

# **THE ADVENT WREATH**

The Advent Season is the time for preparing for the coming of Christ and the celebration of the Incarnation of the Eternally-begotten Son of God, the second Person of the Holy Trinity. Believers remember how the Hebrews longed for the coming of the Messiah, and how their prophets foretold the birth of Christ. Our anticipation of Christmas is coupled with our anticipation of the Second Advent of Christ, when He will come again. The beauty and symbolism of the Advent Wreath reminds Christians to “prepare the way of the Lord.”

**THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT** ~ The Prophets’ Candle, the first purple candle, which represents Christ’s royalty and the sinner’s repentance, is lighted. The coming of Christ was foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament hundreds of years before the Incarnation of Christ.

**THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT** ~ The Bethlehem Candle, the second candle, is lighted pointing to the Messiah being born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem as foretold by the prophet Micah.

**THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT** ~ The Shepherds’ Candle, the third candle, is lighted to remind us that the birth of the Messiah was announced to humble shepherds, and that we straying sheep must go to Him, believe in Him and tell others the Good News of salvation.

**THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT** ~ The Angels’ Candle, lighted as the Festival of the Incarnation nears, reminds us of the angelic announcement and calls us to focus on Christ’s finished work on the cross and to anticipate His second coming.

**CHRISTMAS EVE** ~ The Christ Candle, the white one in the center of the wreath, proclaims the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, Who gives the Light of Salvation to those who walked in sin’s darkness. It is lighted on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

## **THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

DECEMBER 3, 2023

# MORNING WORSHIP

## THE SILENT MEDITATION UPON ENTERING THE SANCTUARY

*Mary's heart was merry within her; but here was the mark of her joy: it was all holy merriment, it was every drop of it sacred mirth. It was not such merriment as worldlings revel in, but such as the angels have around the throne, where they sing, "Glory to God in the highest," while we sing "On earth peace, goodwill towards men." Such merry hearts have a continual feast. I want you, children of the bride-chamber, to possess today and tomorrow, yea, all your days, the high and consecrated bliss of Mary, that you may not only read her words, but use them for yourselves, ever experiencing their meaning: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior."*

**CHARLES SPURGEON (1834-1892)**



## APPROACHING GOD'S THRONE

The Christian Greeting and Call to Preparation

Rev. Bill Clark, *Interim Minister*

The Prelude

Prelude on *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*

Mary Beth Bennett

*For He grew up before Him like a young plant,  
and like a root out of dry ground;  
He had no form or majesty that we should look at Him,  
and no beauty that we should desire Him. – Isaiah 53:2*

The Announcements

Rev. Michael Howell, *Assistant Minister*

† Indicates the congregation standing

• Indicates seating for those detained

The Striking of the Hour

† The Ascription of Praise

BEECHER

**Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of Heav'n to earth come down,  
fix in us Thy humble dwelling; all Thy faithful mercies crown!  
Jesus, Thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love Thou art;  
visit us with Thy salvation; enter every trembling heart.**

† The Call to Worship – Isaiah 40:9 (*congregation reads bold type*)

Go up into a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news;  
**Lift up your voice with strength,  
O Jerusalem, herald of good news;**  
Lift it up, fear not;  
**Say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!"**

•† The Hymn No. 131

*Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

HYFRYDOL

† The Apostles' Creed – inside cover of *The Hymnal*

† The Prayer of Invocation

† The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father Which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name.  
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in 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, for ever. Amen.**

•† The Doxology – No. 650 in *The Hymnal*

OLD HUNDREDTH

## SEEKING GOD'S FACE

The Call to Confession – Isaiah 53:4-6

Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

The Corporate Prayer of Confession                      adapted from *The Book of Common Prayer, 1928*

**Almighty and merciful Father,  
we have erred and strayed from Your ways like lost sheep.  
We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts.  
We have offended against Your holy laws.  
We have left undone those things which we ought to have done;  
and we have done those things which we ought not to have done;  
and there is no health in us.  
O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders.  
Spare those, O God, who confess their faults.  
Restore those who are penitent,  
according to Your promises declared in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
And grant, O merciful Father, for His sake,  
that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life,  
to the glory of Your Holy Name. Amen.**

The Assurance of God's Pardon – 2 Corinthians 5:21

For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

The Pastoral Prayer

• † The Hymn No. 141

*Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*

ES IST EIN ROS'

The Offering

*Each one must give as he has decided in his heart,  
not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

2 Corinthians 9:7

## HEARING GOD'S VOICE

The Anthem

*Go! Tell It on the Mountain*  
(The Children's Choirs)

arr. Mark Patterson

Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,  
and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn.

*Refrain:* Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere;  
go, tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born.

While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,  
behold throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. *Refrain.*

Now the shepherds trembled when above the earth  
the angels sang about the Savior's birth. *Refrain.*

The Prayer for Illumination

Rev. Clark

† The Reading of God's Word – Luke 1:39-56

pew Bible page 1088

*If you are visiting today and do not own a personal copy of the Scriptures,  
please take one from the table in the narthex as our gift.*

All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field.

**The grass withers and the flowers fade,  
but the Word of our God shall stand forever. Amen.**

The Personal Meditation and Preparation of the Heart

*Children age four through kindergarten may leave to attend Children's Church. They may be  
picked up in Room E-100 (Pre-K4) and Room E-105 (Kindergarten) after the service.*

The Sermon

**MARY'S SONG OF PRAISE**

Rev. Clark

The Closing Prayer

## FOLLOWING GOD'S SPIRIT

† The Hymn No. 272

*Hail to the Lord's Anointed*

AURELIA

† The Benediction of God's Grace

† The Threefold Amen – No. 657 in *The Hymnal*

The Postlude

*Noël Suisse*

Louis-Claude Daquin

*Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath;  
for the heavens vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment,  
and they who dwell in it will die in like manner;  
but My salvation will be forever, and My righteousness will never be dismayed.*

– Isaiah 51:6

## SERMON NOTES

*To* all who are spiritually weary and seek rest;  
to all who mourn and long for comfort;  
to all who struggle and desire victory;  
to all who sin and need a Savior;  
to all who are strangers and want fellowship;  
to all who hunger and thirst after righteousness;  
and to all who will come,  
this church opens wide her doors and offers welcome  
in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.



*A congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)*

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