

Worship for Sunday, November 29, 2020
Led by Rev. Jeff Knol
Music by Katie Connolly and GRC Praise Team

OUR APPROACH TO GOD

Words of Welcome

Call to Worship – *The Lighting of the Advent Candle*
Frances Slade and Rainer Muser

On this first Sunday of Advent, as we light the candle of hope we celebrate the hopes that God has fulfilled. God's people had hoped for a Savior, who would guide them to righteousness and rescue them from sin and evil. Christ Jesus was born to fulfil these great hopes.

As we light this candle, we also recognize the hopes we cherish in our longing hearts. We light this candle, asking God to help us hold fast to the hope that Christ will return to bring the completion of God's plans for us and for all creation.

The Candle of Hope is Lit

Prayer:

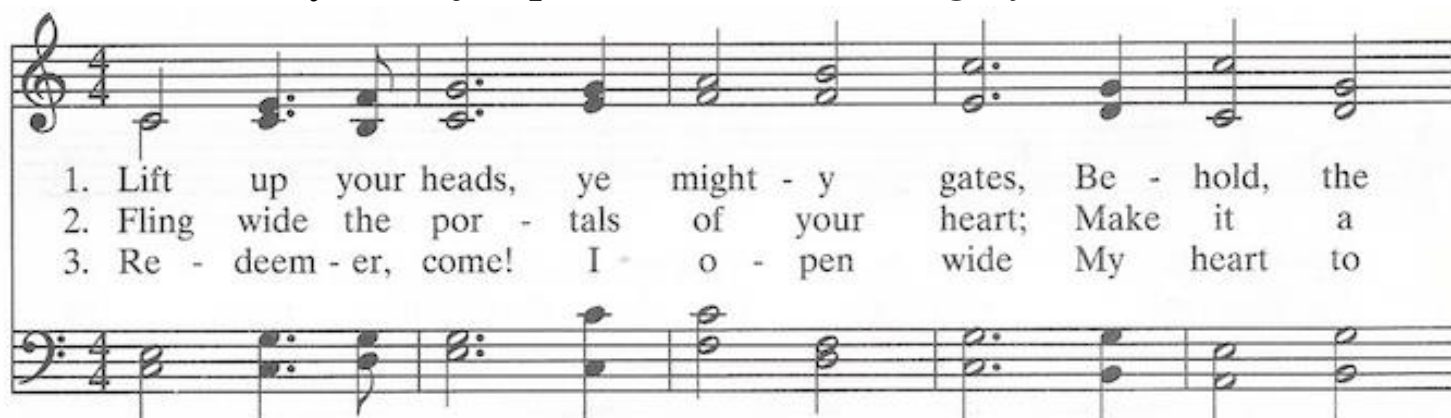
Dear God, we praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ.
He is Emmanuel, the hope of all peoples;
He is our savior, the source of peace that passes understanding;
He is our friend, whose presence fills our hearts with joy;
He is our shepherd, guiding us according to your unfailing love.

Bless us and the lighting of our advent candle.


May the light that shines forth from this wreath illumine our way as we journey towards Christmas; may the light that shines forth from this candle illumine our lives as we wait in hope for the birth of the Christ Child.

We ask this through Christ who is the Light of the World. Amen.

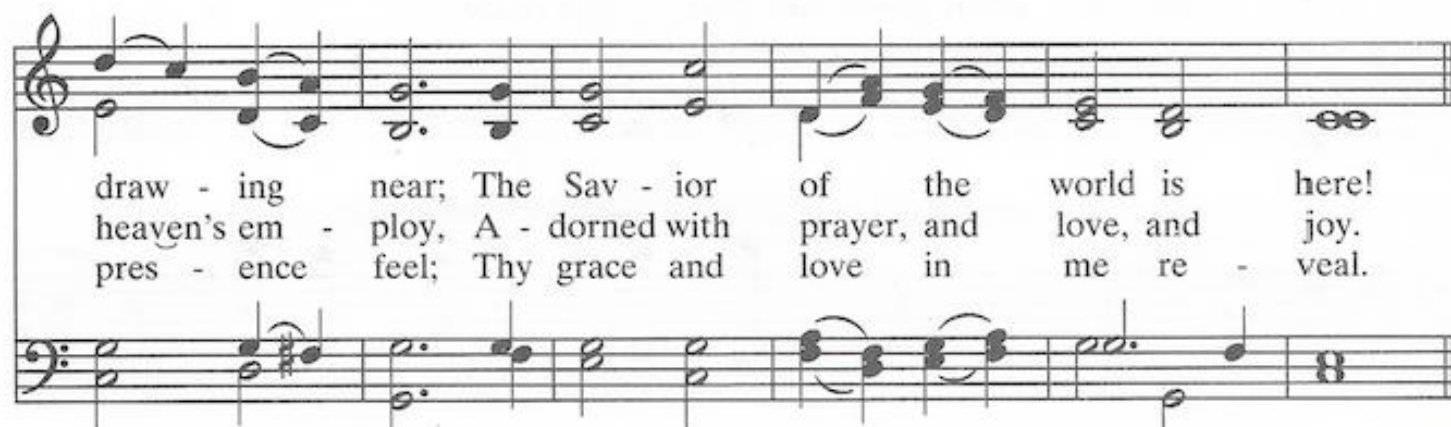
Hymn: *Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates*



