

“The Promised
LIGHT is
Glorious and
Never Fails!”



Fourth Sunday in Advent

The Order of Worship

Pre-Service Music

Welcome

Preparation for Worship

P: Let us worship and praise our glorious Lord who comes to bless us with his love, who releases us from fear, and who shines in our hearts with his saving light: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. It is in his name we pray:

C: O gracious God and Lord, who proclaims his faithful promise and keeps it, be with us and bless us through your Word. Bring us guidance and comfort. Give us both light and life through the coming Savior so that we can joyfully praise you—our God, our Lord, our Savior, and our Comforter. Amen.

Opening Hymn

“Jesus Came, the Heavens Adoring”

Christian Worship 26

The Confession of Sins

1 John 1:5-10

P: Dearly loved in the Lord! ⁵This is the message we heard from him and proclaim to you: God is light. In him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say we have fellowship with him but still walk in darkness, we are lying and do not put the truth into practice. ⁷But if we walk in the light, just as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. ⁸If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar, and his Word is not in us.

P: Recognizing we have sinned, and acknowledging God’s Word has brought us to repentance, let us join in confessing those sins we know, and even those of which we are not aware.

C: O Almighty God, merciful Father, I a poor miserable sinner must plead guilty to all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended you. I must also confess I justly deserve your punishment, for now and for all eternity. But I am truly sorry I have sinned against you, and I humbly repent of every evil I have done. I also place myself at your mercy, and I pray that for the sake the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of your dearly loved Son Jesus Christ, you would be gracious and merciful to me a sinner.

Absolution

1 John 2:1-2

P: The apostle John writes: My children, I write these things to you so that you will not sin. If anyone does sin, we have an Advocate before the Father: Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ²He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the whole world.

P: Now, as a called servant of God's Word, I can assure you he has heard and answered your prayer. He has forgiven all your sins. He has removed your guilt forever. He has brought you out of darkness and into his wonderful light. All this he did through the precious work of his Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Be confident all is forgiven. Live in his grace and peace. Rejoice that God has brought you out of the darkness of death and into light and life of heaven.

C: Amen.

P: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.

Song of Praise

“Christ is the World's Light”

Christian Worship 343 st. 1, 3-4

Christ is the world's light, Christ and none other;
Born in our darkness, he became our brother.
If we have seen him, we have seen the Father:
Glory to God on high!

Christ is the world's life, Christ and none other;
Sold once for silver, murdered here, our brother.
He who redeemed us reigns with God the Father:
Glory to God on high!

Give God the glory, God and none other;
Give God the glory, Spirit, Son and Father;
Give God the glory, God with us, my brother:
Glory to God on high!

Prayer for the Day

P: O gracious Lord and coming Savior, you have brought light and life, joy and peace to our sin-darkened lives. Continue to shine brightly with your light that never fails. Continue to shine brightly on the path where you safely guide us. Continue to shine brightly alerting us to the Devil's dangerous schemes. Be with us through your Word. Bless us with a growing faith. Fill us with every confidence until we enter the unveiled glorious light of heaven to live with you, your Father, and the Spirit—throughout endless ages.



C: A ——— men.

The Lessons from God's Word *"Guide Me with Your Light Everlasting!"*

Old Testament

Isaiah 7:10-14

¹⁰The LORD spoke to Ahaz again. He said, ¹¹"Ask for a sign from the LORD your God. Ask for it either in the depths below or in the heights above."

¹²But Ahaz responded, "I will not ask. I will not test the LORD."

¹³So Isaiah said:

Listen now, you house of David. Is it not enough for you to test the patience of men? Will you test the patience of my God as

well? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give a sign for all of you.
Look! The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and name
him Immanuel.

Psalm of the Day

Psalm 89

(The congregation will respond following the Psalm)

P: ¹ I will sing of the mercies of the LORD forever.
With my mouth I will make your faithfulness known
through all generations.
² Yes, I have said, “Your mercy is built to last forever.
In the heavens you establish your faithfulness.”
³ The LORD said,
“I have made a covenant with my chosen one.
I have sworn to David my servant.
⁴ I will establish your seed forever,
and I will build your throne through all generations.”
⁵ The heavens praise your wonders, O LORD,
also your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones.
⁶ For who in the skies can compare with the LORD?
Who is like the LORD among the sons of God?
⁷ God is revered in the council of the holy ones.
He is to be feared more than all who surround him.

