

CALL TO WORSHIP

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Let us come together in this place to feel the warmth of God's presence.

We are here to spend time with our Creator and listen for the Spirit.

God waits for us. God calls us to place our trust in Him, our Creator and Redeemer.

God calls us to listen once again for the voice of the Spirit speaking to us in our lives.

We find ourselves weary and broken. Only You can heal us and refresh us.

Only You can open our hearts and minds.

Let us remember who created us and loves us just as we are.

Let us worship together as we await the coming of the Messiah. **Amen.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Almighty God, you know us inside and out. You are present alongside us in our past, present, and future. We cannot escape your presence.

You know us before we were born. You watch over us day and night, and always hear our prayers. We come before you now wanting to hear your voice. Forgive us when we stray and bring us closer to your Spirit once again. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection

God of love, **We confess that we have turned away from you, God. We have not trusted in your promises to hear us. We have not believed that you are by our side through everything in our lives. We let worry and fear consume us. We do not always treat our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may know your deep love for us again and glorify your holy name in all that we say and do. Amen.**

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was crucified and died for us and for all our sins. As a minister of the church of Christ, I declare to you that God forgives all of your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. God has never left you. Return to the Lord your God, with joyful hearts, ready to accept God's gift of grace. **Amen.**

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray together.... **Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH: Advent 1

We praise you, O God, for all that you have made. We thank you for evergreen trees and plants which bless our community all winter. We thank you for this evergreen crown that marks our days as we prepare for Christ's advent.

Wake us from our slumber, refresh us from a difficult year, as we light this first candle, that we may be ready to greet our Lord. Grant all these things through Christ, our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. **Amen.**

FIRST READING: Isaiah 64:1-9

This lament comes from a people who have had their hopes shattered. The visions of a rebuilt Jerusalem and a renewed people of God, spoken of in Isaiah 40–55, have not been realized. Instead, the people experience ruin, conflict, and famine. This lament calls God to account—to be the God who has brought deliverance in the past.

- ¹O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—
²as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil—
to make your name known to your adversaries,
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!
³When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.
⁴From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him.
⁵You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways.
But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed.
⁶We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy
cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
⁷There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden
your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.
⁸Yet, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.
⁹Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD, and do not remember iniquity forever.
Now consider, we are all your people. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

- ¹Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph | like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned up- | on the cherubim.
²**In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, | and Manasseh,**
stir up your strength and | come to help us.
³Restore | us, O God; let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.
⁴**O LORD| God of hosts, how long will your anger fume when your | people pray?**
⁵You have fed them with the | bread of tears;
you have given them bowls of | tears to drink.
⁶**You have made us the derision | of our neighbors,**
and our enemies laugh | us to scorn.
⁷Restore us, O | God of hosts; let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.
¹⁷**Let your hand be upon the one at | your right hand,**
the one you have made so strong | for yourself.
¹⁸And so will we never turn a- | way from you;
give us life, that we may call up- | on your name.
¹⁹**Restore us, O LORD| God of hosts; let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.**

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

As the Christians in Corinth await the advent of Jesus, Paul reminds them how the Lord has already enriched them through spiritual gifts and will continue to strengthen them until the coming day of the Lord.

³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—⁶just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—⁷so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁸He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

*GOSPEL: Mark 13:24-37

Jesus encourages his followers to look forward to the day when he returns in power and glory to end all suffering.

[Jesus said:] ²⁴“In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, ²⁵and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. ²⁷Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

²⁸“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³²“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray together over the gifts we have received....Almighty God,

You are Creator of all that is in heaven and on earth. We rejoice that we have many blessings to be thankful for in our lives. You have changed our lives forever with your grace. Grant us courage to change the lives of others with your Good News. Bless our congregation, this community, and all the offerings we give back to you for your holy work, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Pastor: God of power and might, tear open the heavens and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

A brief silence.

Leader: We pray for the ministry we share in Christ's name. Open our hearts to your call for justice, peace, and healing. Attune us to the needs of the world as you draw near. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Leader: We pray for this planet in need of restoration: for devastated habitats, polluted waters, thawing ice, blazing fires, swelling floods, and long-lasting droughts. Renew the face of the earth and our relationship to it. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Leader: We pray for all people who care for others in our community and around the world. Fill them with compassion and the power to respond with justice for those who are oppressed, with welcome for those who are excluded, and with relief for those who suffer. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Leader: We pray for people who are in crisis as the seasons change: for those without homes facing severe weather, for those who are unemployed or underemployed, and for those in poverty or facing food insecurity. Relieve their burdens, sustain their bodies, and ease their minds. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Pastor: We pray for the people in our families and congregation who live with depression, anxiety, chronic pain, addiction, and other invisible illnesses (*especially*). Ease their suffering and support them when they struggle. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Leader: We give thanks for the lives and witness of those who died while waiting for justice, peace, or healing, those whose names we know and those whose names are known only to you. Sustain all who still yearn for the completion of your redeeming work. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Pastor: Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*SENDING PRAYER

Let us pray. Lord God, in this time of holy worship you have refreshed us with your Word and given us new hope. You provide manna when we are hungry, and water to renew us. Send us forth now as witnesses of your Good News for all, that we may be light for the world, as we wait for Jesus, your Son and our Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you. Know that God is closest to you when you feel furthest away. May Christ's presence guide you in all you do. May the Holy Spirit shine in you and bring others closer to God's love and ✠ give you hope. **Amen.**

*DISMISSAL

Go and spread God's love as we prepare for the Messiah! **Thanks be to God**