

The Falls Village Congregational Church

December 3, 2023 10:00 a.m.

1st Sunday in Advent

The Reverend Richard W. Reifsnyder, Worship Leader

Welcome and Announcements

Ringling of the Church Bell

Choral Prelude – *An Advent Prayer* - A. Pote

THE CHURCH GATHERS TO PRAISE

Call to Worship

Among the poor, among the proud, among the persecuted,
among the privileged,

Christ is coming to make all things new.

With a gentle touch, with an angry word, with a clear
conscience, with burning love,

Christ is coming to make all things new.

That the kingdom might come, that the world might believe, that
the powerful might be humbled, that the humble might be raised,

Christ is coming to make all things new.

Let us worship Christ who comes to bring us life.

Prayer for God's Presence:

Almighty God, as we begin this season of Advent remind us
again that in the midst of our darkness you are bringing us peace, to
calm our anxious spirits and hectic lives. Turn our hearts again
toward you. Make us ready to receive your Son our Savior. Slow
our pace, and give us the blessing of feeling your peace in our
spirits. For we ask this in Jesus' precious Name. Amen.

Hymn #125 "*Come, O Long Expected Jesus*"

Prayer of Confession (Unison)

Gracious and understanding God: We confess to you our pride,
our faithlessness, and our reluctance to accept your grace. Through
the work of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit, forgive us, heal
us, correct us, and transform us. Enable us to be still, to know your

presence, and to praise you. We pray through Jesus Christ our
Lord. Amen.

Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon

Gloria Patri

Passing of the Peace

The peace of Christ be with you

And also with you.

Let us pass the peace of Christ.

TO HEAR GOD'S WORD

Lighting of the Advent Wreath Barry and Rowena Fenstermacher
#121 Prepare the Way of the Lord" (2x)

Scripture Reading: Mark 13:24-37 Rich Reifsnyder

Prayer

Sermon: "Worth the Wait"

The Rev. Richard W. Reifsnyder

TO RESPOND IN FAITH

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Invitation to Communion

Hymn of Preparation "*Come to the Table of Grace*"

The Communion Prayer:

The Lord be with you

And also with you

Lift up your heads

We lift them up to the Lord

Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God

It is right, and a good and joyful thing

(The Minister continues the prayer)

The Lord's Prayer

Words of Institution

Distribution of the Elements

(Please partake of the bread individually, when it is received, as a sign of our individual relationship to God, but hold the cup so we may drink together, as a sign of our unity before our God)

Prayer of Thanksgiving (Unison)

Gracious God, we give you thanks that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen

THE CHURCH DISPERSES TO SERVE

Closing Hymn: #129 "Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates"

Benediction

Benediction Response (gather in a circle around the sanctuary)

God Be with You till We Meet Again

.....
You are invited to place your offerings as you leave in the plate at either entrance to the church.

Come, O Long-expected Jesus

125

1. Come, O long-ex-pect-ed Je-sus, born to set your peo-ple free.
2. Born your peo-ple to de-liv-er, born a child, and yet a king,

From our fears and sins re-lease us; Christ, in whom our rest shall be.
born to reign in us for-ev-er, born your grac-ious realm to bring.

You, our strength and con-so-la-tion, come sal-va-tion to im-part;
By your own e-ter-nal Spir-it rule in all our hearts a-lone;

dear de-sire of man-y a na-tion, joy of man-y a long-ing heart.
by your all-suf-fi-cient mer-it raise us to your glo-ri-ous throne.

1st Sunday in Advent – December 3, 2023
Lighting the Candle of Hope

Every year we light candles as we prepare for the coming of Christ. More and more candles, more and more light, as we watch and wait for Jesus, the Light of the World.

Today we light the first candle, the candle of hope, remembering that though we live in times of confusion and uncertainty, as Christians we are “prisoners of hope,” to use Archbishop Desmond Tutu’s words, confident of the future.

(light first purple candle)

Listen to God’s promises from the prophet Isaiah, chapter 9:1-4

But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. ²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined. ³You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁴For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

Let us pray together

God of Promise, come into our darkness.

Renew your hope in us,

for you alone bring life out of death. Amen

Song #121: “Prepare the Way of the Lord” J. Berthier (Taizé)

Prepare the way of the Lord, Prepare the way of the Lord
And all the people will see the salvation or our God (2x)

MARK 13:24-37

²⁴“But in those days, after that suffering,

the sun will be darkened,

and the moon will not give its light,

²⁵and the stars will be falling from heaven,

and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

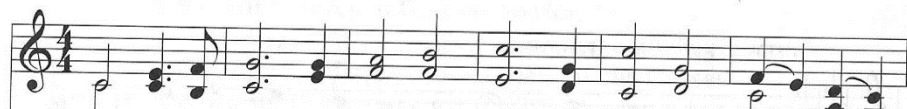
²⁶Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. ²⁷Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

²⁸“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

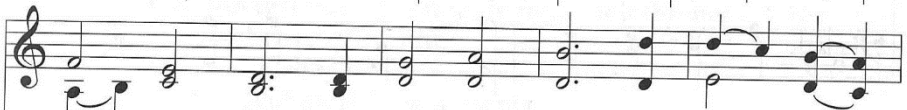
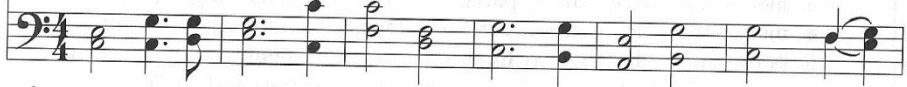
³²“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch.

³⁵Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

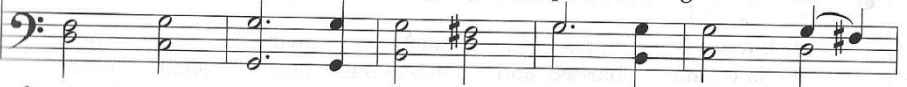
Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates 129



1. Lift up your heads, O might-y gates; be - hold the glo - rious
2. Fling wide the por - tals of your heart; make it a tem - ple,
3. Re - deem - er, come! We o - pen wide our hearts to you; here,
4. So come, our Sov - ereign; en - ter in! Let new and no - bler



Rul - er waits! The Sov - ereign One is draw - ing
 set a - part from earth - ly use for heav - en's em -
 Christ, a - bide! Let us your in - ner pres - ence
 life be - gin; your Ho - ly Spir - it guide us



near; the Sav - ior of the world is here.
 ploy, a - dorned with prayer and love and joy.
 feel, your grace and love in us re - veal.
 on, un - til the glo - ri - ous crown be won.

