



Prepare the way of the Lord —ISAIAH 40:3

DECEMBER 9-10, 2023

2ND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

GATHERING PRAYER:

Begin this Sunday's worship with a time of silence. Our lives are far noisier than wind, fire, or earthquake. In a great paradox, God speaks to us in sheer silence. Use this chance to listen as you pray.

Lord God, you lovingly spoke all creation into existence. You shaped each one of us within our mother's womb. As we gather to worship you today, fill our hearts with wonder and our mouths with praise at the wildly wonderful world you have made. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

PASTORAL WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY:

- ❖ *To hope means to be ready at any moment for that which is not yet born.*
- Eric Fromm
- ❖ *Some things are true whether we believe them or not.*
- Mike Graves
- ❖ *Into our midst comes Advent, representing not the end but the beginning of the church year; not the tying-up of all our loose ends, but God's opening up of our future. Its focus is not on all we have to do, but on all God has done, is doing and will do in the marvelous gift of Christ.*
- Jean Cramer-Heuerman

CALL TO WORSHIP:

One: God gives a promise,

All: The extraordinary amidst the ordinary,

One: But we doubt the promise,

All: God must overcome roadblocks and detours.

One: To lead us to new life,

All: God must prod us at times,

One: To lead us from failure and exile,

All: into a new day.

One: Advent is a journey,

All: Made on a promise,

One: A discovery of God's voice:

All: In unexpected places and spaces!

PRAISE SONG: *“Bethlehem Highway” (music at end of bulletin)*

CONFESSION:

Loving God, it is true that we do not see your new vision for life. We get stuck in old patterns, bad habits, limited hopes. We do not look deep enough to see you in the midst of difficulty, to find you inside our anxious longing. We do not recognize you in our longing for someone or something to take away the emptiness. We place our hopes on some present, some kind word, some new experience and miss the deepest love which is offered to us by the child in the manger.

Persistent God, open us to seeing you in the paradoxes of life. Give us reason to smile, knowing you are working in ways we cannot imagine or expect. Set loose a new hope in us and in all. Amen.

THE CONFESSION RESPONSE: *“Light Shines in the Darkness”
(music at end of bulletin)*

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE: *The Second Sunday of Advent*

CANDLE LIGHTING LITANY:

Leader: Advent is a time to watch

People: We watch, with hope, for the dawning light.

Leader: Advent is a time to watch for hope in our despair.

People: We watch, with hope, for the dawning light.

Leader: Advent is a time to watch for grace and forgiveness.

People: We watch, with hope, for the dawning light.

Leader: Advent is a time to watch for peace in the midst of conflict.

People: We watch, with hope, for the dawning light.

Leader: Advent is a time to watch for peace the end of darkness.

People: We watch for Jesus, the Light of the World.

CANDLE LIGHTING:

Leader: *This morning we light 2 candles. The first candle reminds us that Advent is a time of waiting. The second candle reminds us that Advent is also a time of watching. We watch with expectant eyes, trusting that God is active, present, and constantly at work. As we light the second candle, we ask for faith to watch for God's presence and open our eyes to see all that God is doing.*

CANDLE LIGHTING PRAYER:

Leader: God in heaven, as we learn to watch for signs of your presence, open our eyes that we might see the ways you are at work around us, within us, and through us.

People: Amen.

CANDLE LIGHTING SONG: *“Jesus, the Light of the World”*
(music at end of bulletin)

THE GOSPEL: *Luke 1:5-20; Luke 1:34-45; Luke 1:57-60*

⁵ In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was descended from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶ Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. ⁷ But they had no children because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

⁸ Once when he was serving as priest before God during his section's turn of duty, ⁹ he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord to offer incense. ¹⁰ Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. ¹¹ Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹² When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified, and fear overwhelmed him. ¹³ But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. ¹⁴ You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, ¹⁵ for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶ He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” ¹⁸ Zechariah said to the angel, “How can I know that this will happen? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years.” ¹⁹ The angel replied, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. ²⁰ But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur.”

