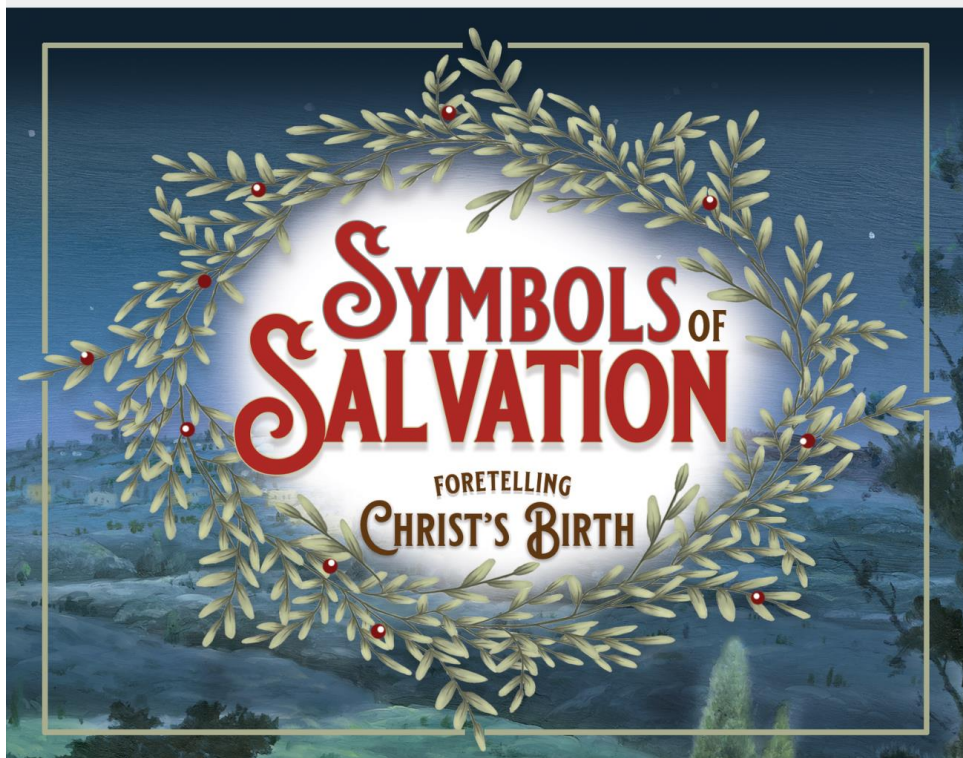


First Advent Midweek
December 1, 2021 | 6:30 P.M.



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MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 1

OLD TESTAMENT CHRISTMAS

AS WE GATHER: The weeks leading up to Christmas are filled with special memories as previous holiday seasons come to mind. The Church Year time of Advent helps us to prepare for the coming of our Lord once again. As we make those preparations, not only do we look back to the first Christmas as recorded by the Gospel writers, but we also look even further back in Scripture to when the Son of God came among His people in other times and places before His wondrous birth at Bethlehem. In the Old Testament, we find the details of earlier divine visits that are part of our sacred memory, and we recall them in these holy days.

As we prepare to celebrate the coming of our Lord in the flesh to save us from our sins, we are reminded that the first Christmas wasn't the first time He revealed Himself to His people on earth. The Son of God comes to His people in tangible ways throughout the Old Testament to speak to them and to bring them deliverance. One such occasion is at the burning bush. The *Malak Yahweh* appears to Moses. *Malak* means "messenger." So while this phrase is usually translated as "Angel of the Lord," it does not refer in this case to any created angel but to the Lord Himself, the messenger of the Father. The Son of God comes down into the burning bush to announce how Israel will be delivered from their slavery to the Egyptians. This foreshadows the greater salvation to come when the Lord will join Himself permanently to our human nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary. As the bush did not burn up at His presence, so the Lord Jesus did not come to destroy us but to save us and make us His own, like living branches of Him who is the vine.

+ PREPARATION +

As the hymn is sung, the candles on the Advent wreath and the altar are lighted.

