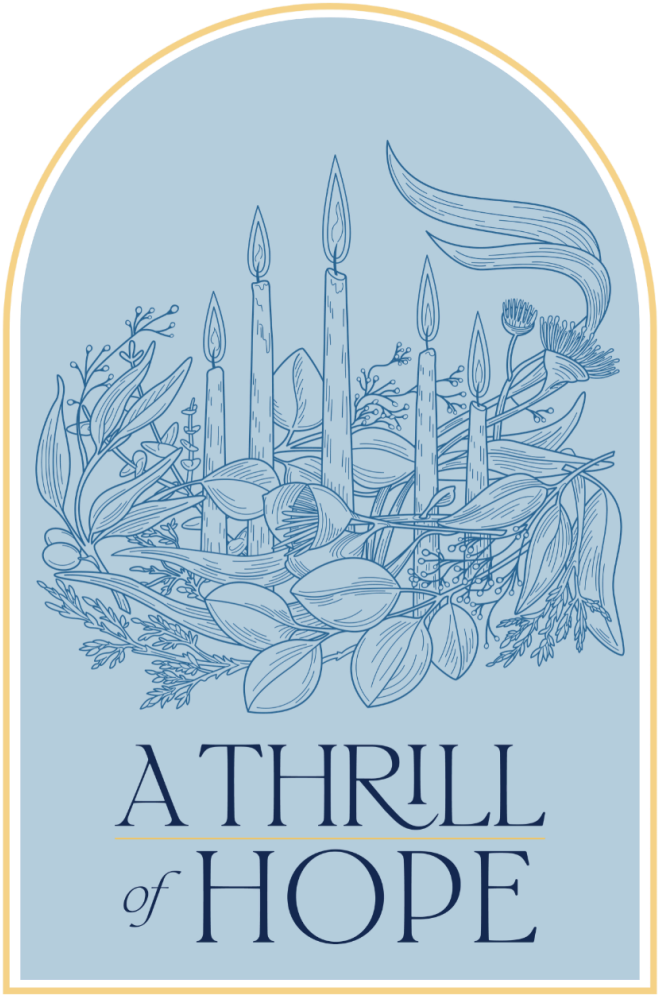
Sunday Worship - November 29, 2026
First Sunday of Advent



Advent Week 1
Mark 13:24–37
How do we recognize God's saving work?

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

Leader: The Lord be with you.
All: And also with you.

* CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Come, listen.
All: A thrill of hope is calling.
One: Come, rejoice.
All: A weary world is healing.
One: Come, watch.
All: A bright star is shining.
One: Come, worship.
All: The Messiah is coming.

*HYMN #88 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (verse1-2, 6)

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.

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.

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.

*LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

Reader 1: In the midst of busyness, bustling, and buzzing,
we pause to breathe and release our burdens.
We surround ourselves with candles, lights, greenery, and beauty.
May these sights and sounds remind us that we are people of faith,
guided by the light of the world.
Listen for words of hope on this First Sunday of Advent.

Brief pause for silence.

Reader 2: It is difficult to gather in this place
without acknowledging the hurt all around us.
Reader 1: There are unjust systems and harmful powers in place that diminish life.
All: What can we do? Where is our hope?
Reader 2: Be alert. Pay attention. There are whispers of hope all around you:
Reader 1: in a meal delivered, a hand extended, forgiveness granted.
Reader 2: As we live between the already and the not yet,
we remember: salvation doesn't happen when all is right in the world.
Reader 1: The Messiah draws near now, breaking into the present
through moments of compassion and flourishing.
Reader 2: In this season of holy waiting and wholly longing,
we light the candle of hope.

Light the first candle.

Reader 1: We say goodbye to the powers that harm
and welcome the coming of Christ.

All: May the hope of God-with-us thrill and inspire.

*HYMN #82 Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

1 . Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

2. Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.

*PRAYER OF RECONCILIATION FOR ADVENT

Leader: Our hearts cry out for restoration.
Our spirits plead for illumination.
Let us come before God in confession and in trust.
Our salvation is near.

