

**Sunday Worship - November 27, 2022**  
**First Sunday of Advent**



**Narrative Lectionary Year 1 Week 12**

**For Such a Time as This - A Time for Hope**

*O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen?*

*Or cry to you "Violence!" and you will not save?*

*Why do you make me see wrongdoing and look at trouble? Habakkuk 1:1-2*

**First Presbyterian Church of Mount Vernon, Iowa**

*"Striving to live as Jesus lived –  
confronting injustice with love, compassion, service."*

## Welcome to Worship

### PRELUDE

### RINGING OF THE HOUR

### WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

L: The Lord be with you.

**P: And also with you.**

### \*LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

L: People of God, prophets like Habakkuk pointed to a future hope, a Savior.

**P: No one knew when that Savior would come.**

L: They only hoped they would recognize the Messiah, the Son of God.

**P: We wait with hope for the One who has come and is coming.**

L: Today we light a candle to symbolize our hope. We hope in the One who will come.

*First Candle is Lit*

L: People of God, a New Hope is coming.

**P: We will rejoice in the Lord.** (© Martha Spong)

### \*HYMN #88 O Come, O Come Emmanuel (verse 1-3)

*1: 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.*

*2: O come, thou Wisdom from on high,  
who orderest all things mightily;  
to us the path of knowledge show;  
and teach us in her ways to go.  
Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*3: O come, O come, great Lord of might,  
who to your tribes on Sinai's height  
in ancient times did give the law  
in cloud and majesty and awe.  
Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

### \*PRAYER OF RECONCILIATION FOR ADVENT

L: Trusting in God's grace, let us confess our sin.

Open our eyes, Lord,  
especially if they are half shut because we are tired of looking,  
or half open because we fear to see too much,  
or blurred with tears because yesterday and today and tomorrow  
are filled with the same pain,  
or shut tight because we only look at what we want to see.

**P: Open our eyes, Lord,  
to gently scan the life we lead, the home we have, the world we inhabit,  
and so to find among the gremlins and the grayness,  
signs of hope we can fasten on and encourage.**

L: Give us, whose eyes are dimmed by familiarity,  
a bigger vision of what you can do even with hopeless cases and lost causes  
and people of limited ability.

**P: Show us the world as you see it, riddled by debt, deceit and disbelief,  
yet also shot through with possibility for recovery, renewal, redemption.**

L: And lest we fail to distinguish vision from fantasy,  
today, tomorrow, this week, open our eyes to one person or one place,  
where we might identify a need and make a difference, no matter how small.  
And with all this, open our eyes, in yearning, for Jesus.

**All: On the mountains, in the cities,  
through the corridors of power and streets of despair,  
to help, to heal, to confront, to convert,  
O Come, O come, Immanuel.**

(From the Iona Community Wild Goose Worship Group)

*Time of silent prayer*

**\*RESPONSE**      #88 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel verse #7

*O Come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;  
Bid envy, strife and discord cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

**\*PASSING OF THE PEACE**

L: Within us, without us, among us, before us,  
in this place, in every place, for this time, for all time:

**P: Christ is coming. Christ is coming to make all things new.**

L: The peace of Christ be with you.

**P: And also with you.**

**\*WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

L: Hear this good news! In Christ, God comes near to us, bringing hope, joy and forgiveness into our lives.

**P: God gathers up the fragments of our lives and shapes us into new people.**

**For this reason, we lift our thanks to God. Amen.**

**DISCOVERY TIME**

## SCRIPTURE READING

L: In the beginning was the Word.

**P: And the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**

L: And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

The Prophet Habakkuk

*Habakkuk 1:1-4 – The Prophet's Lament*

*Reader 1:* The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet saw.

Lord, how long will I call for help and you not listen?

I cry out to you, "Violence!"

but you don't deliver us.

Why do you show me injustice and look at anguish

so that devastation and violence are before me?

There is strife, and conflict abounds.

The Instruction is ineffective.

Justice does not endure

because the wicked surround the righteous.

Justice becomes warped.

*Habakkuk 2:2-4 – The Lord Responds*

*Reader 2:* Then the Lord answered me and said,

Write a vision, and make it plain upon a tablet

so that a runner can read it.

There is still a vision for the appointed time;

it testifies to the end;

it does not deceive.

If it delays, wait for it;

for it is surely coming; it will not be late.

Some people's desires are truly audacious;

they don't do the right thing.

But the righteous person will live honestly.

*Habakkuk 3:17-19 – The Prophet Responds*

**Congregation:** Though the fig tree doesn't bloom,

and there's no produce on the vine;

though the olive crop withers,

and the fields don't provide food;

though the sheep are cut off from the pen,

and there are no cattle in the stalls;

**I will rejoice in the Lord.**

**I will rejoice in the God of my deliverance.**

**The Lord God is my strength.  
He will set my feet like the deer.  
He will let me walk upon the heights.**

**L:** For the Word of God in scripture, for the Word of God among us, for the Word of God within us,  
**P:** Thanks be to God.

## REFLECTION

Rev. Lori Wunder

## HYMN #800 Sometime a Light Surprises

*1: Sometimes a light surprises  
the child of God who sings:  
the light of one who rises  
with gentle, healing wings.  
When comforts are declining,  
God grants the soul again  
a season of clear shining,  
to cheer it after rain.*

*2: In holy contemplation  
with joy we shall pursue  
the theme of God's salvation,  
and find it ever new.  
Set free from present sorrow  
we cheerfully can say,  
let the unknown tomorrow  
bring with it what it may.*

*3: It can bring with it nothing  
but God will bear us through.  
Who gives the lilies clothing  
will clothe the people, too.  
Beneath the spreading heavens  
no creature but is fed:  
the one who feeds the ravens  
will give the children bread.*

*4: Though vine and fig tree neither  
their yearly fruit should bear,  
though all the fields should wither,  
nor flocks nor herds be there,  
yet God, the same abiding,  
through praise shall tune my voice,  
for while in love confiding  
I cannot but rejoice.*

## SHARING OF JOYS & CONCERNS AND 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.**

## CALL FOR THE OFFERING

**L:** We are called to be a living body, seeking God's will in the world.  
Let us offer our lives to the Lord.

## GATHERING OF THE GIFTS

### OFFERTORY

**\*HYMN OF THANKSGIVING #108 Of The Father's Love Begotten verse 6**

*Christ, to thee with God the Father, and, O Holy Ghost, to thee,  
Hymn and chant and high thanksgiving and unwearied praises be.  
Honor, glory, and dominion, and eternal victory,  
Evermore and evermore. Amen.*

## **\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

L: Let us pray:

**All: Open our eyes, Lord, to see with renewed vision,  
to acknowledge what is good and what is bad  
and never to let go of the hope that can transform.**

**Use us as we commit ourselves in service  
within the commonwealth of your love.**

**May the gifts we bring today of money, of time and ability,  
small though they are, be offered in response to your great love for us.**

**Amen.**

## **\*HYMN      #692 Spirit, Open My Heart**

*(\*we have altered gendered language in verse 3)*

*Chorus:*

*Spirit open my heart  
To the joy and pain of living  
As you love may I love  
In receiving and in giving Spirit,  
open my heart*

*1: God, replace my stony heart  
with a heart that's kind and tender.  
All my coldness and fear  
to your grace I now surrender.*

*2: Write your love upon my heart  
as my law, my goal, my story.  
In each thought, word, and deed,  
may my living bring you glory.*

*3: May I weep with those who weep,  
share the joy of friend and neighbor.  
In the welcome of Christ,  
may we welcome one another.*

## **\*BENEDICTION**

## **\*POSTLUDE**