SERIES HYMN:

O Great I Am, Almighty Word

David Rogner

O GREAT I AM
Jacob B. Weber



1 O great I AM, al - might - y Word, Whose sav - ing
2 Ap - pear - ing in a bush of flame, You called on
3 You dwelt a - midst the wan-d'ring band And led them
4 You chose the weak and gave them might To con - quer
5 O Word In - car - nate, Christ of God, Par - tak - er



deeds were seen and heard A - mong Your peo - ple
Mo - ses to pro - claim De - liv'r - ance from cap -
to the Prom-ised Land; Your pres - ence hov - ered,
in the mor - tal fight, Then took on flesh to
of our flesh and blood, Be in our midst and



Is - ra - el, Come now to us, and ev - er dwell.
tiv - i - ty And lead Your peo - ple through the sea.
as a cloud, Your glo - ry filled the tent of God.
draw our breath, Meek child, yet vic - tor o - ver death.
al - ways dwell As Sav - ior, Lord, Im - man - u - el.

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INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

P Our help is in the name of the LORD,

C Who made heaven and earth.

P In this season of penitence and reflection, let us think of our unworthiness and confess before God that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, asking for His merciful forgiveness.

C God Almighty, have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to life everlasting. Amen.

P Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us and has given His only Son, our Emmanuel, to die for us, and for His sake, forgives us all our sins. May the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

C Amen.

SALUTATION

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

OPENING COLLECT

P Let us pray.

Almighty Father, by the advent of Your Son into the world, the kingdom of heaven now is open to all who believe in Him. Give us grace to look for the signs of His coming and to receive the Lord Jesus as our Emmanuel, God with us. By the working of Your Holy Spirit, lead us evermore to serve Him in our lives until that day when He comes again to claim us as His own for eternity. This we ask in His most blessed name.

C Amen.

P The theme for our Advent services in this season is “Symbols of Salvation: Foretelling Christ’s Birth.” That birth is recorded “deep in prophets’ sacred page,” as our next hymn expresses.

HYMN

810 O God of God, O Light of Light



1 O God of God, O Light of Light, O Prince of Peace and
2 For deep in proph-ets' sa - cred page, And grand in po - ets'



King of kings: To You in heav-en's glo - ry bright The song of
wing-ed word, Slow - ly in type, from age to age The na - tions



praise for - ev - er rings. To Him who sits up - on the throne,
saw their com - ing Lord; Till through the deep Ju - de - an night



The Lamb once slain but raised a - gain, Be all the glo - ry
Rang out the song, “Good - will to men!” Sung once by first - born



He has won, All thanks and praise! A - men, a - men.
sons of light, It ech - oes now, “Good - will!” A - men.

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FIRST READING

Exodus 3:1-14

P A reading from Exodus, the third chapter.

Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then He said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." And He said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Then the LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children

of Israel out of Egypt?” He said, “But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.”

Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?” God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalms 24

P The earth is the LORD’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein,

C for He has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.

P Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in His holy place?

C He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.

P He will receive blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

C Such is the generation of those who seek Him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob.

P Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.

C Who is this King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle!

- P** Lift up your heads, O gates! And lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.
- C** **Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory!**
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

SECOND READING

Isaiah 25:6-9

- P** A reading from Isaiah, the twenty-fifth chapter.

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.

And He will swallow up on this mountain
the covering that is cast over all peoples,
the veil that is spread over all nations.

He will swallow up death forever;
and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces,
and the reproach of His people He will take away from
all the earth, for the LORD has spoken.

It will be said on that day, "Behold, this is our God; we
have waited for Him, that He might save us.

This is the LORD; we have waited for Him;
let us be glad and rejoice in His salvation."

- P** This is the Word of the Lord.

- C** Thanks be to God.

- P** The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.
- C** **Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth.**
- P** Our God comes; He does not keep silence; before Him is a devouring fire, around Him a mighty tempest.
- C** **He calls to the heavens above and to the earth, that He may judge His people: “Gather to Me My faithful ones, who made a covenant with Me by sacrifice!”**
- P** The heavens declare His righteousness, for God Himself is judge!
- C** **Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and perform your vows to the Most High.**

- P** The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the fifteenth chapter.
- C** **Glory to You, O Lord.**

[Jesus said:] “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.

