

First Sunday in Advent, December 3, 2023

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

3228 SW Sunset Blvd, Portland, Oregon

<https://zoom.us/j/738059997> or <http://www.facebook.com/standrewspdx/live>



Photo by Ojaswi Pratap Singh

GATHERING

Prelude

Ringing of the Bell

Welcome

Time to Center

Lighting the First Advent Candle

Person A: In our most desperate times, by day or by night, the hope of Christ may be found. We watch and we wait to witness the hope of heaven making a place here on earth.

Person B: Today we light the candle of hope, because hope has come to us.

Light the first candle.

All: ***Come, hope of heaven!
We lift up our heads with expectation.
Where will we find you today?***

Song *Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah (v. 1 only)*
Glory to God #85

***Call to Worship**

Come to worship, all who seek and search for truth and justice.

The light will guide your way to wisdom.

Come to worship, all who wonder, wander, and wait for Jesus.

The light will show you the way.

Come to worship, to find comfort, rest, and peace.

God is in the shadows, find peace under God's wings.

Come to worship, all who seek safety from scary things.

God is in the hiding places, and the darkness is safe.

We gather to worship in light and in darkness.

God is here among us. Let us worship!

***Opening Prayer**

Light of the World and Shadow of Safety,
you created light and darkness for our good.

As we enter this season of Advent,

waiting in the darkness for the light of the world,

we find you all around us. We join together to praise you today,

to hear from your Spirit, and to meet with the living Word,

Christ Jesus, who was with God in the beginning.

Open our hearts and minds to hear what you have to say to us today.

Open our hearts and minds to release our concerns to your loving care.

And open our hearts and minds to meet the needs

of our neighbors with compassion. ***Amen.***

***Hymn** *O Come, O Come Emmanuel (vv. 1 and 6)* Glory to God #88

Call to Confession

On this first Sunday of a new church year, this first Sunday of a season of preparation for a fuller experience of God's incarnation in Jesus, we prepare our hearts for the light through self-examination and confession. Please pray with me.

Prayer of Confession

***Light of the World and Shadow of Safety,
we humble ourselves to pray.***

***You created us to be reflections of your love and justice,
but we often reflect our own fears and prejudices.***

***Forgive us, God. If we are mirrors of your great brilliance,
help us sparkle when the world is gray.***

Amen.

Silent Prayers of Confession

...In Jesus' name. ***Amen.***

Assurance of Forgiveness

God is faithful to turn us around and place us on healthy paths when we acknowledge our unloving and unjust selves.

Rest in the assurance you are forgiven, loved, and ready to begin again.

***Sung Response of Praise** *Gloria* Glory to God #113.
(*Refrain only from Angels We Have Heard on High*)

Sharing the Peace of Christ

God said, "let there be light," and there was light.
God says, "let there be peace in this place," and there shall be peace.
Speak a word of peace to your neighbor,
to your family members, to a stranger.
May the peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

THE WORD

Prayer of Illumination

Light of the World and Shadow of Safety,
open our hearts and minds to the brilliance of your Word today.
May we receive it as illumination for our journey
and a cloud of shelter for our souls. ***Amen.***

A Reading from the Gospel According to Mark *Mark 8:27-29*

A Reading from the Prophet Jeremiah *Jeremiah 33:14-16*

Sermon *Pastor Sarah Sanderson-Doughty*

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

Silent Reflection on the Word Read and Proclaimed

***Affirmation of Hope**

Siblings in Christ, let us proclaim the hope of our faith:
While we were still stardust,
our Creator held us in contemplation.
While we were enslaved,
the Righteous Judge burned with anger.
When we were set free,
the Shepherd guided us toward green pastures.
While we were violent and hateful,
God imagined a world of peace.
When we oppressed others,
the Mighty One moved against us and laid us low.
When we were oppressed,

the Deliverer broke our chains.

When we did not know the way of love and justice,

the Loving Parent sent the Child, Jesus.

When we carried heavy burdens,

Jesus bore them for us.

We have seen God's faithfulness in the past.

And because of our past, we have hope for the future.

Worshiping God with our Tithes and Offerings

Invitation to Generosity

We shine with the light of God when we mirror the generosity of God.

Let us continue our worship in act of dedication.