³⁴ Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?”^[c] ³⁵ The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born^[d] will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶ And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God.” ³⁸ Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

³⁹ In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰ where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled

OUR *Welcome* IS WIDE OPEN

Skeptic. Cynic. Certain. Believer. Confident. Fearful. Doubter. Seeker. Questioner.
Latino. Black. Asian. White. Indigenous. Immigrant. Any combination of ethnic or
racial identities. Female. Male. Straight. Gay. Bisexual. Transgender. Questioning.
Rich. Poor. Middle-class. Barely making it. Able bodied. Specially abled. Disabled.
Young. Old. In-between. Married. Single. Divorced. Awaiting trial. Served time.
On probation. Tired. Worn. Hopeful. Employed. Unemployed. Workaholic. Slacker.
Anxious. Depressed. Confused. Centered. Inked. Pierced. Both. Life long follower
of Jesus. Regular attender. Occasional attender. Curious onlooker. Don't quite fit the box.
Need a prayer right now. **Trinity is a faith community where we believe
in God's love, grace and mercy—illustrated most clearly through Jesus
Christ. We believe we are all children of God, created in God's image
and equal in God's sight. We believe God loves us just as we are and
way too much to let us stay this way. We are called to live in God's light
and be transformed, not through judgment but through unconditional love.
We believe God's love is all-inclusive and is stronger than the pressure
to be perfect regardless of whatever labels we carry. Saint. Sinner. Democrat.
Republican. Independent. Libertarian. Green. Socialist. Apolitical. Addicted. Recovering.
We don't care what religion or denomination you are. We are all Human. We are all Flawed.
We are all Beloved. —You are welcome here.**

COME *as you are.*

TRINITY CONGREGATION WELCOME STATEMENT | MARCH 2017



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Bethlehem Highway

There is hope on Beth-le-hem high-way for the ones who will
jour-ney there, and the hope is the child in the man-ger
bring-ing us love be-yond com-^{Fine}pare. It's a life-line for the need
Let the an-gels go be-fore
-y. It's__ sight to those who can't see. It's a
us. Let the dark-ness__ be-come__ light. Now the
free-dom for the faith-ful in a Child of pro- phe- cy.
Sav-ior lives a-mong us. Now__ truth has come to life.

Jesus, the Light of the World

We'll walk in the light, beau-ti-ful light, come, where the
dew-drops of mer-cy shine bright. O, shine all a-round us by
day and by night, Je-sus, the light of the world.

Light Shines in the Darkness

Oh the light shines in the dark - ness and the
light will not be o - ver - come. In this world *Last time end*
bro - ken and scat - tered the light will not be o - ver - come.
As our lives are turn - ing and our
Tears through - out cre - a - tion, torn a -
hearts are yearn - ing through the days of hurt - ing,
part re - la - tions, wounds a - cross the na - tions,
2
deep in the night still the flame burns bright.
hope may seem gone still the flame burns on.

Advent Begins in the Darkness of Night



1. Ad - vent be - gins in the dark - ness of
2. Ad - vent be - gins with our dreams yet de -
3. Ad - vent be - gins in op - pres - sion's do -
4. Ad - vent goes on till the prom - ised dawn



night, wait - ing and watch - ing for signs of a
ferred. Love sounds ri - dic - u - lous; prayer seems ab -
main, marked by the cries of con - fu - sion and
breaks, ty - rants are top - pled, and God's dream a -



light; walk - ing in faith that a path will ap -
surd, but in the midst of life's cen - ter - less
pain. Yet hope is kin - dled where jus - tice is
wakes. Hope is per - fect - ed and faith is made



pear; dar - ing to fol - low in spite of our fear.
maze, we lift to - geth - er our pro - test of praise.
done, mer - cy is nur - tured and peace is be - gun.
sight. Love is our cen - ter and Christ is our light.

All Through the Night

1. Go, my friends, and hope de - fend you all through the night.
2. Walk the streets and bus - y high - ways all through the night.
3. Wash the feet of friend and strang - er all through the night.

May she peace and cour - age send you all through the night.
Trudge the dark and lone - ly by - ways all through the night.
Shel - ter in the time of dan - ger all through the night.

May she ev - er stand be - side you, in her lov - ing
Touch the sor - row and the sad - ness, dance with those who
In your lives is grace a - bound - ing. Love and light the

kind - ness hide you. Through the treach - 'rous dark - ness guide you
long for glad - ness. Be the com - fort in the mad - ness
night con - found - ing. In your souls the song is sound - ing

all through the night.
all through the night.
all through the night.

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