

Mount Vernon United Methodist Church

November 28, 2021

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Greeting and Welcome of Visitors

PRELUDE

“Carillon” (Georges Bizet)

Baxter Jennings

* CALL TO WORSHIP

The days are shorter and darkness comes early to our lives.

Lord, hear our prayers through the darkness.

Come, seek the Lord. Place your hope in God's mercy and love.

Lord, we seek your presence among us.

Look closely! God is making us ready.

Brighten our spirits this day, and help us to receive your good news. Amen.

* HYMN 211

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

1. O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain:

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

2. 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. *(Refrain)*

3. O come, O come, great Lord of might,
who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times once gave the law
in cloud and majesty and awe. *(Refrain)*

4. O come, thou Root of Jesse's tree,
an ensign of thy people be;
before thee rulers silent fall;
all peoples on thy mercy call. *(Rejoice)*

* MORNING PRAYER

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

We can hardly believe it, Lord. The Advent season is upon us. We usually translate that into the buying season in preparation for The Big Day.

But when we place our hope in the tinsel, wrappings, tape and boxes, we forget the most glorious gift of all, the gift of God's absolute love.

Open our eyes, our hearts, our spirits today to behold God's gracious love for us in the fulfillment of all God's promises. For we ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES

Ann & J.G. Hurt

Luke 17: 20-24

Once Jesus was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, and he answered, “The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed;²¹ nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There it is!’ For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you.”²² Then he said to the disciples, “The days are

coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. ²³ They will say to you, 'Look there!' or 'Look here!' Do not go, do not set off in pursuit. ²⁴ For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day.

Candle Lighting

This morning we light the first candle.

The first candle reminds us that, as we wait upon the Lord, God's light never ceases to shine, God's will never ceases to unfold, and God's Grace never ceases to be felt. As we begin the journey of Advent, may we learn to wait upon the Lord with hopeful expectation by celebrating all God has done And anticipating all that the Lord will do.

RESPONSE 431 "Let There Be Peace on Earth"

**Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me;
let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.
With God our creator, children all are we.
Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.
Let peace begin with me; let this be the moment now.
With every step I take, let this be my solemn vow:
to take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally.
Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.**

SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 13: 24-30

He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵ but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. ²⁶ So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. ²⁷ And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?' ²⁸ He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' The slaves said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' ²⁹ But he replied, 'No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. ³⁰ Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.'"

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

SERMON

"Does Evil Come from God?"

*Robert Harrison***

* AFFIRMATION OF FAITH 881: 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;
the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven,**

**and sitteth at 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 Spirit, the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

* GLORIA 238 (*Refrain*)

Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

OFFERING OF TITHES AND GIFTS

OFFERTORY SONG "Children of Our Heavenly Father" (Arr. Don Hustad) *Baxter Jennings*

* DOXOLOGY 95 "Christmas Doxology"



Glo-ry be to God the Fa-ther, glo-ry be to Christ the Son, glo-ry
to the Ho-ly Spir-it, glo-ry to the Three-in-One. Here we of-fer to you
glad-ly all the gifts that you im-part, as we
glo-ry in your Pre-sence, giv-ing from a grate-ful heart.

* OFFERTORY PRAYER

PASTORAL PRAYER

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

It is so easy for us, Lord, to let the anger, frustration, and fear overshadow our lives. We can't seem to escape it. We try to find some way to cover it up, but it remains. And in our anxiety, we act out our fear in ways which are not helpful and, far too often, go against the ways you have taught us to live. We feel the pressure to give, and resentment in giving. We feel the push to be present at every upcoming event, and want to run and hide. Help us, Lord. Heal our wounded spirits. Free us again to look to you for Hope. Let us see the many ways in which you are present to us ... guiding, healing, loving, encouraging us. Forgive us for our fears and our stubbornness. Bring us again to your light, for we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

"The days are coming", says the prophet Isaiah, "when all God's promises will be fulfilled." These promises of hope, peace, joy, and love are for you. Receive the hope that God offers to you today.

* CLOSING HYMN 213 "Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates"

**1. Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates;
behold, the King of glory waits;
the King of kings is drawing near;
the Savior of the world is here!**

**2. Fling wide the portals of your heart;
make it a temple, set apart
from earthly use for heaven's employ,
adorned with prayer and love and joy.**

**3. Redeemer, come, with us abide;
our hearts to thee we open wide;
let us thy inner presence feel;
thy grace and love in us reveal.**

**4. Thy Holy Spirit lead us on
until our glorious goal is won;
eternal praise, eternal fame
be offered, Savior, to thy name!**

* BENEDICTION

* POSTLUDE

"Echoes of Joy" (Hans-André Stamm)

Baxter Jennings

*** Robert Harrison is a retired English teacher. He was on the faculty of Danville Community College for 34 years and was an adjunct teacher there for 15 years. His wife is a retired registered nurse. They have three children and five grandchildren.*