

November 30th 2025
Portage Lake United Church

First Sunday of Advent



Lectionary Year A
Liturgical Color: Purple/Blue

Welcome and Announcements

We gather in the name of the Holy Trinity, one God, source of all goodness and mercy. No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

- PLUC will be having “Advent by the Fire” on Wednesday evenings, Dec. 3rd, 10th, and 17th with soup and bread at 5:30 pm and a meditation and conversation around the fire at 6:00 pm. One soup and bread will be provided with a request for one other soup each week. A sign up sheet is on the table in the lounge.
- Don't forget about “Giving Tuesday.” Donations are accepted through December 2nd.
- We will be “Greening the Church” next Sunday after worship.
- There is a sign up sheet on the table in the lounge for people who wish to purchase gifts for the Angel Mission Christmas Tree Project.
- Cookie Sunday is December 7th. Please bring some cookies or other snacks for students while they are studying.
- Copper Country Chorale presents Christmas Traditions in Song on Sun., Dec. 14, 3 p.m. at Grace United Methodist Church. The choir of mixed voices will share carol selections of various eras and feature guest artists B Lauer and members of the Keweenaw Historical Music Ensemble. The Chorale will host a refreshment social after the concert. There will be a free will donation.
- Angel Mission needs: Shelf stable tortillas
- ***Are there any other announcements?***



Serving This Morning

Presider: Rev. Peter Norland
Musician: Susie Byykkonen
Greeters: Nancy Byers Sprague, Dianne Sprague
Reader: Ann Campbell
Prayer Writer: Jim Northey
Coffee: Nancy Byers Sprague, Dianne Sprague
Children's Church: Olivia Byykkonen



PRELUDE AND MEDITATION

God's apparent lack of restraint when it comes to creating things is but a symptom of a deeper "problem": God lacks restraint when it comes to loving too. In fact God is most unrestrained when it comes to loving.

From: Abundant Treasures, by Melannie Svoboda



GATHERING: THE HOLY SPIRIT CALLS US TOGETHER AS THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

+ Call to Worship

As the sun rises on this new season, we turn to God who renews hope in each one of us.

For the sake of relatives and friends, we proclaim with joy:

“Let us go to the house of our God and find hope within!”

Though the days are short, and the news, grim, we turn to our gathered family and ask one another to trust God, as we have so many times in the past.

For the sake of relatives and friends, we proclaim with joy:

**“Peace be within the walls of this house,
that our hope might spread beyond!”**

In fear or joy, in desperation or fullness, in pain or contentment, God wraps us in bands of hope, holding us together so we may continue the struggle for justice and peace.

For the sake of relatives and friends, we proclaim with joy:

**“I will seek all that is good within the house of God,
and I will carry it with me wherever I go!”**


Gathering Hymn “View the Present Through the Promise” #90 GREEN

Used with permission.
One License #A-725614

ADVENT

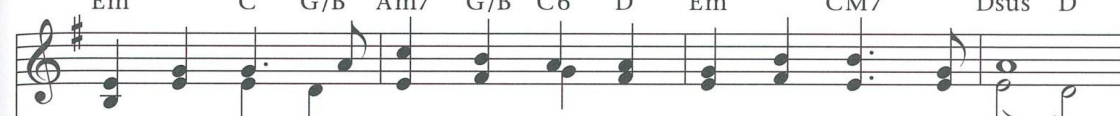
View the Present Through the Promise 90

Unison G C/G G Am7 G/B C Am7 D7sus D7



1 View the pres - ent through the prom-ise, Christ will come a - gain.
2 Probe the pres - ent with the prom-ise, Christ will come a - gain.
3 Match the pres - ent to the prom-ise, Christ will come a - gain.

Unison Em C G/B Am7 G/B C6 D Em CM7 Dsus D




Trust de - spite the deep-ening dark-ness, Christ will come a - gain.
Let your dai - ly ac - tions wit - ness, Christ will come a - gain.
Make this hope your guid - ing prem - ise, Christ will come a - gain.

