SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT
DECEMBER 5, 2021
11:00 AM



PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

Improbable God,
Under the clamor of all the voices that claim our allegiance
call us into the wild and uneven places
where your life-giving word is heard.
There, purge and prune and tend our spirits
until your love finds its home in our hearts.
Then show us how we might
smooth the way of your coming,
for the sake of the world you love.

CHURCH LIFE UPDATE Margaret LaMotte Torrence

INTROIT *Rhapsodie* Joseph Rheinberger
(Jonathan Gentry, oboe; Steven Phillips, organ)

***CALL TO WORSHIP AND LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES**

Carrie, Lorenzo, Henry, and Alice Mills

The prophet Isaiah spoke of the day
when people would beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks,
the day when nations would no longer lift up swords against other nations.

(The Advent candles are lit.)

We light these candles as a sign of the coming light of Christ.
As the Lord has promised, in days to come.
The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling will lie down together.
And a little child shall lead them.
Let us walk in the light of the Lord.

***HYMN 106** *Prepare the Way, O Zion* Bereden Väg för Herran

Prepare the way, O Zion, your Christ is drawing near!
Let every hill and valley a level way appear.
Greet One who comes in glory, foretold in sacred story.
O blest is Christ who came in God's most holy name.

He brings God's rule, O Zion; he comes from heaven above.
His rule is peace and freedom, and justice, truth, and love.
Lift high your praise resounding, for grace and joy abounding.
O blest is Christ who came in God's most holy name.

Fling wide your gates, O Zion; your Savior's rule embrace,
And tidings of salvation proclaim in every place.
All lands will bow rejoicing, their adoration voicing.
O blest is Christ who came in God's most holy name.

**Those who are able are invited to stand.*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION Margaret LaMotte Torrence

Holy One,
In the cool flush of morning
we dare to come,
not because we are ready to greet you,
but because our need is so great
and your hour approaches.
Strip away our defenses
and bathe us in your mercy
until we yield our lives in joy.

(silent prayer)

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

* **SONG OF JOY** *From All That Dwell Below the Skies*

From all that dwell below the skies
Let the Creator's praise arise: Alleluia! Alleluia!
Let the Redeemer's name be sung
Through every land in every tongue: Alleluia! Alleluia!
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Alleluia!

* **THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READING Luke 3:1-18

SERMON *"The Word in the Wilderness"* Margaret LaMotte Torrence

* **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** From *A Declaration of Faith*
Carrie Mills

In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus
God kept his promises.
All that we can ever hope for
was present in Christ.
But the work of God in Christ is not over.
God calls us to hope for more than we have yet seen.
The hope God gives us is ultimate confidence
that supports us when lesser hopes fail us.
In Christ God gives hope for a new heaven and earth,
certainty of victory over death,
assurance of mercy and judgment beyond death.
This hope gives us courage for the present struggle.

Jesus is Lord!
He has been Lord from the beginning.
He will be Lord at the end.
Even now he is Lord.

ANTHEM *The Lord Your God is With You* Text adapted from Zephaniah 3:17
(The Chancel Choir, with Jonathan Gentry) Music by J. Baas

The Lord your God is with you,
Emmanuel who saves.

He will take great delight in you.
He will no longer rebuke you.

I will exalt over you with loud singing: Alleluia!
The Lord your God is with you.

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

THE GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Let us pray.

O Lord, how shall I meet you, how welcome you aright?
Your people long to greet you, my hope, my heart's delight!
O kindle, Lord most holy, a lamp within my breast
To do in spirit lowly all that may please you best.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

You breathed us into being; you named us as your own;
And when we wandered from you, you grieved our hearts of stone.
You sent to us your prophets, your poets and your priests
Who told us of your mercy, the promised day of peace.

Therefore, we praise you, joining our voices with choirs of angels and with all the faithful of every time and place who forever sing to the glory of your name:

Love caused your incarnation; love brought you down to me;
Your thirst for my salvation procured my liberty.
O love beyond all telling, that led you to embrace
In love, all loves excelling, our lost and fallen race.

Great is the mystery of faith:
Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Pour out your breath upon us, and on this table spread,
That we might come to meet you in cup and broken bread.
And bind us to each other that we might live to see
Your grace in blind eyes opened and captives breaking free.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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 debts as we forgive our debtors;
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 WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE SHARING OF THE BREAD AND THE CUP

PRAYER OF RESPONSE

Gracious God,
Truly you have met us here;
we have tasted your love,
and glimpsed your image reflected in our neighbor's.
Continue to burn in our hearts
until we recognize your coming
wherever bread and hearts are broken.
For we pray in the name of Jesus, whose every breath was praise.

You come, O Lord, with gladness, in mercy and goodwill,
to bring an end to sadness and bid our fears be still.
In patient expectation, we live for that great day
when your renewed creation your glory shall display.

***HYMN** *All Hail to God's Anointed* Aurelia

All hail to God's anointed, great David's greater Son!
All hail, in time appointed, your reign on earth begun!
You come to break oppression, to set the captive free,
To take away transgression and rule in equity.

You come with rescue speedy to those who suffer wrong,
To help the poor and needy and bid the weak be strong;
To give them songs for sighing, their darkness turn to light,
Whose souls, condemned and dying, are precious in your sight.

You shall come down like showers upon the fruitful earth;
Love, joy, and hope, like flowers, spring in your path to birth.
Before you on the mountains shall peace, the herald, go,
And righteousness in fountains from hill to valley flow.

All rulers bow before you, and gold and incense bring.
All nations shall adore you; your praise all people sing.
To you shall prayer unceasing and daily vows ascend.
Your rule is still increasing; your rule is without end.

***BENEDICTION** Margaret LaMotte Torrence

POSTLUDE *Advent Pastiche* Jean Langlais