Offertory Anthem *Come, Messiah!*

Words by Lloyd Larson and Abbe Simon-Joseph Pellegrin; Music by Lloyd Larson

***Response of Praise** *to the tune of Midnight Clear*

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Praise God all creatures here below.

Praise God, above, ye heavenly host

Praise Parent, Child, and Holy Ghost!

***Prayer of Dedication**

Light of the World and Shadow of Safety,

we bring our humble offerings to you,

knowing to you belong the lights sustaining us

and the vastness of the universe surrounding us.

Take our offerings of time and treasure

and multiply them among us.

Guide us to use these gifts with wisdom

and cleverness to the glory of your Son, Jesus.

Amen.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

Invitation

Even as we watch and wait for the coming of our True Hope, Christ prepares a table for us. Christ's bread of life and cup of blessing are available to all who desire to be fed by the feast. This fellowship welcomes you to come to the table, no matter where you are on your journey, no matter where you come from, whom you love, your identity, or level of understanding.

All willing hearts are welcome.

The Great Thanksgiving, Words of Institution, and Prayer of Consecration

The light be with you

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the light.

Let us give thanks to God our light.

It is right to give thanks and praise to God.

Light of the World, you are holy.

Shadow of Safety, you are powerful and mighty.

Just as you guided Israel as a pillar of fire at day

and a pillar of cloud at night, you guide us through darkness and light.

And you guided Jesus, from his incarnation in Bethlehem,

through his baptism, temptation, and ministry,

even as he prepared for pain and loss. We remember:

On the night before he died, Jesus was at table with his friends.

He took bread, broke it and gave it to them saying,

“Take, eat, this is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

In the same way after supper he took the cup and poured it saying,

“This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me.”

Every time we eat this bread and drink this cup

we proclaim the saving death of our risen Lord until he come again.

And so, in remembrance of the Light of the World, Jesus Christ,

we come to the table with hope and expectation,

confident that through the incarnation of Jesus, we are made whole.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Let us pray:

God our Loving Parent,

meet us here as we share these gifts of bread and cup.

Make them be for us the life and blessing of Christ,

that we may be lights of love and justice to the world.

Holy Spirit, unite us in Christ’s mission.

Help us care for one another and for our community,

until love and justice reign

and we feast at his heavenly banquet together.

To Christ, our friend and brother,

to the Almighty Creator, to the Holy Spirit, our comforter,

be glory and praise forever and ever. Amen.

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

Light of the World and Shadow of Safety,
among this gathering of your saints
we bring joys and sorrows from our lives,
and the lives of those whom we love.

Today we celebrate...

Today we pray for...

Attend the joys and concerns of your people with both the light of your
salvation and the shadow of your comfort.

And open our own hearts to how we may partner with you
to accompany our friends, family, and neighbors through both joy and loss.

And now hear us as we pray with the confidence of the children of God,

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.

Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the glory,

and the honor forever and ever.

Sharing the Bread and Cup

I invite the servers forward for all is ready. The bread is all gluten free, the
juice is all unfermented. Everyone is safe and welcome at this table. If you
desire to be served in your seat raise a hand when the traveling server comes
your way. Otherwise, please come forward to receive bread and cup. Please
hold the elements until all have received so that we can receive as one body
with our kindred who are worshiping with us on-line.

Prayer after Communion

Light of the World and Shadow of Safety,

you have fed us with the bread of life and the cup of blessing.

You have made our humanity whole by the sacrifice of Jesus.

When we doubt our worth or splendor,

we remember your holy work, completed on our behalf,

by the light and the shadow of heaven.

We choose to go by the powers of love

and justice from this moment onward. Amen.

SENDING

***Closing Song** *Now the Heavens Start to Whisper* Glory to God #94

Our Ministry in Christ

Charge and Sung Benediction

Siblings in Christ, do not be afraid of the light or darkness.

Go into the world and bring light to the lost and darkness to the weary.

Remember that at St. A's we are connecting with Christ
and each other to serve our neighbors.

Receive this blessing:

And All God's People Say...

Postlude

Worship Source

Much of our liturgy for this season is from the resource "In Light and Darkness" by Illustrated Ministry. Amanda Meisenheimer was the primary writer of this resource. www.illustratedministry.com. 2022. We purchased this resource and are permitted to use it for our worship services.