Unison Am F/A G/B Am/C Em Am7 Bm C D/C



Lift the world a - bove its griev-ing through your watch-ing and be - liev - ing
Let your lov - ing and your giv - ing and your jus - tice and for - giv - ing
Pat - tern all your cal - cu - lat - ing and the world you are cre - a - ting

Harmony G G/B C Am G/B C Am7 D7 G



in the hope past hope's con-ceiv-ing: Christ will come a - gain.
be a sign to all the liv - ing: Christ will come a - gain.
to the ad-vent you are wait-ing: Christ will come a - gain.

Text: Thomas H. Troeger (b. 1945)
Music: Roy Hopp (b. 1951)

Text © 1994, Oxford University Press, Inc.; music © 1997, Roy Hopp

85 85 88 85
FRANKLIN PARK

✦ PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of justice, God of peace,
even now you are breaking into our weary world.
Make your presence known to those who wait and watch for you.
Send your Spirit of justice rolling over the earth;
sweep away all war and suffering
so that all of your creation can glorify you in peace—
the kin-dom that Jesus promised us come down to earth at last.

Amen.

+ Prayer of Confession (Unison)

O God, we are steeped in a world of violence.
War is one of the first things we learn,
and we let it work its way into our lives.
Your promises of peace sound like impossible dreams,
and we become accustomed to cruelty.
Forgive us.
Wrest our weapons from our hands,
and show us how beautiful life can be
when you forge them into instruments of peace.

...

Through Jesus Christ we are forgiven!
Thanks be to God!



Church of the Light
Tadao Ando Ibaraki, Japan

✦ PASSING THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

We greet one another with a sign of God's peace.



✦ Lighting of Advent Candles

Today, we light the candle of Hope.

We think of Hope as anticipation of something future, but in truth,
Hope can be the incarnation of trust.

We trust in our Wonderful Counselor –

that when we seek guidance, we will find answers.

We trust in our Emmanuel –

**that when we are exhausted, God will send someone
to share our burdens for a while.**

We trust our Creator –

**to renew our faith in community, in the goodness of
others, and in the power of our compassion
put into action.**

We trust in our Beloved God –

**that, when things are beyond our strength, too difficult,
too broken, or too messed up, Hope will appear,
and we rush forward, arms open wide to receive grace.**



WORD



Isaiah 2:1-5

2:1 The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

2:2 In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it.

2:3 Many peoples shall come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

2:4 He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

2:5 O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD!

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God**

LIFE IN CHRIST

Isaiah 11

337 Isaiah the Prophet Has Written of Old

SAMANTHRA 11.8.11.8 D

Joy F. Patterson, 1982.

American folk melody
Arr. Alice Parker and Robert Shaw



1. I - sa - iah the proph - et has writ - ten of old How
2. Yet na - tions still prey on the meek of the world, And

God's earth-ly king-dom shall come, In - stead of the thorn tree the
con - flict turns par - ent from child. Your peo - ple de-spoil all the

fir tree shall grow; The wolf shall lie down with the lamb. The
sweet - ness of earth; The brier and the thorn grow wild. Lord,



moun - tains and hills shall break forth in - to song, The
has - ten to bring in Your king - dom on earth, When

peo-ples be led forth in peace, For the earth shall be filled with the
no one shall hurt or de - stroy, When wis - dom and jus - tice shall

knowl - edge of God As the wa - ters cov - er the seas.
reign in the land And Your peo - ple shall go forth in joy.

Romans 13:11-14

13:11 Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; 13:12 the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; 13:13 let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. 13:14 Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Word of God, Word of Life. Thanks be to God

✚ GOSPEL READING Matthew 24:36-44

24:36 "But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 24:37 For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 24:38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, 24:39 and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. 24:40 Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. 24:41 Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. 24:42 Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. 24:43 But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. 24:44 Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

The Gospel of the Lord. Thanks be to God

Sermon



Offering and Prayer of Dedication

Beloved Creator,

we offer these gifts to you in the spirit of Hope.

