

LARGE PRINT

Worship Celebration

First Sunday of Advent

December 3, 2023 + 9 AM

PLAN

STAYAWHILE

Advent Lessons

in Divine Hospitality

We Gather as God's Children

Words of Welcome

Prelude

In Dulci Jubilo from *Seventy-Nine Chorales*

Marcel Dupré

+ Opening Prayer

Creator God, all too often, we put too much faith in our own plans.

***Help us to trust in the plan you set forth
in the covenant of baptism.***

As we continue to plan for the coming of Christmas Day,

***Help us to trust in the plan of salvation you created
by coming to live among us.***

As we consider all the plans we have made
for our upcoming celebrations,

Help us to remember to plan for the coming of your Kin-dom.

+ Hymn

O Come, O Come Emmanuel (vv. 1-4)

UMH 211

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Choral Introduction *Preparing Our Hearts* Ruth Elaine Schram

Today, we light one candle,

Remembering that God can always begin anew.

***We respond and plan for the coming of Christ,
During this holy season of Advent.***

As we prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of Jesus,

In the past the present and the future,

**May we share in God's generosity
and always plan for more siblings**

Who might come to feast at the table.

Choral Response

Preparing Our Hearts

Ruth Elaine Schram

We Grow in God's Word

Leader: With disciples of every time and place,
let us listen for the word of God among us.

People: *Our ears and hearts are open.*

First Lesson — Jeremiah 29.5-14 (NRSVUE)

⁵ Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. ⁶ Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. ⁷ But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. ⁸ For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let the prophets and the diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to your dreams that you dream, ⁹ for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, says the LORD.

¹⁰ For thus says the LORD: Only when Babylon's seventy years are completed will I visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. ¹¹ For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. ¹² Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. ¹³ When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, ¹⁴ I will let you find me, says the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

The word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Second Lesson — Mark 1.1-8 (NRSVUE)

1 The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ.

2 As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way,

3 the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord;
make his paths straight.’ ”

4 so John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. **5** And the whole Judean region and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him and were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins. **6** Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. **7** He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the strap of his sandals. **8** I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

The word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon

HandBell Anthem

Grazioso

Arnold B. Sherman

Prayers of the People

Opportunities for Ministry

and Invitation to Give Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory Anthem

Make My Life a Bethlehem

Pamela Martin
Craig Courtney

The Great Thanksgiving

Today's elements have been consecrated earlier by an Elder. Pastor Carrie will lead us through The Great Thanksgiving & Sharing the Bread and Cup.

The Holy One be with you

And also with you

Open your hearts to the One who is Love

We open our hearts to you, O God

Let us give thanks to God with us

To the One who took on flesh, we give thanks and praise

Creator of all that is, Mother of life itself,

by your hand we were formed.

You made us relational.

You created us to thrive – not alone, but together.

You shaped the entire cosmos

so that every form of life depends on another.

You never intended for us to power through these lives alone.

Even in all of our planning,

you have planned for us to depend on one another,

As we seek your will, and your plans for us all, and all of creation.

You gifted us with the need to rely on one another,

bone of each other's bone, flesh of each other's flesh.

Together was always the plan.

Therefore we join our voices with your people on earth and all the company of the heavens, singing praise to you,

Holy, Holy, Holy One

God of justice and love

Heaven and earth are full of your wonder

Hosanna among us

In our longing for your presence with us, we often expect your arrival in traditional places of power. We seek our hope and salvation in the false promises of dominance and might. We make plans without you.

Your plan: salvation through vulnerability. You too became bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh. God, in the form of a baby, you made yourself dependent on us. An infant, revealing the transformative power of giving and receiving love through human flesh. Not only was Jesus a part of the plan, but we too, are a part of your divine plans.

Throughout the life of Jesus, we saw lives transformed by your willingness to make yourself vulnerable. And yet, the same vulnerability also came at a price. Though some fed you and raised you and befriended you, others persecuted you to the point of death. Seeking to eradicate their own feelings of vulnerability, those in power preyed on yours.

Still, today, we often crucify the ones who dare to risk it all on love.

On the night of his arrest, Jesus prepared a meal with love, and shared it with his companions.

He took bread, blessed it, broke it, gave it to his disciples in ultimate hospitality, saying

***“This is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.”***

After the meal, he took the cup, blessed it, and shared it saying:
“This cup that is poured out is the new covenant.”

In remembrance of all you have done to save us,
we proclaim the mystery of our faith:

Christ was birthed among us.

Christ was killed among us.

Christ rises again among us.

Pour out your Spirit on these gifts, O God. Give us a taste of resurrection hope that meets us in the moment when the unexpected and unplanned happens. Meet us in this bread and this cup and hear the prayers of your people in this aching world.

We beg to know Lord, what is the plan?

Come, O Come, Emmanuel. That is your plan. We are your plan.
Blessed be this meal which strengthens us.

In collective longing for a taste of your Kin-dom on earth,
we join together in echoing the prayer of Jesus:

The Lord's Prayer

Sharing the Bread and Cup

Hymn *Oh Come, All Ye Faithful* (vv. 1-3,6)

UMH 234

Hymn *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

UMH 196

Prayer after Communion

*God, we recognize the ways
you still make yourself vulnerable to us today.
In gratitude for a taste of your Kin-dom,
may our discipleship shape us
into fierce protectors of the vulnerable.
Give us courage to practice our own vulnerability,
and help us to honor the sacredness
of our need for one another.
In Christ's name we pray, Amen.*

We Go Out to Serve in God's Name

+ Hymn *Take Time to Be Holy*

UMH 395

+ Benediction

Postlude *Vom Himmel hoch, da komm' ich her*

Johann Pachelbel

***Our service of worship is ended.
Our worship through service now begins.***

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Morning Prayer

Lord God, you have woken me from sleep;
The night is gone, the day is here.
Enable me to put on the Lord Jesus Christ
and help me to live honorably this day,
to the glory of your name. Amen.

Evening Prayer

God, my Savior, you are even nearer now
than when I first learned to trust you.
Help me to lay aside the burdens of the day
and rest in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ
my strength and my salvation. Amen.

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