

Celebration of Worship

December 20, 2009 – 6:15 P.M.

We enter to worship;

we depart to serve

ADVENT WORSHIP

The Santa Claus decorations begin filling our retail stores in November, October, even September. The music of Christmas is piped in through every speaker in the mall to help us get in the spirit of giving (which translates all too often for us as “buying”).

In churches across the country we struggle with what it means to worship in Advent. Do we jump straight in to focusing on the joy of Christ’s birth, as the commercial world around us invites us to do? Or do we take time first to focus on the darkness into which the light of Christ comes?

In Advent we expectantly wait for the One who has already come. We anticipate the promised justice of God’s new world, yet we praise God who raised the “righteous branch” to rule with justice and righteousness. We hope for the restoration of the afflicted, the tormented, and the grieving, yet we delight that healing has come in Christ. We long for the beating of swords into plowshares, yet we rejoice that the Prince of peace has appeared. We dream of the land where lions and lambs live in harmony, yet we acclaim the child born to lead us into the Promised Land.

Christ has come! Christ is risen! Christ will come again! In Advent, we are living between the first and the second coming of the Lord. Perhaps we need to cling to the paradoxical reality of the Kingdom of God that has broken into our world in the birth of the babe in Bethlehem and the longing and expectation of God’s Kingdom breaking into our world fully at Christ’s return. That way, we may fully embrace “the new thing” prophesied by Isaiah (43:19) that God is doing among us right now.

In Advent hope and expectation, this service will begin in near darkness and we will welcome the coming light of Christ.

SONGS OF LONGING

First Lesson: Psalm 13:1-3

“Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”

Second Lesson: Isaiah 7:14b

Hymn 9 *“O Come, O Come Emmanuel”*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SONGS OF EXPECTATION

Third Lesson: Matthew 2:1-6

Hymn 66 *“We Three Kings”* v. 1

Fourth Lesson: Luke 2:1-7

Hymn 53 *“What Child Is This?”* vv. 1, 3

Fifth Lesson: Luke 2:8-14

Hymn 38 *“It Came Upon A Midnight Clear”*

OPENING PRAYER/ASSURANCE OF PARDON

SONGS OF WONDER

Sixth Lesson: Luke 2:15-20

Hymn 44 *“O Little Town of Bethlehem”* vv. 1, 3, 4

Hymn 22 *“Angels, from the Realms of Glory”* vv. 1-4

Hymn 23 *“Angels We Have Heard on High”* vv. 1, 3

Hymn 56 *“The First Nowell”* vv. 1, 6

PASTORAL PRAYER & THE LORD’S PRAYER

SONGS OF JOY

Seventh Lesson: Philippians 2:5-11

Hymn 31 *“Hark! the Herald Angels Sing”*

Hymn 40 *“Joy to the World”*

Hymn 464 *“Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee”*

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

“Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas”

Garrett Anderson, Trumpet



Advent

*First Presbyterian Church
Sand Springs, Oklahoma*