



Order of Service
28th November 2021

Introit: 25 (TiS) 'As pants the hart for cooling streams'.

Call to Worship:

This is a time of new beginnings and these are the days of branching out into new rightness, new justness, new faithfulness.

We come to wait and watch together, keeping each other alert and alive to new possibilities.

God, who is always faithful,
meets us here to show us the way.

Let us worship God.

Lighting of the Advent Candle:

Reader One:

When I look around, I see shadows of hunger. So many people in this city and around the world will go to bed hungry tonight...

Reader Two:

When I look around the world, I see shadows of injustice, the rich are getting richer and the poor getting poorer, everyone saying, "Buy, buy, buy!" – and someone somewhere will fall asleep under a bridge tonight...

Reader One:

In the face of hunger, we light a candle of hope...

Reader Two:

In the face of injustice, in the face of despair, we light a candle of hope...*(Light the first candle in the Advent wreath.)*

Reader One:

Let the light from this candle say to all that God's HOPE is coming on earth as it already is in heaven.

Reader Two:

Friends, be not afraid, God's HOPE is at hand.

Hymn: 147 (TiS) 'To God be the glory'.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Confession:

As reliable as the seasons of the earth, spring turning into summer bringing abundance, its heat and sun so you bring us to a new season of hope.

We have come here to wait and watch together, to see what you will do to make all things new, again.

We give thanks for what has been: all the new beginnings that brought us today.

We thank you for new beginnings and stay alert to new possibilities.

We give you thanks for what will be: all the new beginnings beckoning from the path ahead.

We give you thanks for new beginnings and stay alert to God's promises.

You say to us, "Be alert at all times."

We bring our excuses:



We are dulled by too many demands on our attention.

We are numbed by too much of everything.

We sleep through our days, ignoring the signs of your presence.

We see the tree, how its leaves sprouts, and we know that summer is near, but we turn away, turn on the air conditioning, and condition ourselves against the heat of the truth.

The truth is: you have something for us, a gift is coming to us and we might miss it because of our fears and worries and the traps of a busy life.

We know you are there waiting for us.

Teach us how to let go of everything that will pass away, gone as fast as summer, and prepare ourselves, again, to embrace the true things that last.

Redirect our way to you, O God. Amen.

Declaration of Forgiveness:

Here is the good news:

God remembers us in steadfast love, always willing to teach us the humble way that leads to boundless joy.

Be alert to the signs of God's leading, blazing on the trail that lead us to fresh springs of hope.

We are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

Doxology: 768 (TiS) 'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.'

Readings:

Jeremiah 33: 14-16, Luke 21: 25-36

Hymn: 276 (TiS) 'There's a light upon the mountains.'

Sermon: 'Hope in the Promise'

1. The advent of the promise – “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah”. (v 14)
Promises made to the House of Israel points to a time of blessings. The nation will be restored from captivity (16: 14-15; 23: 7-8; 30: 3), the righteous branch of David will be ruling a united kingdom (23: 5-6; 33:14-15), the nation will experience peace and prosperity (31: 27-28; 33:14, 16), the new covenant will be a covenant of redemption where cleansing from sin will effect, restoration; the city of Jerusalem will be rebuilt as a Holy City that will never be destroyed (31: 38-40).
2. Fulfillment of the promise – Christians believe that the promises made to the House of Israel is ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The advent of Christ. He comes in days of sin and rebellion; he comes in the days when people are worshipping idols and foreign gods. Jesus comes to a people in captivity to self, but His kingdom is for both Israel and Judah – for all people. In Him the promise made to Jeremiah, who himself was in captivity in the house of the guard is realised. He will establish a new covenant with his own life and the people will call Him “our Righteousness”.
3. Waiting for the promise – In a sense, the season of advent is a season of waiting in HOPE for the promise that is being fulfilled. We have hope to anticipate and appropriate the promise. Salvation and security are in store for the people of God because of the presence of righteousness personified in Christ. Living in peace, actively waiting in serenity of mind, dependent upon the conduct of this prince of peace who calls us to follow that the promise is fulfilled in the lives of people and the restoration of the new Jerusalem. When the whole world enjoys this restoration through Christ and His mission, then its capital, Jerusalem, can be renamed “The Lord is our righteousness”.



Conclusion:

You are invited in this advent season to look away from all the negativity we hear or the bad news we are bombarded with in the media, and to long for the good news of human destiny.

Advent is a time of anticipating the good news on the horizon – the Son of Man coming in great glory saying to us, “Stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near” (Luke 21: 28). Advent brings us to our most explicit awareness of that WAITING and that HOPE.

God is fulfilling God’s promise – in Christ we will live in harmony and peace, in Christ we are free from sin and death, in Christ it is possible to love again for Christ is our Righteousness!

Amen.

Hymn: 272 (TiS) ‘Come, thou long expected Jesus.’

Notices:**Joys and Concerns:****Offering:**

Loving God, we pray that through these gifts we will be drawn nearer to you and the world will know that your kingdom is near.

When these gifts create peace, when these gifts spark joy, when these gifts empower love: we will know your kingdom is near. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Prayers of the people:

The branches are heavy with summer leaves. The trees are sprouting all around us. We know that summer is here. And on this warm air there is a scent of something new: new life is coming to the empty places.

Where there is no love, there will be flowers of compassion. Where there is no peace, there will be soft meadows of rest. Where there is no joy, there will be fresh springs of hope.

God, make us a part of your new beginnings.

Give us parts to play in bringing love, peace and joy to the empty places in the lives of loved ones and in the life of the world.

Keep us alert, O God, to the signs of these times.

In the midst of confusion,

Give us clarity.

What are the causes of poverty, war, destruction? How might we be part of the solution, letting go of our parts in the problems?

Loving God, we pray for the world you redeem by your presence.

Be present in and through us, that together we might herald your true hope for the world and its people, whom you love so much as to be born into it and among us.

In this is our hope and our salvation. Amen.

Hymn: 315 (TiS) ‘Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.’

Blessing:

781 (TiS) ‘Father bless us as we go’.