1. Lift up your heads, ye might - y gates, Be - hold, the
 2. Fling wide the por - tals of your heart; Make it a
 3. Re - deem - er, come! I - o - pen wide My heart to



King of glo - ry waits; The King of kings is
 tem - ple, set a - part From earth - ly use for
 Thee; here, Lord, a - bide. Let me Thy in - ner



draw - ing near; The Sav - ior of the world is here!
 heaven's em - ploy, A - dorned with prayer, and love, and joy.
 pres - ence feel; Thy grace and love in me re - veal.

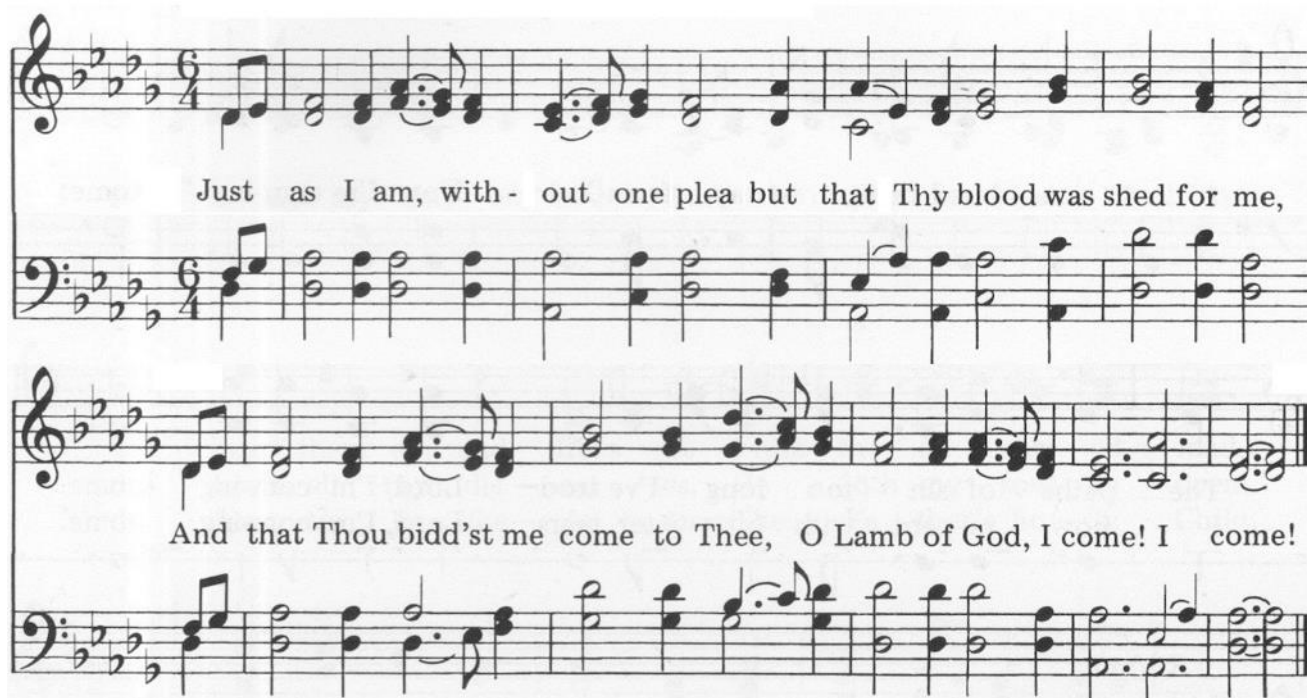
Prayer of Confession

Dear God, we praise you for sending Your Light into this world. We confess that we live as though the Light had come to defeat the darkness of sin and evil. We confess that we ignore the Savior you sent to dwell with us. We have kept His birth confined to the Christmas season. We do not yearn each day for his Light to return. Forgive us for not opening our eyes, ears, or our hearts to fully receive His hope, peace, joy, and love. Prepare us for Jesus' second advent. Help us rejoice in Your Light so that your grace can illuminate the darkened places of our hearts and our world... *Time of Silent Confession*

Words of Assurance: Inspired by Psalm 139:11-12, Isaiah 60:1

Hear the good news of the psalmist's proclamation: If I say, "Surely the darkness will overwhelm me, and the light around me will be as night." Even the darkness is not dark to you O God, and the night is as bright as the day. The God who promised never to leave us nor forsake us has come to us in Jesus Christ who binds up our broken hearts, heals us of our infirmities, and relieves us of the burden of our sins. People of God, be assured, in Jesus Christ our sins are forgiven. Arise and shine; our light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon us. Amen.

