



Order of Worship

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 18, 2022

Call to worship (*Isaiah 40:3-5*)

Leader: Prepare the way of the Lord!

People: Lift every valley, lift every voice.

Leader: Prepare the way of the Lord!

People: And all flesh shall see the salvation of our God.

Call to confession

In Jesus Christ, God seeks to smooth those places made rough by sin.
With humility and hope, let us make our confession.

Prayer of confession

Great God, as we behold the birth of Jesus again, we are mindful of how we have failed to receive the fullness of that gift. The story points us to your glory, yet we struggle to join in the song of praise and thanksgiving. We are distracted and confused, so focused on things that matter little that we overlook the good news of great joy that you have prepared. Tell us again that the Savior is born. Tell us again that we are forgiven. Tell us again that our lives can be abundant in faith, hope and love because of what you have given us in Jesus Christ. Amen.

Declaration of forgiveness

The angel tells Joseph that the child forming in Mary's womb is to be named Jesus. "Call him Jesus," the angel says, "For he will save the people from their sins." From his birth through his resurrection, from age to age, Jesus is about salvation. This is good news!

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

Prayer for illumination

Gracious God, illumine these words by your Spirit that we might hear what you would have us hear and be who you would us be, for the sake of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. Amen.

Scripture readings

Sermon



Affirmation of faith (*Confession of 1967*)

Out of Israel, God in due time raised up Jesus. His faith and obedience were the response of the perfect child of God. He was the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel, the beginning of the new creation, and the pioneer of the new humanity. He gave history its meaning and direction and called the church to be his servant for the reconciliation of the world.

Call for the offering

With gratitude for God's faithfulness and with thanksgiving for all that we have received, let us bring our gifts to God.

Prayer of dedication

O God, with faith and hope, we offer these gifts. Use them, even as you use, to accomplish your purposes in Jesus Christ, whose birth we celebrate and whose Lordship we praise. Amen.

Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

Come, Lord Jesus. Bring your presence; bring your peace; bring your light.

Comfort the sick. Soothe the sorrowful. Bind up the wounded.

Calm our spirits. Ease our burdens. Mend our hearts.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Come, Lord Jesus. Bring your justice; bring your righteousness; bring your goodness.

Reorder our priorities. Direct our efforts. Strengthen our resolve.

Break down walls. Dismantle oppression. Overthrow tyrants.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Come, Lord Jesus. Bring your love; bring your compassion; bring your mercy.

Heal our divisions. Seek out the lost. Restore the guilt-ridden.

Widen our embrace. Teach us generosity. Show us how to forgive.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Come, Lord Jesus. Bring your passions; bring your fire; bring your steadfastness.

Inspire our witness. Motivate our mission. Energize your church.

Open our minds. Extend our hands. Overcome our lethargy.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Come, Lord Jesus. Bring your hope; your tenderness; your promise.

Build up our common life. Hold us in our frustrations. Brighten our darkness.

Release us. Renew us. Redeem us.

Come, Lord Jesus.



Come, Lord Jesus, hear our cries, hear our whispers, hear our prayers.
Now, with the confidence of the children of God, let us pray as Jesus
taught, saying, **“Our Father...”**.

Charge and blessing

Let us go trusting that in Jesus Christ, God is with us. Emmanuel.
This day, this Christmas, and forevermore, God is with us. Emmanuel.
May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the
companionship of the Holy Spirit be with you and abide with you
today and always. Amen.

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Liturgy written by John Wurster
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