Every branch of Mine that does not bear fruit He takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not

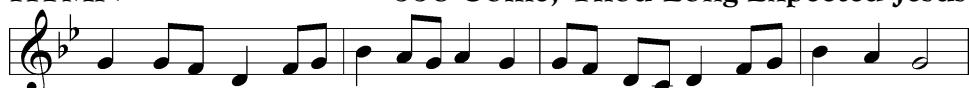
abide in Me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be My disciples.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

HYMN

338 Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus



1 Come, Thou long - ex - pect-ed Je-sus, Born to set Thy peo-ple free;
2 Born Thy peo - ple to de - liv-er; Born a child and yet a king!



From our fears and sins re-lease us; Let us find our rest in Thee.
Born to reign in us for-ev - er, Now Thy gra - cious king - dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con-so - la-tion, Hope of all the earth Thou art,
By Thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it Rule in all our hearts a - lone;



Dear de - sire of ev-'ry na-tion, Joy of ev - 'ry long-ing heart.
By Thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it Raise us to Thy glo - rious throne.

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SERMON: Old Testament Christmas

Exodus 3:1-14

CATECHISM

C I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

P What does this mean?

C I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them.

He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.

He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil. All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him. This is most certainly true.

HYMN

771 Be Still, My Soul, before the Lord

1 Be still, my soul, be - fore the Lord, For
2 You need not mul - ti - ply your words Nor
3 Wait, then, in qui - et con - fi - dence, Your
4 Be still, my soul, be - fore the Lord; On

God is al - ways near. Be - fore your mind is
pray with prac - ticed art. Be - yond all speech, God
anx - ious thoughts at rest. God knows your needs be -
God in pa - tience wait. God's love, un - seen, sur -

moved to pray, God lis - tens and will hear.
un - der - stands The hun - ger of your heart.
fore you ask And works for what is best.
rounds your life; God's help will not be late.

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PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

P In this season of prayer and preparation, Lord, we bring You our petitions. Graciously bless the Church and all the faithful around the world who expectantly await the celebration of the birth of the Christ Child. By Your Holy Spirit, direct these days that they be for each of us a time of reflection, repentance, and preparation for the Savior's coming. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Trusting in Your mercy, we pray for the world in which we live and for our nation. Grant that the coming of Emmanuel, God with us, be known in all corners of the world as the Good News shared throughout the pages of Scripture is proclaimed once more. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Remembering the call to prepare our hearts and our lives, we ask that we be blessed with an extra measure of charity in these weeks. Help us to find time to be those people for whom giving in Jesus' name is a way of life. Give us fulfillment in the joy brought to others in thoughtful ways in this special season. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P In these days, help us to hear the voices of those in need of our aid and comfort. Grant that we find ways to reach out to the lonely, the ill, the hurting, and those for whom these days bring sadness. Give us the Spirit to direct our hearts and lives, so that each day of our lives is lived to Your glory. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P In this season of remembering, we call to mind those saints whose earthly journeys have been completed and who now rejoice in the fullness of Your eternal care. We thank You for the witness of the prophets and holy writers whose words enlighten and encourage us. In these holy days, let our gladness have no end. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

LORD'S PRAYER

C 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 trespasses as we forgive those who
trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.

THE OFFERING IS PRESENTED AND BLESSED

OFFERTORY HYMN: 358 From Heaven Above to Earth I Come



Text and tune: Public domain

HYMN:

357 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, And ran - som
cap - tive Is - ra - el, That mourns in lone - ly
ex - ile here Un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
Refrain
Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el
Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

Tune and text: Public domain

ADVENT ANTIPHON

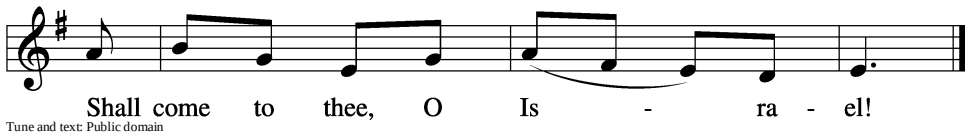
P O Wisdom, proceeding from the mouth of the Most High,
pervading and permeating all creation, mightily ordering
all things:

C Come and teach us the way of prudence.

