Living Out God's Call To Joy and to Justice

First Presbyterian Church, McAllen
Advent Worship – November 29, 2026

Until the Dawn …Cry Out



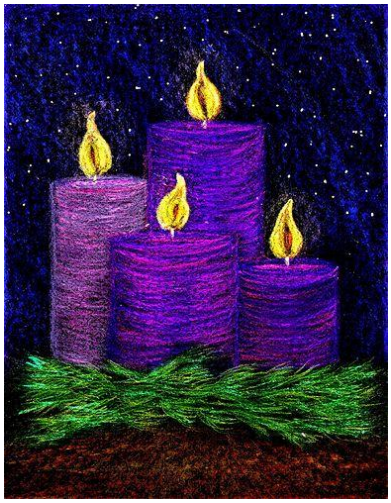
Lisle Gwynn Garrity
Heavens Torn & Transformed

Opening Sentences

- People, look east. The time is near. People, look east. Love is on the way.
- Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship.

Prelude

Call to Worship – Lighting the Advent Wreath



When the nights are long
and the roads are hard,
we turn our eyes to the stars.
When the work is demanding
and injustice unending,
we stand together, arm in arm.
When fear looms large
and grief weighs heavy,
we cry out to God without holding back.
And when the dawn of tomorrow
feels far away,
we gather together to light the candle of hope.
Light first candle on Advent Wreath.
Like the stars above,
may the light shine bright.
May it guide our path.
May it inspire deeper hope.
Until God's promised day,
may it be so.
Amen.

Hymn O Lord, How Shall I Meet You GG #104

O Lord, how shall I meet you, how welcome you aright?
Your people long to greet you, my hope, my heart's delight!
O kindle, Lord most holy, a lamp within my breast,
to do in spirit lowly all that may please you best.

Love caused your incarnation; love brought you down to me;
your thirst for my salvation procured my liberty.
O love beyond all telling, that led you to embrace
in love, all loves excelling, our lost and fallen race.

You come, O Lord, with gladness, in mercy and goodwill,
to bring an end to sadness and bid our fears be still.
In patient expectation we live for that great day
when your renewed creation your glory shall display.

Prayer of the Day

Great God,
no one knows the hour of your return,
yet we await your arrival, trusting that it will come.
There is a sense of urgency in our waiting.
We await the birth of Jesus,
but we watch for so much more,
anticipating all that your incarnation means in a hurting world.
Teach us to keep alert,
that we may not become complacent
or convinced that we have time.
Show us how to hurry up and wait,
to enact our expectation by sharing love,
offering forgiveness,
and living according to the movement of the Holy Spirit.
In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

Call to Confession

In scripture, we see people cry out to God with honesty and authenticity.
The Psalmist prays, "How long, O God?
Come and save us. Let your face shine upon us."

From their raw honesty, we know that we can go to God
with just as much honesty about the truth of our lives.
So join me in the Prayer of Confession. Join me in this moment of truth-telling. Just as the Psalmists did, let us go to God in prayer.

Prayer of Confession

Holy God,
we have been known –
to bite our tongues,
to work through a broken heart,
to don our favorite rose-colored glasses.
We have been known –
to look on the bright side,
to sweep pain under the rug,
to choose ignorance for the benefit of bliss.
We have been known to keep the hurt in our heart to ourselves.

Forgive us for filtering our honesty.
Forgive us for ignoring the power of lament.
Forgive us for not turning to you first.
Remind us that you are a God who listens
and you are a God who restores.
With open hearts we pray.
A moment of silent prayer.

Declaration of Forgiveness

Family of faith,
whether you pray like the Psalmists – raw and unfiltered –
or you can't remember the last time you were honest with God,
God still loves you, God sees you. And God longs to be in relationship.
So hear and believe the good news of the gospel:
There is nothing we could do or say that will keep God's love at bay.
We are seen, forgiven, and invited
into deeper honesty and deeper relationship.
Thanks be to God! Amen.

Act of Praise Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus, v. 1 GG #82

Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation, joy of every loving heart.

Passing the Peace of Christ

The peace of our Lord be with you all. / **And also with you.**

Time with the Younger Church

Life of the Church

Prayer for Illumination

Gracious God,
for generations,
we have cried out to you,
and you have listened.
So as we turn to hear your Word read and proclaimed,
give us the ability to listen as well as you do.
Give us the ears and the hearts to hear your words.
In hope we pray. Amen.

