



CENTRAL
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

PREPARATION

November 28, 2021 The First Sunday Of Advent

WORDS FOR REFLECTION

“Advent—the four-week period that leads up to Christmas—is a series of events designed not to delay the celebration of Christmas, but to enhance it. It’s a kind of delayed gratification that culminates in a...satisfaction that is all the richer for the waiting.”

—JOAN CHITTISTER, *LISTEN WITH THE HEART*

COLLECT OF THE DAY

Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came among us in great humility; that on the last day, when he comes again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

THE COMMON LECTIONARY READINGS

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 33:14-16

PSALM: Psalm 25:1-10

SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

GOSPEL: Luke 21:25-36

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRELUDE

Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending

Cecil F. Alexander · Traditional

Lo! he comes with clouds descending,
Once for favored sinners slain;
Thousand, thousand saints attending
Swell the triumph of his train.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
God appears on earth to reign.

Ev'ry eye shall now behold him,
Robed in dreadful majesty;
Those who set at naught and sold him,
Pierced, and nailed him to the tree,
Deeply wailing, deeply wailing,
Shall the true Messiah see.

Ev'ry island, sea, and mountain,
Heav'n and earth, shall flee away;
All who hate him must, confounded,
Hear the trump proclaim the day:
Come to judgment! Come to judgment!
Come to judgment, come away!

Now Redemption, long expected,
See in solemn pomp appear!
All his saints, by man rejected,
Now shall meet him in the air.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
See the day of God appear!

Yea, amen! let all adore thee,
High on thine eternal throne;
Savior, take the pow'r and glory,
Claim the kingdom for thine own.
O come quickly, O come quickly;
Alleluia! Come, Lord, come.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Traditional English

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel.
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

CALL TO WORSHIP

Isaiah 2:1-5

LEADER It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say:

PEOPLE **“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.”**

LEADER For out of Zion shall go the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples;

PEOPLE **And 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 anymore.**

LEADER O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD.

HYMN

O Come, O Come Emmanuel (Continued)

Traditional English

O come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,
And order all things far and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And cause us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Desire of nations, bind
All peoples in one heart and mind.
Bid envy, strife, and quarrels cease;
Fill the whole world with Heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Lord, have mercy on us. We are not ready for your coming. We live in sin, as though there were no justice. We live in fear, as though there were no grace. Forgive us, Lord. Show us your mercy and steadfast love. Lead us in your truth, and teach us your paths, for you are the God of our salvation. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Romans 15:12-13

Isaiah says, “The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope.” May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

LEADER Hear and receive the good news of the gospel:
 in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

ALL **Thanks be to God!**

PASSING OF THE PEACE

LEADER The peace of the Lord be with you always.

ALL **And also with you.**

HYMN

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

Traditional French Carol

Let all mortal flesh keep silence,
And with fear and trembling stand;
Ponder nothing earthly-minded,
For with blessing in His hand,
Christ our God to earth descendeth,
Our full homage to demand.

King of kings, yet born of Mary,
As of old on earth he stood,
Lord of lords, in human vesture,
In the body and the blood;
He will give to all the faithful
His own self for heavenly food.

Rank on rank the host of heaven
Spreads its vanguard on the way,
As the Light of light descendeth
From the realms of endless day,
That the powers of hell may vanish
As the darkness clears away.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth;

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
Born of the Virgin Mary,
Suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Was crucified, dead, and buried.

He descended into hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven,

And is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
The holy catholic Church,
The communion of saints,
The forgiveness of sins,
The resurrection of the body,
And the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYER WITH CHILDREN

All preschool and elementary age children are invited to the front of the church and will be dismissed to Children's Church with their teachers where they will read, sing, learn, and play in an environment suited to their language and style. Alternatively, children are always welcome to remain in the sanctuary to worship alongside the adults for the duration of the service.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

We regularly pray for needs in our congregation, our neighborhood and city, and the world. Please let the prayer ministry know of your prayer requests by visiting centralchurchnyc.org/prayerrequest.

OFFERING

If you are our guest today, please feel no obligation to give. For members and regular attenders of Central, give generously as you are able. We give because all we have has been graciously given to us by God. Our offerings express our joyful dependence upon God and our commitment to join God in his work of renewal.

*Please text **centralchurchnyc** to (833) 737-6262 or visit centralchurchnyc.org/give in order to give electronically.*

OFFERTORY HYMN

The Water

David Lanz

Lauren Dykstra and Erika Toderic-Marks, Soloists

This far He has held us.
Through the waters as they crash against
This far He is with us, He is for us.
Through the stormy depths
I will soar on wings like eagles.
O God, You've carried me
This far, this far.

*There is power, victory, hope
For the broken hearted,
Healing meant for me.
There is goodness, justice, rest
For the weak and weary,
Love that's meant for me.*

This far He has lead us
Through the darkness to the light of day.
This far He has shown us
Love and mercy and unfailing grace.
When my hope is lost in the shadows,
This promise You have made
It's not far, not far. *Chorus*

When the water, the water, the water is crashing over,
He's gonna, He's gonna, He's gonna, He's gonna save us.
The water, the water, the water is crashing over,
He's gonna rescue us. *Chorus*

THE DOXOLOGY

Old Hundredth LM

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 1:5-23

⁵In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. ⁷But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

⁸Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, ⁹according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. ¹¹And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him.

¹³But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. ¹⁴And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, ¹⁵for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. ¹⁶And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, ¹⁷and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”

¹⁸And Zechariah said to the angel, “How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.” ¹⁹And the angel answered him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. ²⁰And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time.” ²¹And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple. ²²And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute. ²³And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

SERMON

The Actors of Advent | Zechariah

Rev. Chris Hildebrand

THE THANKSGIVING

LEADER Lift up your hearts.

PEOPLE We lift them up to the Lord.

LEADER Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**PEOPLE It is right to give him thanks and
praise.**

LEADER

It is indeed right, our duty and joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to you, Lord, holy Father, Almighty and Everlasting God.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

Prayer for Those Searching for Truth

Lord Jesus Christ, you claim to be the way, the truth, and the life. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reasons for doing so. If what you claim is true, please guide me, teach me, and open to me the reality of who you are. Give me an understanding of you that is coherent, convincing, and that leads to the life that you promise. Amen.

Prayer of Belief

Lord Jesus Christ, I acknowledge that you are so holy and I am so sinful that you had to die for me. Yet you are so merciful and I am so loved that you were willing to die for me. I confess that I have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed by what I have done and by what I have failed to do. I thank you for paying my debt, bearing my punishment on the cross, and offering forgiveness and new life. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive you as Savior and Lord. Amen.

Prayer of Commitment

Lord Jesus, I know that if I do not love you with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength, I shall love something else with all my heart and mind and soul and strength. Grant that by loving you first I may be liberated from all lesser loves and loyalties and have you as my first love, my chief good, and my final joy. Amen.

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,
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever,
Amen.

HYMN

Creator of the Stars of Night

Chris Tomlin · Ed Cash

Creator of the stars of night,
Your people's everlasting light,
O Christ, Redeemer of us all,
We pray you, hear us when we call.

*Come, O come,
Come, O come,
Come, O come, to us.*

When this old world drew on toward night,
You came, but not in splendor bright.
Not as a monarch, but the child
Of Mary, humble mother mild. *Chorus*

At your great name, O Jesus, now,
All knees must bend, all hearts must bow.
All things on earth with one accord.
Like those in heaven, shall call you Lord.

BENEDICTION

DISMISSAL

LEADER Let us go forth to serve the world as those who
 love our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

ALL **Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE

Creator of the Stars of Night (reprise)

Central Church Chamber Ensemble