Before God and one another,

All: we confess our love for power and control
that separates us from one another and from you, O God.
We cling tightly to wealth because we fear vulnerability.
We insist on our own way because we fear change.
We reject love and salvation
when they come to us from outside our comfort zone.
We follow our own paths
instead of your own faithful leading.
Forgive us through your endless grace
and guide us into your truth.
Lead us by the mercy of Jesus,
who is our way and our life.
Amen.

Time of silent prayer

*WORDS OF ASSURANCE

One: From the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven,
so great is God's mercy for us.
You are forgiven, and you are held by a love that will never pass away.
Receive this good news in the name of Christ.
All: Amen.

*RESPONSE HYMN #88 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel verses #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

One: The one for whom we wait is our prince of peace and reconciler of the world.
We share this peace with a weary world. We share this peace to offer God's grace.
We share this peace to anticipate and recognize God's salvation in our world.
May the peace of Christ be with you.
All: And also with you.

DISCOVERY TIME

SCRIPTURE READING

Leader: In the beginning was the Word.
All: And the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
Leader: And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

Mark 13:24–37 (CEB) - The Necessity for Watchfulness

Reader 1: [24] "In those days, after the suffering of that time, the sun will become dark, and the moon won't give its light. [25] The stars will fall from the sky, and the planets and other heavenly bodies will be shaken. [26] Then they will see the Human One coming in the clouds with great power and splendor. [27] Then he will send the angels and gather together his chosen people from the four corners of the earth, from the end of the earth to the end of heaven.
Reader 2: [28] "Learn this parable from the fig tree. After its branch becomes tender and it sprouts new leaves, you know that summer is near. [29] In the same way, when you see these things happening, you know that he's near, at the door. [30] I assure you that this generation won't pass away until all these things happen. [31] Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will certainly not pass away.
Reader 1: [32] "But nobody knows when that day or hour will come, not the angels in heaven and not the Son. Only the Father knows. [33] Watch out! Stay alert! You don't know when the time is coming. [34] It is as if someone took a trip, left the household behind, and put the servants in charge, giving each one a job to do, and told the doorkeeper to stay alert. [35]
Reader 2: Therefore, stay alert! You don't know when the head of the household will come,whether in the evening or at midnight, or when the rooster crows in the early morning or at daybreak. [36] Don't let him show up when you weren't expecting and find you sleeping. [37] What I say to you, I say to all: Stay alert!"

Leader: For the Word of God in scripture, for the Word of God among us,
for the Word of God within us,
All: Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION Rev. Lori Wunder

HYMN #92 While We Are Waiting, Come

1 . Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

2. Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.

SHARING 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 AND PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Gracious God, in this Season of Advent, as we wait for the Messiah, we offer not only ourselves but our tithes and gifts as well. May these offerings work to bring about healing, justice, belonging, and the thrill of hope to a weary world.
Amen.

*HYMN #100 Canticle of the Turning

1. My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the God of my heart is great,
and my spirit sings of the wondrous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight, and my weakness you did not spurn,
so from east to west shall my name be blest. Could the world be about to turn? **REFRAIN**

REFRAIN: My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is about to turn.

2. Though I am small, my God, my all, you work great things in me,
and your mercy will last from the depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
Your very name puts the proud to shame, and to those who would for you yearn,
You will show your might, put the strong to flight, for the world is about to turn. **REFRAIN**
3. From the halls of power to the fortress tower, not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice tears every tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more, for the food they can never earn;
There are tables spread; every mouth be fed, for the world is about to turn. **REFRAIN**
4. Though the nations rage from age to age, we remember who holds us fast:
God's mercy must deliver us from the conqueror's crushing grasp.
This saving word that our forebears heard is the promise which holds us bound,
till the spear and rod can be crushed by God, who is turning the world around. **REFRAIN**

*BENEDICTION

*POSTLUDE

Thank you to the following people for helping with our service this morning:
Beth Simon, Coffee Hour Host
Gerald Gerber & Scott Larson, AV

First Pres Mount Vernon Staff:
Lori Wunder, Pastor
Cristina Galán, Office Manager
Nona Hutchinson, Treasurer
María Seda, Nursery
Teresa Sullivan, Custodian