We place our trust in you and in those who

faithfully care for your people,

that these gifts will be used to protect

and uplift those who are in need.

Help us to remember our role to act as agents

of your grace each and every day.

Amen.



Christ our Light

ADVENT

11

O Lord, How Shall I Meet You?

VALET WILL ICH DIR GEBEN 7.6.7.6 D

Paul Gerhardt, 1653

Trans. Catherine Winkworth and others, 1863; alt.

Melchior Teschner, 1614

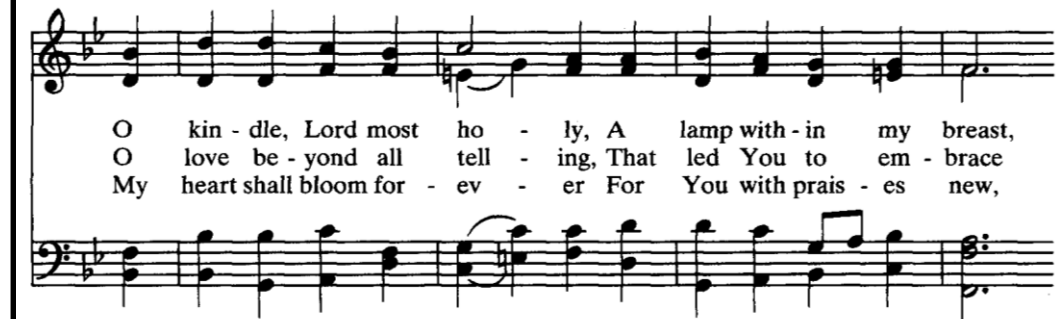
Harm. William Henry Monk, 1861



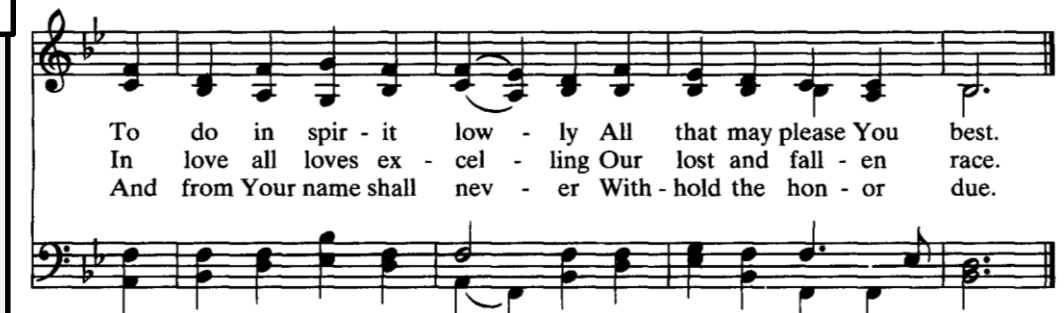
1. O Lord, how shall I meet You, How wel - come You a - right?
2. Love caused Your in - car - na - tion, Love brought You down to me;
3. A glo - rious crown You give me, A trea - sure safe on high,



Your peo - ple long to greet You, My hope, my heart's de - light!
Your thirst for my sal - va - tion Pro - cured my lib - er - ty.
That will not fail nor leave me As earth - ly rich - es fly.



