, then a toddler, a youth, and an adult.
Pastor: Yet, even as we prepare to celebrate his birth, we remember the life that this baby would live.
Congregation: We remember how he rejoiced with those who rejoiced, how he wept with those who wept.
Liturgist: We remember how he broke the bonds of human tradition and ate, openly, with the despised and the outcast of his world.
Congregation: To the despairing, he spoke words of hope; to the sick, he gave healing; to the rejected, he was a friend.
Pastor: We remember how he was betrayed and nailed to a cross. We proclaim the good news about how you lifted him from the grave and restored him to life, so he might be with us and, we, with him – alive – forevermore.
All people: Therefore, with all the prophets, martyrs, and saints, and all the company of heaven, we glorify you in the song of the angels:

SERAPHIC HYMN

Hymnal, #522

Pastor: So it is, O Lord, as we gather in praise and thanksgiving, we also remember one very special meal that he ate with his closest friends.
Congregation: They gathered to share the story of deliverance from slavery. Yet, he prepared them for liberation of a different kind – freedom from sin and death.
Liturgist: At the end of the meal, he took bread, blessed and broke it, then passed it to them, saying:

Congregation: “Take and eat. This is my body broken for you.”
Liturgist: When supper had ended, he took the cup, blessed it, and passed it to them, saying:
Congregation: “Take this, all of you, and drink from it. This cup is the sign of the New Covenant. Whenever you drink it, remember me, for I shall not eat or drink of it again until the time of the heavenly banquet.”
Pastor: Remembering the birth of the child in a Bethlehem stable, we remember also his life, his death, and his resurrection.
Congregation: We remember how he poured his love out for all he met and look forward to his return and the coming reign of peace, love, and justice.
Pastor: Mighty God, you poured your Spirit upon Mary and she sang words of hope. Pour out your Spirit upon this bread and this wine, and all who have gathered here. As we eat this holy meal, may we find strength for your advent, our time of waiting, and our journey home with you.
Liturgist: Through the broken bread –
Congregation: We participate in the Body of Christ.
Liturgist: Through the cup of blessing –
Congregation: We participate in the promise of new life that Christ brings.
Pastor: These are the gifts of God, for the people of God. Christ's feast is now ready.

DISTRIBUTION OF ELEMENTS

Both grape juice and wine are offered.

Grape juice is clear. Wine is red.

Commune as you feel called.

Please come forward as directed by the Communion usher.

Come by way of the center aisle and return to your seat by way of the side aisle.

Pastor Laura and an usher will come to you, if mobility is difficult.

Please raise your hand and we will serve you communion at your seat.

PRAYER OF RESPONSE AND PRAISE

All people: God and Father of Jesus Christ may the eating and drinking of this holy meal, fill us with hope in a world of despair. Through this meal, grant us a hunger for peace and justice, that we might be beacons of hope in our communities and around the world. Amen.