Anthem

A Reading from the Prophets Isaiah 64:1-9

64 O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—
2 [a]as when fire kindles brushwood
and the fire causes water to boil—
to make your name known to your adversaries,
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!
3 When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,
you came down; the mountains quaked at your presence.
4 From ages past no one has heard,
no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you,
who works for those who wait for him.
5 You meet those who gladly do right,
those who remember you in your ways.
But you were angry, and we sinned;
because you hid yourself we transgressed.[b]
6 We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.
We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
7 There is no one who calls on your name
or attempts to take hold of you,
for you have hidden your face from us
and have delivered[c] us into the hand of our iniquity.
8 Yet, O Lord, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.
9 Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord,
and do not remember iniquity forever.
Now consider, we are all your people.

The Word of the Lord / **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Hymn The Days Are Surely Coming GG #357

The days are surely coming, says God to all the earth,
when you will see my promise: salvation come to birth.
My righteousness and justice will spread throughout the land
and you will be delivered by my almighty hand.

The days are surely coming, says Christ, the promised one,
when you will read my warnings in moon and stars and sun.
Though earth and heaven tremble, stand up and do not fear,
for I am your redeemer, and I am drawing near.

The days are surely coming when we will know at last
the fullness of God's presence, God's promise, come to pass.
Then righteousness and justice will spread throughout the land
and we will be delivered by God's almighty hand.

Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer



Hannah Garrity
Bread of Tears

God who holds us,
who hears us,
who knows the rhythm of our heartbeats
and the ache of our prayers –
we unfurl before you.
We stretch out our weary hearts.
We lay bare the truth of our lives.

We come to you in prayer.
It should be easy to cry out to you, God,
for the prophets all did it.
Isaiah said, "O that you would tear open the heavens
and come down!"
We hear these words
brimming with honesty
and we are reminded
that there is nothing we cannot bring to you.
We are reminded that, like Isaiah,
we can bring our full emotions to you.

Surely there is no plea, no ache, no grief, no joy,
no riddle, not wondering, no curiosity
that we cannot name and lift up.
What a gift that is.

So today, Holy One, we will lean on this truth.
In silence, we take a moment for each of us
to name the payers that rest on our hearts
Gracious God, hear our silent prayers now. …

God who holds us, who hears us,
who knows the rhythms of our heartbeats
and the ache of our prayers –
we lay bare the truth of our lives.

Thank you for being a God who hears us when we cry out.
Thank you for being a God who welcomes our honesty
with open arms and gracious love.
Hear us now as together we blend our voices to pray the prayer your Son has taught us, saying:
Our Father, who art in heaven …

Invitation to the Offering

All things in heaven and earth belong to God,
who is coming in glory to reveal a new creation.
Let us offer our lives to the Lord.

Offertory

Act of Dedication Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus, v. 2 GG #82

Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us forever; now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.

Offertory Prayer

God Most High, receive the gifts of our lives
as an offering of gratitude for your grace.
Overshadow us with your Holy Spirit
and let it be with us according to your word,
for nothing is impossible with you. Amen.

Hymn It Came Upon the Midnight Clear GG #123

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth, to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heaven's all-gracious King"
the world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come, with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world:
above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.

Yet with the woes of sin and strife the world has suffered long;
beneath the heavenly hymn have rolled two thousand years of wrong;
and we at war on earth hear not the tidings that they bring;
O, hush the noise and cease the strife to hear the angels sing!

And you, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow,
look now, for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing;
O, rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing.

For lo, the days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold,
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world give back the song which now the angels sing.

Charge and Benediction

As you leave this place, may you speak the truth in love,
may you hold fast to courage, may you be quick to joy,
may you listen for the angels, and may you build each other up,
until we reach God's promised day –
when the lion will lie down with the lamb
and the sun will rise over all of us.
That is what we dream of.
That is what we move toward.
So look toward the horizon,
and go with hope. Go in peace.
Amen.

Congregational Response While We are Waiting, Come, v. 1 GG #92

While we are waiting, come;
while we are waiting, come.
Jesus our Lord, Emmanuel,
while we are waiting, come.

Postlude



Today's Worship Leaders:

Rev. Kathryn J. Escandell

Beverly Avila Robert Garza Ale Pacheco FPC Chancel Choir

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