Congregation sings

“O Splendor of God’s Glory Bright”
Christian Worship 586 st. 1-2

O Splendor of God’s glory bright,
You daily bring forth light from light.
O Light from Light, light’s fountain-spring,
O Day, our days enlightening.

Come, very Sun of truth and love,
Come in your radiance from above,
And shed the Holy Spirit’s ray
On all we think or do or say.

Epistle*Romans 1:1-7*

¹Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ²which he promised in advance through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures. ³This gospel is about his Son—who in the flesh was born a descendant of David, ⁴who in the spirit of holiness was declared to be God’s powerful Son by his resurrection from the dead—Jesus Christ, our Lord. ⁵Through him we received grace and the call to be an apostle on behalf of his name, to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles, ⁶including you, who were called by Jesus Christ.

⁷To all those loved by God who are in Rome, called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Theme for the Day*Psalm 89*

P: ⁸O LORD God of Armies, who is like you?

You are mighty, O LORD,
and your faithfulness surrounds you.

Your hand is strong. Your right hand is raised high.

¹⁴Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne.

Mercy and truth are right in front of you.

¹⁵How blessed are the people who know the joyful cry.

LORD, they walk in the light from your face.

¹⁶In your name they celebrate all day long.

In your righteousness they are lifted up.

¹⁷For you are the beauty of their strength,

and by your favor you exalt our Horn.

¹⁸Indeed, our Shield belongs to the LORD,
our King to the Holy One of Israel.

Congregation sings

“O Splendor of God’s Glory Bright”

Christian Worship 586 st. 3-4

Teach us to work with all our pow’r
To conquer in temptation’s hour.

Let faith her eager fires renew
And hate the false and love the true.

Oh, joyful be the live-long day,
Our thoughts as pure as morning ray,
Our faith like noonday's glowing height,
Our souls undimmed by shades of night.

Gospel

Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸This is how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. His mother, Mary, was pledged in marriage to Joseph. Before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Joseph, her husband, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her. So he decided to divorce her privately. ²⁰But as he was considering these things, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

²²All this happened to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³"Look, the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son. And they will name him Immanuel," which means, "God with us."

²⁴When Joseph woke up from his sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him. He took Mary home as his wife, ²⁵but he was not intimate with her until she gave birth to her firstborn son. And he named him Jesus.

P: This is the Word of our God: Our hope to cheer us, our peace to comfort us, and our light to guide us.



C: Praise be to you, O Christ!

The Confession of Faith

(we unite in the words of the Apostles' Creed)

**C: I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe 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, died, and was buried.**

He descended into hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

**He ascended into heaven and is seated
at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge
the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church—the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Hymn of the Day

**“O God from God, O Light from Light”
*Christian Worship 85 st. 1-3***

Sermon

Isaiah 9:1-2

¹Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for the land that was in anguish. In the former times, he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will cause it to be glorious, along the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, in Galilee of the Gentiles.

²The people walking in darkness have seen a great light. For those living in the land of the shadow of death, the light has dawned.

A Glorious Light has Dawned

“A Matchless Light to Make Us Glorious!”

A Light which never fails

A Light which always guides

Service of the Advent Candle

P: In our lives there is a desperate need for light. That light is always provided by our Savior through his faithful Word and precious work. We also see a desperate need for peace. Our fears, our anguish, our guilt, all seek to drive us back into the darkness from which our Savior rescued us. This is why we rejoice to know there is peace—the peace which surpasses all understanding and which guards our hearts and lives—peace given by our Savior, the Light of the world.

Psalm 85, selected verses

¹ You showed favor to your land, O LORD.

You restored Jacob.

² You removed the guilt of your people. You covered all their sin.

³ You put away all your wrath.

You turned from your burning anger

⁴ Restore us, O God who saves us.

Put an end to your indignation with us.

⁷ Show us your mercy, O LORD, and give us your salvation.

⁸ I will hear what the true God, the LORD, will say.

He indeed speaks peace to his people, to his favored ones,

⁹ Surely his salvation is near for those who fear him.

¹⁰ Mercy and truth meet together.

Righteousness and peace kiss each other.

¹³ Righteousness walks in front of him.

It prepares the way for his footsteps.

