

Eastminster Presbyterian Church

SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

First Sunday of Advent

November 29, 2020-11:00 a.m.

OPENING PRAYER

O Lord, our lives are so filled with chaos. Quieten us in these moments that we may focus on you. Help us be ready to receive your message and gift of love that we might grow into more faithful disciples, serving you by serving others with hope and compassion. Amen

VOLUNTARY

Melody Davis

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

The Kelleher Family

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light,

those who lived in a land of deep darkness on them light has shined.

We join with sisters and brothers around the world, lighting candles to mark our steps in this Advent journey.

Today, we light the candle of Hope.

Even though the world seems dark and cold, we know that the light of Christ is coming. The face of our Lord will shine, and we shall be saved!

Testifying against all suffering and darkness, we kindle this light. And in doing so together, we proclaim to the world that, in Christ, we have hope.

OPENING HYMN 106 *Prepare the Way, O Zion*

CALL TO CONFESSION

A question to ponder for a moment: How good are we at watching for signs of God's presence in the world - in our lives, our homes?

(A moment for silent reflection)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND GOD'S ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

God, we confess that time and distance have made us forget the passion that your prophets had, the trust of your disciples, and the courage of the early believers. Too often we get caught up in the busy-ness around us and can't be bothered to watch and wait for signs of your return. Forgive us. Call us into the spirit of Advent, into a life of active watching and participating in your reign now and in the time to come. You forgive us, O God, and renew a right spirit in our hearts. With grateful hearts, we return our thanksgiving. Amen

RESPONSE 110 *Love Has Come* (verse 3)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Open the eyes of our hearts to see the power and truth of your words. Give us courage and joy that we might be witnesses to your eternal love through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING (*Pew Bible, page 694*)

Isaiah 64: 1-9

O 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.

NEW TESTAMENT READING (*Pew Bible, page 50*)

Mark 13: 24-37

²⁴“But 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.”

HYMN 83 *Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus*

SERMON

A Tiny Tear

Sherry Holloman

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe in God, who is love, whose love is manifest in all creation, in our lives, and in all people. We follow Christ, who embodied God's love. In his life and ministry, his death and resurrection, and his granting to us of his Spirit, he filled us with that love as well. We live by the Spirit, the presence of God's love in us. In that love we participate in the Church, Body of Christ, in loving God by loving our neighbors through our prayers, our presence, our gifts and our service. Love is our faith, and it is a gift from God. We thank God, and ask God's blessings, that we may love in the name of Christ and the power of the Spirit, to God's glory. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

God of Advent, God of watching and waiting, give us patience when we lack it. Give us courage when we are weak. Grant us mercy when we feel small. Grant us justice when we feel wronged. Keep us to the paths of love and peace that your son modeled for us and taught us. Help us to actively watch and wait for ways we can participate in your reign now, so that others may recognize your love and light in our world, returning in a new way. We are all your people, O God, and all of us are in need in this time of a little extra strength, a little extra courage, a little extra hope so that we might follow You in the best way we can. In the name of Christ, the Source of all our strength and courage and hope, we pray, saying...**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.**

OFFERTORY SENTENCE

In Jesus Christ, God brought Good News into our world. By the Good News of the Bible, God is still bringing hope to people. In this season of preparation, may we think good thoughts, do good deeds, share generously so that we may continue to be God's good people of hope in our world.

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY

Advent Antiphon

Joel Raney

Michele Pappas, soloist, Handbells and Sanctuary Choir

RESPONSE 103 *As With Gladness Men of Old (verse 3)*

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

O God, the greatest gift creation ever received came during this season of anticipation. Throughout the next four weeks, may we live into a renewed spirit of generosity that exhibits the hope, peace, love, and joy that became incarnate in the our Lord. We offer

them and our lives to you, O God, in the name of the Living One: Jesus the Christ. Amen.

DISMISSAL AND BENEDICTION

May we be people of hope who let hope live in our hearts and share the hope of Christ with all you meet. May we share hope by noticing someone else's humanity, by listening to someone's story, by praying for our world. In this Advent season, we need to see, feel, and share hope. May the hope of God our Creator, Christ our Redeemer and the Holy Spirit, our Sustainer walk with us this and every day. Amen

CLOSING HYMN 104 *O Lord How Shall I Meet You?*