

*The beginning of the prelude is a call to silent,
personal preparation for the worship of God.*

Gathering around the Word

Prelude

Come Thou Now, Jesus, Down from Heaven Johann Sebastian Bach

Introit

“Freedom Is Coming” South African song
O freedom is coming; O yes, I know. O Jesus is coming; O yes, I know.

*Doxology (*sung*) The Hymnal, 606

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise God, all creatures here below;
praise God above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Leader: *One candle to remind us of the prophets,
the second for John the Baptist,
who called people to change their way of living
to prepare for the coming of Christ.
The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness has never put it out.
God sent the messenger, a man named John,
who came to tell people about the light
so that all should hear the message and believe. (John 1:5-7)*

People: **Disturbing God,
we thank you for the witness of John the Baptist.
Help us to be open to the changing power of your love
and your call to live lives of peace.
And help us to be true witnesses
to the power of Jesus in our lives. Amen.**

*Hymn 88 “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”
(verses 1-4)

Litany of Confession

Minister: *We live in a world held down by sin,
a world of hunger, pain, and injustice.*

People: We confess we are part of this world
and have not always played our part
in confronting the shadows
and bringing the light of Christ to troubled places.

Minister: *We are a part of the body of Christ, a body that is sometimes
known more by our fighting than our loving.*

People: We confess our own tendencies to argue or to shut out
rather than to seek peace and to welcome.

Minister: *We are beloved people, created in the image and likeness of God.*

People: We confess we do not always live up to God's dream for us.

Minister: *Though God says, "Let there be Light!"*

People: we fear to come out of the shadows.

Minister: *Though God says, "You are the salt for the earth,"*

People: we rest content with blandness.

Minister: *Though God says, "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you,"*

People: we live afraid of the power of God's love for us
and for all God's people.

Forgive us, God.

Forgive us and make us new. Amen.

Declaration of Pardon

Minister: *Friends, believe the good news.*

People: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Concerns of the Church

Listening for the Word

Prayer for Illumination

Psalter (*responsively*)

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13 Old Testament, page 514

Anthem

"Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding" Eric H. Thiman

First Lesson

Isaiah 40:1–11 Old Testament, page 627

Leader: *The Word of the Lord.*

People: Thanks be to God.

*Gloria Patri (*sung*) The Hymnal, 581

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen. Amen.

Second Lesson

Mark 1:1–8 New Testament, page 32

Minister: *The Word of the Lord.*

People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon Shannon J. Kershner

Responding to the Word

*Hymn 96 “On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry”

*Affirmation of Faith (*unison*) Apostles’ Creed

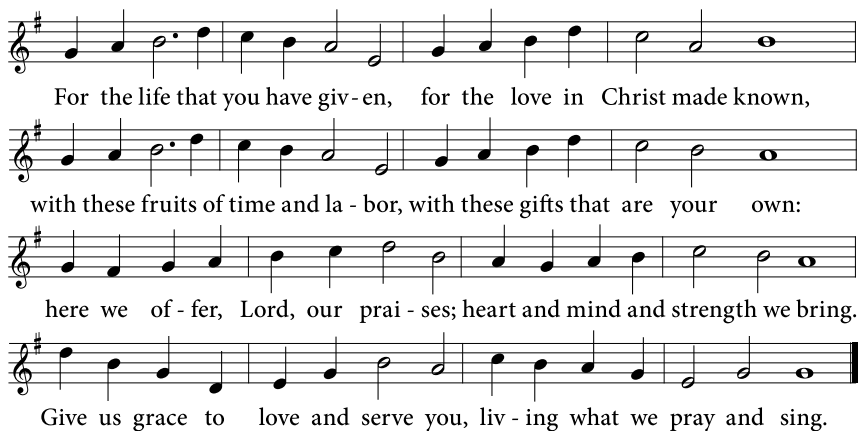
I believe in God the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell;
the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand
of God the Father Almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church;
the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Offering

Offertory Voluntary

Aria from “On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry” Bruce Neswick

*Offertory Response



For the life that you have giv-en, for the love in Christ made known,
with these fruits of time and la-bor, with these gifts that are your own:
here we of-fer, Lord, our prai-ses; heart and mind and strength we bring.
Give us grace to love and serve you, liv-ing what we pray and sing.