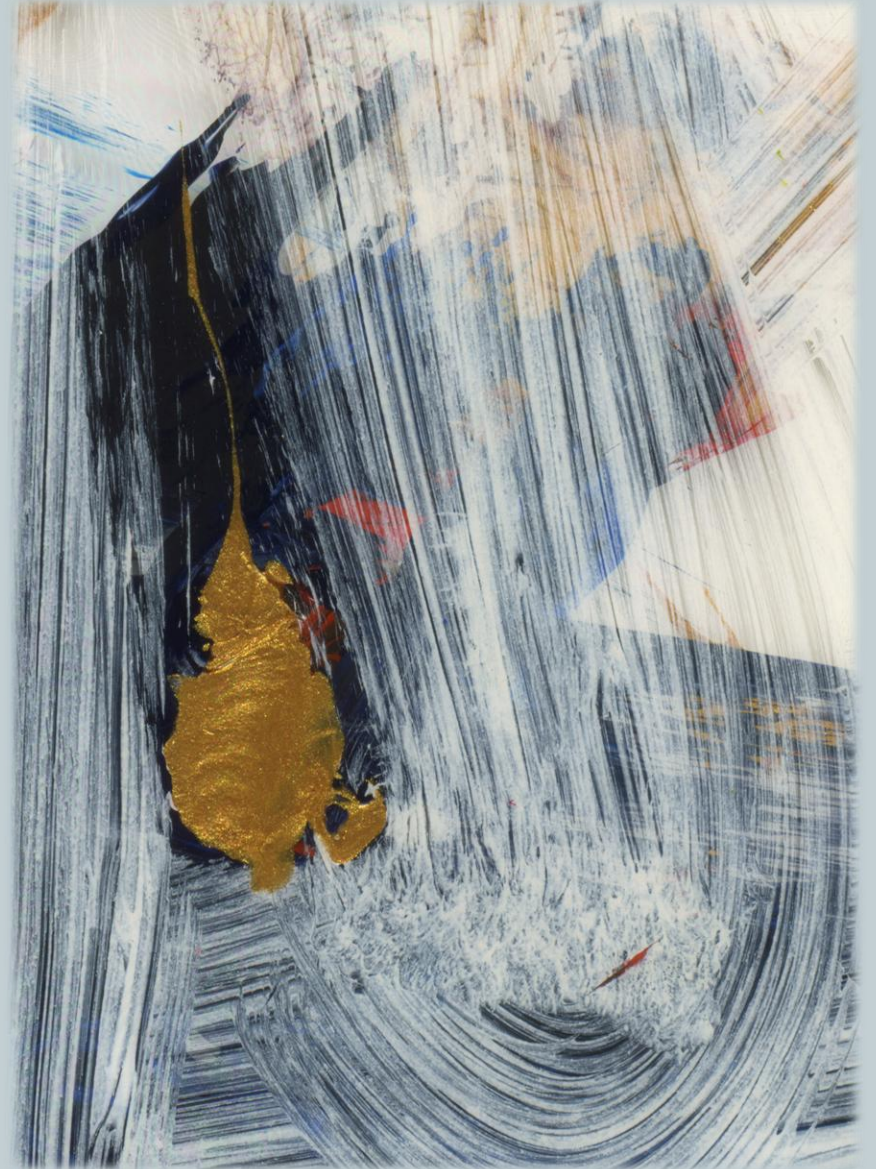
O kin - dle, Lord most ho - ly, A lamp with - in my breast,
O love be - yond all tell - ing, That led You to em - brace
My heart shall bloom for - ev - er For You with prais - es new,



To do in spir - it low - ly All that may please You best.
In love all loves ex - cel - ling Our lost and fall - en race.
And from Your name shall nev - er With - hold the hon - or due.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Response: “Come, Lord Jesus.”



PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

ECUMENICAL

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever.
Amen.



✦ Sending Hymn “Soon & Very Soon” #106 GREEN

Used with permission.
One License #A-725614

ADVENT

106

Soon and Very Soon

Capo 3 F(D)

1,4 Soon and ver - y soon, we are going to see the King!
 2 No more cry - ing there— we are going to see the King!
 3 No more dy - ing there— we are going to see the King!

Chords: Bb(G), F(D)

Soon and ver - y soon, we are going to see the King!
 No more cry - ing there— we are going to see the King!
 No more dy - ing there— we are going to see the King!