Isaiah 52:7-10

⁷ How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of a herald,
who proclaims peace and preaches good news,

who proclaims salvation,
who says to Zion, “Your God is king!”
⁸ The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voices. Together they shout for joy, because with both eyes they will see it when the LORD returns to Zion.
⁹ Break out, shout for joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem, because the LORD is comforting his people. He is redeeming Jerusalem. ¹⁰ The LORD lays bare his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation from our God.

John 14:27-30 _____

²⁷ “Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, and do not let it be afraid. ²⁸ You heard me tell you, ‘I am going away and I am coming to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I.

²⁹ “I have told you now before it happens so that, when it does happen, you may believe. ³⁰ I will not speak with you much longer, because the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me.

The Lighting of the Candle of Peace

Advent Candle Song “O Christ, Our True and Only Light”
Christian Worship 569 st. 1-4

O Christ, our true and only light,
Enlighten those who sit in night;
Let those afar now hear your voice
And in your fold with us rejoice.

Fill with the radiance of your grace
The souls now lost in error’s maze
And all whom in their secret minds
Some dark delusion haunts and blinds.

Oh, gently call those gone astray
That they may find the saving way!
Let ev'ry conscience sore oppressed
In you find peace and heav'nly rest.

Shine on the darkened and the cold;
Recall the wand'ers to your fold.
Unite all those who walk apart;
Confirm the weak and doubting heart.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

Prayer for the Day

Special Prayers and Requests

The Lord's Prayer

(the congregation will join with the pastor)

**C: Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.**

Hymn

“Oh, Rejoice, All Christians, Loudly”
Christian Worship 45 st. 1-3

Closing Prayer

P: O gracious Lord, your promise stands firm and it remains true.

You have assured us the Savior would come and bring his glorious light into our sin-darkened world. We rejoice because you have faithfully kept your promise and Jesus has come. Let his light shine brightly in our hearts and lives. Let it shine brightly and never grow dim. Let it shine brightly to guide us through this life to heaven. Keep us in your light, and keep us from returning to the darkness in which we formerly lived. Let your light not only shine in us, but also through us that we may share the glorious joy you have given us. All praise, honor, and glory belong to you, O Lord, as Father, Son and Spirit, receive it as we give it willingly, faithfully and joyfully.



C: A ——— men.

The Benediction

P: Brothers and sisters, go in peace; live in harmony with one another; serve the Lord in gladness.

The Lord bless you and keep you;

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;

The Lord look on you with his favor; and
give you peace.



C: A — men. A — men. A ——— men.

Closing Hymn

“Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord”
Christian Worship 28 st. 1-4

Silent Prayer

Announcements

Today—*Welcome in the name of our ever faithful and ever loving Savior. May the light and life he comes to bring fill you*

with joyful hope as you walk in the brightness of his light. If you are visiting this morning, please sign the guest book. Come back and worship with us again, soon!

- Everyone is invited to enjoy a cup of coffee, some snacks, and the gift of friendship in the Lord.
- After you get a cup of coffee, please make your way back to the sanctuary for Bible Class. We will conclude last Sunday's lesson on "patience."
- This afternoon at 3:30 pm everyone is invited to help decorate the church for the Christmas season. After everything is complete, around 5:30 pm, we will gather for a chili dinner and some desserts.

Monday—Handbell Choir practice at 7:00 pm.

Wednesday—Bible Class came to a close this past week. We will resume after the first of the year. Make it your New Year's resolution to study the Word with your sisters and brothers in Christ.

Friday—Office Hours from 10:30 am—2:30 pm.

Saturday—Clean: Pettus

Christmas Eve Worship at 7:00 pm. How blessed we are to have this opportunity to praise our Savior who came into this world to endure humiliation, scorn, death, and punishment to give us eternal life in heaven.

- There will be a time for fellowship after the service. Plan on bringing cookies, hors d'oeuvres, and snacks to share.

Sunday, December 25th—Christmas Day Worship at 9:30 am. The celebration of our Savior's birth continues! Come and rejoice in the great gift God has given us.

- Once again, there will be snacks and a time for fellowship.
- There will be no Bible Class this Sunday following refreshments. We will resume next year.

Thank You

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Church Decorating and Fellowship

This afternoon we will meet at 3:30 pm to decorate the church. It is a time to enjoy fellowship and prepare the sanctuary for our celebration of Jesus' birth. Around 5:30 pm we will have a chili dinner and desserts. Please check the sheet on the table in the back for more information. Also, young and old, singles and families can all help out.

Acknowledgements

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