

# *The First Sunday of Advent*

November 29, 2020 at 10:30 AM

*We welcome you to worship today. It is a privilege to have you as our guest.  
As you join us today, begin to worship quietly with personal prayer.  
Please turn off your cell phone and turn your hearts and minds toward God.*

## **We prepare for worship**

*Take a moment and meditate on this as you prepare for worship...*

*The Incarnation...illuminates and orders all other phenomena, explains both our laughter and our logic, our fear of the dead and our knowledge that it is somehow good to die, and which at one stroke covers what multitudes of separate theories will hardly cover for us if this is rejected.* *C. S. Lewis*

Prelude

Dr. Josh Perry-Parrish

Aisquith Life and Opportunities

## **We praise our great God**

Call to Worship

Today we light *the candle of hope* as we anticipate the coming of Jesus, who is our hope now and forever. We read from 1 Peter: "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. . . In this you rejoice. . .*" **(1:3-6)**

Gracious God and loving Father, as we light this candle and begin this new Advent season, shine the light of your hope into our hearts and world. Amen.

The Lighting of the Advent Wreath

*We light this candle as a symbol of our Hope, who has come into the world.*

Hymn No. 194

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

Plainsong

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

***Rejoice! Rejoice! Emanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.***

O come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy tribes on Sinai's height,  
In ancient times didst give the law in cloud and majesty and awe.

O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free thine own from Satan's tyranny;  
From depths of hell thy people save, and give them vict'ry o'er the grave.

O come, thou Day-spring from on high, and cheer us by thy drawing nigh;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.

O come, thou Key of David, come and open wide our heav'nly home;  
Make safe the way that leads on high and close the path to misery.

Invocation

**We embrace Christ our Savior**

Confession of Faith (**unison**)

Second Helvetic Confession, VIII.1 (1566)

**Man was from the beginning created of God after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness, good and upright; but by the instigation of the serpent and his own fault, falling from the goodness and uprightness, he became subject to sin, death and divers calamities; and such a one as he became by his fall, such are all his offspring, even subject to sin, death, and sundry calamities.**

Confession of Sin (**unison**)

based on Isaiah 59:2-8, 20

**The words of your prophet Isaiah, spoken so long ago, come back to accuse us yet today. O Lord, our iniquities separate us from you. Our sins have caused you to hide your face from us. Our hands are stained, our fingers covered with guilt. Our lips have spoken lies and our tongues muttered wicked things. Our thoughts are evil, our roads are crooked, and we do not walk in peace. We do not call for justice or plead for integrity. O Lord, forgive us, do not hide your face from us any longer. Hear our pleas for mercy. Redeem us by your grace and mercy. Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

Psalm 103:8-12 (ESV)

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

Hymn No. 645

*Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee*

St. Agnes

Jesus, the very thought of thee with sweetness fills my breast;  
But sweeter far thy face to see, and in thy presence rest.

Nor voice can sing, nor heart can frame, nor can the mem'ry find,  
A sweeter sound than thy blest name, O Savior of mankind.

O Hope of ev'ry contrite heart, O Joy of all the meek,  
To those who fall, how kind thou art! How good to those who seek!

But what to those who find? Ah, this nor tongue nor pen can show:  
The love of Jesus, what it is none but his loved ones know.

Jesus, our only joy be thou, as thou our prize will be;  
Jesus, be thou our glory now, and through eternity.

The Prayers of God's People and the Lord's Prayer (**in unison**)

## We respond in gratitude for God's blessing

The Doxology (*Hymnal*, pg. 731) and Prayer of Dedication

### We hear God speak

Scripture Reading

Genesis 4:1-16, 25, 26 (ESV)

**4** Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD." <sup>2</sup> And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. <sup>3</sup> In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, <sup>4</sup> and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, <sup>5</sup> but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. <sup>6</sup> The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? <sup>7</sup> If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it."

<sup>8</sup> Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. <sup>9</sup> Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" <sup>10</sup> And the LORD said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. <sup>11</sup> And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. <sup>12</sup> When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth." <sup>13</sup> Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. <sup>14</sup> Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me." <sup>15</sup> Then the LORD said to him, "Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him. <sup>16</sup> Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

<sup>25</sup> And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, "God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him." <sup>26</sup> To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD.

Sermon

"The Triumph of Grace over a Murderous Cause"

Pastor Bell

### We respond to God's grace

Hymn No. 219 (vv. 1, 4, 5)

*All Praise to Thee, Eternal Lord*

Canonbury

All praise to thee, eternal Lord, clothed in a garb of flesh and blood;  
Choosing a manger for thy throne, while worlds on worlds are thine alone.

Thou comest in the darksome night to make us children of the light,  
To make us, in the realms divine, like thine own angels round thee shine.

All this for us thy love hath done; by this to thee our love is won;  
For this we tune our cheerful lays, and shout our thanks in ceaseless praise.

Benediction and Three-Fold Amen (*Hymnal*, pg 740)

Danish

Postlude

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**We Welcome and Thank** Dr. Josh Perry-Parrish for providing the musical accompaniment today.

**Our Thanksgiving offering** will go to the Mission to North America Mercy Ministries Fund.

**The sign up book** for Christmas poinsettias on the table in the narthex. The cost is \$9.00 again this year. The deadline is SUNDAY, December 6<sup>th</sup>. You can also sign up by emailing Pastor Ceselsky (john@aisquith.org). Put the money in a pink envelope and write your name and “Flowers” on the outside.

**We will have** a Christmas Eve service at 7:00 PM on Thursday, December 24<sup>th</sup>.