Chords: C7(A7), F(D)

Soon and ver - y soon, we are going to see the King! Hal-le-
 No more cry - ing there— we are going to see the King! Hal-le-
 No more dy - ing there— we are going to see the King! Hal-le-

Chords: F(D), Bb(G), F(D), A7(F#7), Dm(Bm)

lu - jah! Hal-le - lu - jah! We're going to see the King!

Chords: (B7/F#) D7/A, (Em/G) Gm/Bb, (D/A) F/C, (Gm6) Bbm6, (D/A) F/C, (F#m/A) Am/C, (D) F

Text and music: Andraé Crouch (b. 1947)

© 1976, Bud John Songs, Inc./Crouch Music, admin. EMI Christian Music Publishing

SOON AND VERY SOON

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

CHARGE AND BLESSING


When we leave this place today,
carry the flame of Hope within yourselves.
No matter how small it may seem, hope is powerful.
Feed it with the knowledge that God's love is incendiary.

May Spirit's breath blows through us,
allowing the flame flicker, rise and grow.
May the Hope of God's coming in Christ Jesus
give you light and warmth and strength
for all the days that are to come. Amen.



Ann Campbell

Postlude and Reflection

A serene winter scene featuring several evergreen trees heavily laden with snow. The trees are dark green, contrasting with the white snow. In the background, a bright, glowing sun or moon is visible through a hazy, blue-tinted sky, creating a soft, ethereal light. The overall atmosphere is quiet and contemplative.

What does it mean to “get your house in order” for the coming of the Lord?
Can we ever be perfectly ready for Christ’s return?
Why is the coming of the Lord compared to a thief in the night?
Is there grace in God’s surprising advent, God’s unexpected arrival?

Thanks to

Presider: Rev. Peter Norland
Musician: Susie Bykkonen
Greeters: Nancy Byers Sprague, Dianne Sprague
Reader: Ann Campbell
Prayer Writer: Jim Northey
Coffee: Nancy Byers Sprague, Dianne Sprague
Children's Church: Olivia Bykkonen

1. All Scriptures taken from NRSV, copyright Thomas Nelson publishers.
2. All songs used with permission. One License #A-725614
3. Portions reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from Feasting on the Word® Worship Companion. Copyright 2013



Portage Lake United Church

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA) & UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

1400 East Houghton Avenue, Houghton Michigan 49931
www.PLUC.org office@pluc.org (906)482-5224

Rooted in the Trinity. Growing in God's Word.
Branching out to those in need. Nourished by many waters.

Visio Divina

Photos by

Ann Campbell
Sherry Middlemis-Brown
Jim Northey

The Word

Christ our Light

20th century, Holy Rosary Priory, Bushey, United Kingdom

Note: This image and many others with iconographic content have been generously donated to the Flickr Creative Commons by Brother Lawrence, OP.

Notes:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life...those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God." John 3:16, 21

"In his commentary on Genesis, 'De Genesi ad Litteram,' Augustine reflected on the meaning of the words 'Fiat lux' ('And light was made') and brought into the theological tradition a perennial interest in the theology of light and of vision. Augustine notes that light was the first creature made out of 'nothing.' As the 'first incarnation' of God's Word, light is the supreme example of God's beauty or form. Moreover, since light is incorporeal, it is the most spiritual of all 'creatures.' And since light is not only incorporeal but also visible, it is the ultimate mediator between the visible and the invisible, the material and the immaterial."

SERMON

Preparing the Way © Jan Richardson <https://janrichardsonimages.com>

Our guest artist again today is Tom Co, Some of you may know Tom from Michigan Tech. Now that he has moved to being an emeritus professor, he is spending much more time with his artwork. These works are currently on display in the gallery in the lower level of the Rosza Center.

Additional descriptions can be found at the Art in the Christian Tradition image library, a service of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/>. All images available via Creative Commons 3.0 License.