Sealing the Word

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Invitation

Great Thanksgiving

Minister: *The Lord be with you.*

People: **And also with you.**

Minister: *Lift up our waiting hearts.*

People: **We lift them up to the One whose heart belongs to us.**

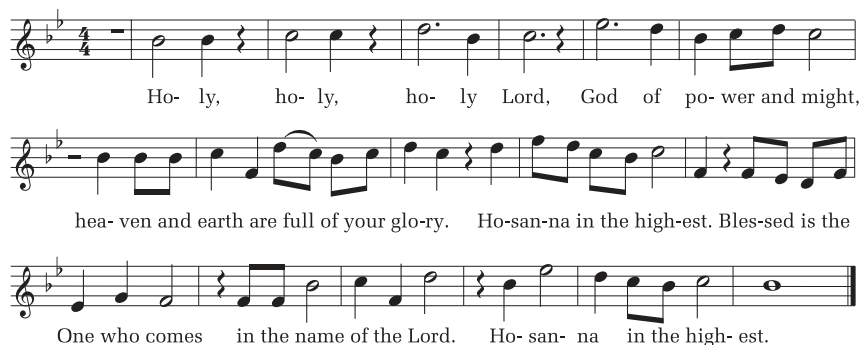
Minister: *Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.*

People: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Prayer

Minister: *It is always right to give our thanks and praise.*

*It is always good and right to stand in your house of peace
with thanksgiving on our lips, Holy God . . .*



Ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly Lord, God of po-
wer and might,
hea-ven and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho-san-na in the high-est. Bles-sed is the
One who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san-na in the high-est.

Minister: *Holy are you, God who comes to us . . .*

*Then, when that day and hour come, and we are gathered
with our sisters and our brothers, our enemies and our friends,
around the Feast in Heaven, we will be bound firmly together
for all eternity with you, walking in your Light.
And hear us as we continue to pray together, saying . . .*

The Lord’s Prayer (unison)

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by 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.**

The Communion

Communion Anthem

“Comfort, Comfort, Ye My People” Genevan psalter
arr. Paul Bunjes

*Comfort, comfort, ye my people; speak ye peace, thus saith our God;
comfort those who sit in darkness, mourning 'neath their sorrow's load.
Speak ye to Jerusalem of the peace that waits for them;
tell her that her sins I cover, and her warfare now is over.
Hark, the herald's voice is crying in the desert far and near,
bidding all now to repentance since the kingdom now is here.
O, that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God a way;
let the valleys rise to meet him and the hills bow down to greet him.*

Prayer after Communion (unison)

**O God, in this meal
we have been given a foretaste of the feast that is to come.
Help us always to be alert to your gifts in our midst;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*Hymn 360 “Christ Is Coming!”

Bearing the Word into the World

***Benediction and Response**

Postlude

Toccata from “On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry” B. Neswick

Worship Leaders

Judith L. Watt, Roberta Dawson, Shannon J. Kershner

The Music Today

The Chancel Choir

John W. W. Sherer, Organist and Director of Music

Thomas E. Gouwens, Associate Organist

MJ Chen, Organ Scholar

Worship Notes

THIS MORNING, COMMUNION IS SERVED BY INTINCTION. The congregation comes forward by the center aisle to receive the bread, which they then dip into the chalice of grape juice. (Gluten-free bread is available in a small tumbler in each basket of bread.) Worshipers return to their pews by the side aisles.

The Lord's Supper is the sign and seal of eating and drinking in communion with the crucified and risen Lord. In this act, we remember that during his earthly ministry, Jesus shared meals with his followers and sat at dinner tables as a sign of acceptance of the sinner and the outcast.

The invitation to the Lord's Supper is not just for Presbyterians or "members of the church." All who confess Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord are invited to partake of the Lord's Supper. Even one who doubts or whose trust is wavering may receive the bread and grape juice (in place of wine) in order to be assured of God's love and grace in Jesus Christ.

SOURCES AND CREDITS: The liturgy of our Advent wreath is adapted from *Candles and Conifers: Resources for All Saints' and Advent* by Ruth Burgess, copyright © 2005 Wild Goose Publications. All rights reserved. Used by permission. The litany of confession is adapted from <http://www.wellsprings.org.uk/wellsprings.htm> Hymn tune names—as well as composers of the music and authors of the text—are listed in the hymnal with each hymn. The words to "For the Life that You Have Given" are by Carl P. Daw Jr. © 1987; music is by Morgan Simmons © 1990, 1992 by Hope Publishing Co. The music for "Holy, Holy, Holy" is by John Sherer © 1997.

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