



— FIRST SUNDAY OF —
ADVENT

Mifflin Avenue United Methodist Church
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WELCOME Visitors: WE ARE GLAD YOU COULD JOIN US!
If you do not have a permanent church home, please consider joining us.

May God bless your experience in worship with us today.
We are here to serve, so please let us know how we might better serve you.

ORDER OF WORSHIP
First Sunday of Advent
CENTERING

WELCOMING & ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING WORDS

Pastor: Keep awake.

People: Christ is coming.

Pastor: Wait for the Lord.

People: Love is coming.

Pastor: Prepare the way.

People: Hope is coming.

Pastor: Worship the Lord.

People: Christ is coming soon.

PRAISING

OPENING HYMN:

"All Earth Is Waiting"

No. 210

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: Rejoice, for today is a new day and the beginning of a season to celebrate!

People: This is indeed a new day. For today we begin a journey, a journey to prepare our hearts for the coming of the Son.

Pastor: We are expecting God to come among us in new ways.

People: We are expecting to birth holiness right here.

Pastor: In the eternal moment that is now, God pours out salvation upon us.

People: God has come! God is coming!

Pastor: We raise up our heads and our hearts in faithful hope and expectation.

People: God has come! God is coming!

All: Let us set our minds on the God of love, and prepare our hearts for God's great gift.

OPENING PRAYER

O Lord, on this first Sunday of the Advent Season, as we gather in your house of prayer and praise, we ask that the weeks ahead may be a very special time for us. May we arrive at a new awareness of your claim on our lives; may we gain a new appreciation of what it means to have God with us through the incarnation of your Son; and may we make a new commitment to the rule of justice and peace which Christ came to establish upon the earth. Amen.

CHILDREN'S MOMENTS

BLESSING

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY (The Candle of Hope)

Pastor: Lift your eyes and your hearts. From where does your hope come?

People: Our hope is in God, who made heaven and earth; our hope is in Jesus Christ, for whose birth we wait.

Pastor: What keeps you from hoping? Bring it to this time of worship and offer it to God..

People: We come to worship to renew our hope. We come seeking a light for our way through the darkness.

(Lighting the Candle of Hope)

Pastor: People of God, may this candle serve as a reminder of the hope that is within us.

PRAYER:

Loving God, as we enter this Advent season, we open all the dark places in our lives and memories to the healing light of Christ. Show us the creative power of hope. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you, that we may walk in the light of Christ. Amen

HEARING

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Pastor: Prepare the way of the Lord.
People: We listen for the word of God.

FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 64: 1-9

This is the Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

*GOSPEL LESSON

The Lord be with you,
And also with you.
A reading from the Gospel of St. Mark.
Glory to You, O Lord.

*THE GOSPEL IS READ

Mark 13:24-37

THE GOSPEL RESPONSE

The Gospel of the living Christ.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROCLAIMING

SERMON

“Are We Almost There Yet?”

Reverend Shuluga

CONFESSING

THE INVITATION

The world is noisy, busy, confusing and chaotic. Let us come aside to a place of quiet and peace, in which to prepare for the arrival of the Christ Child. Let us begin by confessing our sin together.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Merciful Savior, in our rush to Christmas joy, we confess that, like our culture, we would prefer to skip Advent's invitation to stillness, reflection and preparation. Shiny wrappings and ornaments are more festive than looking at the ways we fall short of the call to be your people. Holiday parties and shopping conveniently blind us to the poverty of those who will celebrate your birth with neither tree nor gifts. Our busyness numbs us to the despair felt by many during this time of year. Thank you for your faithful prophet Malachi, whose voice pierces our self-absorbed revelry with the truth we need to face: we are lost, we are broken, we need you. Come, Lord Jesus. Come into our hearts with mercies new this morning, grace sufficient for this day, and forgiveness that cleanses us from our guilt and sin. We gratefully received the Christ child again. Amen

SILENT CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Friends, God is for us and not against us. For that reason, God sent the Son into the world — not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Believe the good news: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

CELEBRATING

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

As we share our gifts with the people of God, we bring forth justice for the poor, deliverance to the needy, and hope to the oppressed.

THE LORD'S OFFERING

OFFERTORY

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Bless these gifts, O God, that they may become justice for the poor, deliverance to the needy, and hope to the oppressed. Bless our gifts, Holy One, that we may grow in your grace, and produce the fruit of your Spirit: Love, peace, hope, and joy. Amen.

SENDING

BENEDICTION

Pastor: In the midst of loss, hopelessness, and despair,

People: we will practice hope!

Pastor: By doing the hard work of healing,

People: we will practice hope!

Pastor: By forgiving again and again and again,

People: we will practice hope!

Pastor: By planting seeds and trees and new life,

People: we will practice hope!

Pastor: Be reaching out to others who are suffering,

People: we will practice hope!

Pastor: By cherishing your own life,

People: we will practice hope!

Pastor: By living in the perspective of God's eternity,

People: we will practice hope!

CLOSING HYMN:

"Emmanuel, Emmanuel"

No. 204 (sing twice)

"WE TAKE THE LIGHT OF JESUS INTO THE WORLD"