

Lord's Day Worship

November 28, 2021

First Sunday in Advent

*(Asterisk) indicates *Please stand as you are able.*

PRAISE

* Call to Worship

* Opening Hymn *"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"*

RENEWAL

* Prayer of Confession (unison)

God our Father, like Abraham and Sarah we are often more likely to laugh at your promises than we are to trust and be at peace in your faithful love. Your call to walk blamelessly before you weighs on our hearts. Sometimes we are aware how far short we fall and we despair of ourselves; sometimes we are blind to our sin and imagine ourselves to be doing quite well. Lord, thank you that your mercy is more than a match for our sins of self-hatred and self-righteousness. Forgive us, and give us faith to believe your promises and live with joyful, confident hope, through Jesus Christ, our redeemer and friend. (silent prayer)

* Song *"Emmanuel, Emmanuel"*

Advent Candle Lighting

Pastoral Prayer & 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.

COMMITMENT

Offering

Old Testament Reading

Genesis 15:1-6

* Hymn

"Fullness of Grace"

New Testament Reading

Luke 1:5-20

Sermon

"How Shall I Know?"

Prayer

* Affirmation of Faith – The Apostles' Creed (c. 3rd century)

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from there he shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy universal Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

* Closing Song

"Jesus, Hope of Every Nation"

* Benediction

* Dismissal

Church, where are you going?

We go forth to serve God's world as those who love our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Glory to God!

The Strap of His Sandals

John answered them all saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." (Luke 3:16, ESV)

If there's one thing we Americans believe in, it's equality. It's in our founding creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal . . ." We may not always live up to it, but our ideal is that every person stands equal with every other. It's why we've always rejected European notions of nobility and aristocracy. Americans don't bow or curtsy, even to those in high office. We hold our heads up, side-by-side, as equals. So, if I may be so bold, there's something distinctly un-American about the gospel.

The Christ whose birth we celebrate at Christmas comes to us humbly as one of us, but emphatically not as our equal. He is infinitely more graceful, more powerful, more worthy than we are. Next to him, well, we're not worthy to stoop down and tie his shoes. John the Baptist got this right, and so must we if we would prepare for Christ's coming. John wasn't putting himself down, he was lifting Christ up as *he who is mightier than I.*

To borrow a phrase from Mark Twain, the difference between Jesus and John the Baptist was the difference between the lightning and the lightning bug. John baptized with water, and it was powerful. But John prophesied of Jesus: *He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.* And the great surprise of the gospel is that He will give his Holy Spirit not to the high and mighty, but to the lowly and humble who will receive Him. It's as if the King stopped his carriage to get out and embrace street urchins and say, "You are my lost children. Come and live with me." The coming of Christ is our coming into true manhood and womanhood, children of our heavenly Father through the indwelling of His Spirit.

Pastor Phil Moran



CHRIST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

“...so that Jesus Christ might come to have first place in everything.” Colossians 1:18 (b) NRSV

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Luke 1:5-20

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