Hymn:

357 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

2 O come, Thou Wis - dom from on high, Who or - d'rest
all things might - i - ly; To us the path of
knowl - edge show, And teach us in her ways to go.
Refrain
Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el



ADVENT ANTIPHON

- P** O Adonai and ruler of the house of Israel, who appeared to Moses in the burning bush and gave him the Law on Sinai:
- C** Come with an outstretched arm and redeem us.

Hymn: 357 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

3 O come, O come, Thou Lord of might, Who to Thy tribes on Si - nai's height In an - cient times didst give the Law In cloud and maj - es - ty and awe.

Refrain

Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el

Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

Tune and text: Public domain

PRAYER

- P** Let us pray. Almighty God, Judge and King, the whole creation waits for Your coming. Come, Lord Jesus, with Your grace, and fill our lives with Your presence. Use all our time for Your gracious purpose; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** Amen.

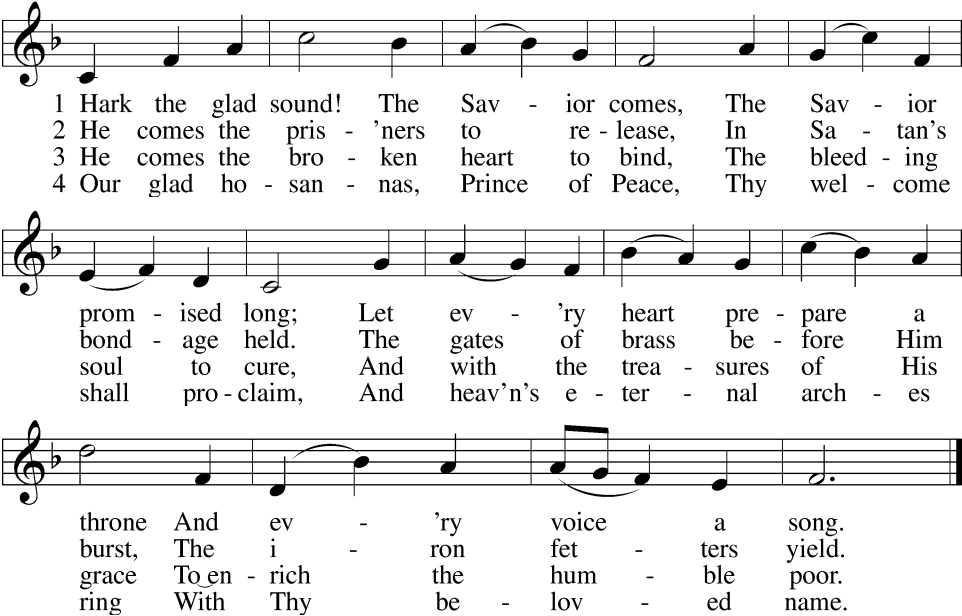
BLESSING

- P** The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the ✠ Son,
and the Holy Spirit, bless you and keep you.

C Amen.

Hymn:

349 Hark the Glad Sound



1 Hark the glad sound! The Sav - ior comes, The Sav - ior
2 He comes the pris - 'ners to re - lease, In Sa - tan's
3 He comes the bro - ken heart to bind, The bleed - ing
4 Our glad ho - san - nas, Prince of Peace, Thy wel - come

prom - ised long; Let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare a
bond - age held. The gates of brass be - fore Him
soul to cure, And with the trea - sures of His
shall pro - claim, And heav'n's e - ter - nal arch - es

throne And ev - 'ry voice a song.
burst, The i - ron fet - ters yield.
grace To en - rich the hum - ble poor.
ring With Thy be - lov - ed name.

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