

Bower Hill Community Church (Presbyterian USA)
Order for Worship ~ First Sunday of Advent ~ 27 November 2022

Preparation for Worship:

"Hope smiles from the threshold of the year to come, whispering 'it will be happier'."
~Alfred Lord Tennyson

Prelude

Watchman, Tell Us of the Night

Call to Worship:

Leader: Awake from your sleep: salvation is near!

People: The night is far gone; the day is at hand.

Litany for Advent:

O Wisdom, coming forth from the mouth of the Most High, pervading and permeating all creation, you order all things with strength and gentleness: Come now and teach us the way to salvation.

Come, Lord Jesus.

O Adonai, Ruler of the house of Israel, you appeared in the burning bush to Moses and gave him the law on Sinai: Come with outstretched arm to save us.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Prayer of Adoration:

Faithful God, your promises stand unshaken through all generations. Renew us in hope, that we may keep alert as we watch for the glorious coming of Jesus Christ, our judge and Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Lighting of the Advent Candles:

Leader: On this first Sunday in Advent, we light the candle of hope.

"The nations shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks..."

People: Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."

***Hymn 97**

Watchman, Tell Us of the Night

1) *Watchman, tell us of the night, what its signs of promise are.*

Traveler, what a wondrous sight: see that glory-beaming star.

Watchman, does its beauteous ray news of joy or hope foretell?

Traveler, yes; it brings the day, promised day of Israel.

2) *Watchman, tell us of the night; higher yet that star ascends.*

Traveler, blessedness and light, peace and truth its course portends.

Watchman, will its beams alone gild the spot that gave them birth?

Traveler, ages are its own; see, it bursts o'er all the earth.

3) *Watchman, tell us of the night, for the morning seems to dawn.*

Traveler, shadows take their flight; doubt and terror are withdrawn.

Watchman, you may go your way; hasten to your quiet home.

Traveler, we rejoice today, for Emmanuel has come!

Call to Prayer

"A voice is calling in the wilderness: Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." Trusting in God's grace, let us confess our sin.

Gathering Prayer

God of the future, you are coming in power to bring all nations under your rule. We confess that we have not expected your kingdom, for we live casual lives, ignoring your promised judgment. We accept lies as truth, exploit neighbors, abuse the earth, and refuse your justice and peace. In your mercy, forgive us. Grant us wisdom to welcome your way, and to seek things that will endure when Christ comes to judge the world. [Silent prayers]

Words of Assurance

"The wilderness will rejoice the dry land will blossom. The people of God will return with joy and singing." Friends, hear and believe the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ: in him we are forgiven. Amen.

***The Gloria Patri**

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.*

***The Peace**

Leader: The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us greet one another with the peace of Christ.

Time with the Children

All children from preschool through second grade are invited to the front steps for the children's sermon.

Prayer of Illumination

Holy God, our hope and strength, by the power of your Spirit prepare the way in our hearts for the coming of your Word, so that we may see the glorious signs of your promise fulfilled; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

First Scripture Reading

Isaiah 2:1-5

Leader: The Word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God.

The Psalter: Hymn 400

I Rejoiced When I Heard Them Say

Psalm 122

Second Scripture Reading

Matthew 24:36-44

Choral Response

Threefold Amen

Sermon

"Visions"

Rev. Fred Leasure

Pastoral Prayer and 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.

Welcome and Next Steps

Offerings and Gifts of Self

Anthem

The People Who Walked in Darkness

***Response 592: The Doxology**

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

Old Hundredth

Praise God from whom all blessings flow! Praise God all creatures here below!

Praise God above, ye heavenly host! Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost! Amen.

***Prayer of Dedication**

***Closing Hymn 357**

The Days Are Surely Coming

1) The days are surely coming, says God to all the earth, when you will see my promise: salvation come to birth. My righteousness and justice will spread throughout the land and you will be delivered by my almighty hand.

2) The days are surely coming, says Christ the promised one, when you will read my warning in moon and stars and sun. Though earth and heaven tremble, stand up and do not fear, for I am your redeemer, and I am drawing near.

3) The days are surely coming when we will know at last the fullness of God's presence, God's promise come to pass. Then righteousness and justice will spread throughout the land and we will be delivered by God's almighty hand.

***Charge and Benediction**

Choral Extroit

Sevenfold Amen

Postlude

People, Look East!

Kristina Langlois

Feel free to exit during the postlude, mindful of those who wish to stay and listen.