Seasonal Response: *Just As I Am*



Just as I am, with - out one plea but that Thy blood was shed for me,

And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

THE WORD OF GOD

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture and Sermon: Mark 13:24-37

Hymn: *Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending*

1. Lo, He comes with clouds de-scend-ing, Once for fa - vored sin - ners slain;
 2. Ev - ery eye shall now be-hold Him, Robed in dread-ful maj - es - ty;
 3. Now re-demp-tion, long ex-pect-ed, See in sol - emn pomp ap-pear:
 4. Yea, A - men! let all a-dore Thee, High on Thine e - ter - nal throne;

Thou-sand thou-sand saints at-tend-ing, Swell the tri - umph of His train:
 Those who set at naught and sold Him, Pierced and nailed Him to the tree,
 All His saints, by men re - ject-ed, Now shall meet Him in the air:
 Sav - ior, take the pow'r and glo - ry, Claim the king - dom for Thine own:

Al - le - lu - ia! al - le - lu - ia! God ap-pears on earth to reign.
 Deep-ly wail - ing, deep-ly wail - ing, Shall the true Mes - si - ah see.
 Al - le - lu - ia! al - le - lu - ia! See the day of God ap-pear.
 O, come quick-ly, O, come quick-ly! Ev - er - last - ing God, come down. A-men.

OUR RESPONSE TO THE WORD

Announcements, Celebrations, and Prayer Requests

Our Offerings to God

Please mail your financial offerings to church

Blawenburg Reformed Church at PO Box 266 Blawenburg, NJ 08504

Griggstown Reformed Church at 1065 Canal Rd. Princeton, NJ 08540

Seasonal Song of Praise: *In the Bleak Midwinter* (verse 4)

What can I give him, poor as I am?

If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;

if I were a wise man, I would do my part;

yet what can I give him—give my heart.

Prayer of Dedication: Inspired by John 1: 6-8, 19-28

Dear God, in this season of Advent, we pray that you would use us, as you used your Servant John the Baptist. He came to prepare Jesus' way. He came to prepare people's hearts. So use us, and our gifts, to prepare the way for the return of our Savior and the fulfillment of your plans. As John came for testimony, to declare to the dawning light of salvation, so that all might believe; send us as well to share our testimony. Let us be your voice crying out in the wilderness of doubt, despair, and unbelief. Let our whole lives, and the gifts we offer this day, be a witness to your saving light. Amen.

Advent Profession of Faith - *Adapted from the Belgic Confession, Article 18 & 26*

What do we profess to believe concerning the coming of Christ Jesus?

We confess that God fulfilled the promise made, by the mouth of the holy prophets, when God sent the only and eternal Son of God into the world at the time appointed.

We believe that we have no access to God except through the one and only Mediator and Intercessor, Jesus Christ the righteous, who was made human, uniting together the divine and human natures, so that we human beings might have access to the divine Majesty. But this Mediator, whom the Father has appointed, ought not terrify us by his greatness. For neither in heaven nor among the creatures of earth is there anyone who loves us more than Jesus Christ.

Although he was in the form of God, Christ nevertheless emptied himself, taking human form and the form of a slave for us, and he made himself like his brothers and sisters in every respect. In this way, Christ is truly our Immanuel, that is, God with us.

Congregational Prayers and the Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

Hymn: *It Came upon the Midnight Clear*



1. It came up - on the mid - night clear, That glo - rious song of old,
2. Still thru the clo - ven skies they come With peace - ful wings un - furled,
3. And ye, be - neath life's crush - ing load, Whose forms are bend - ing low,
4. For lo, the days are has - t'ning on, By proph - ets seen of old,



From an - gels bend - ing near the earth To touch their harps of gold:
 And still their heav'n - ly mu - sic floats O'er all the wea - ry world:
 Who toil a - long the climb - ing way With pain - ful steps and slow,
 When with the ev - er - cir - cling years Shall come the time fore - told,



"Peace on the earth, good - will to men, From heav'n's all - gra - cious King!"
 A - bove its sad and low - ly plains They bend on hov - 'ring wing,
 Look now! for glad and gold - en hours Come swift - ly on the wing:
 When the new heav'n and earth shall own The Prince of Peace their King,



The world in sol - emn still - ness lay To hear the an - gels sing.
 And ev - er o'er its Ba - bel sounds The bless - ed an - gels sing.
 O rest be - side the wea - ry road And hear the an - gels sing.
 And the whole world send back the song Which now the an - gels sing.

Closing Benedictions - *God Be With You* - GRC Praise Team

Sharing the Peace of Christ

Today's Music

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

Text: Georg Weissel, 1642 Trans. Catherine Winkworth, 1855

Music: Thomas Williams, 1789 Harm. Lowell Mason (1792-1872)

Just As I Am

Text: Charlotte Elliott

Music: William B. Bradbury

Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending

Text: Charles Wesley and Martin Madan; based on John Cennick

Music: Henry T. Smart

In the Bleak Midwinter

Text: Christina Rossetti, c. 1872; alt.

Music: Gustav Theodore Holst, 1906

It Came upon the Midnight Clear

Text: Edmund H. Sears

Music: Richard S. Willis

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