



# First Sunday of Advent

## November 28, 2021

\* *Please stand if you are able*

Prelude: "I Don't Mind Waiting"

J. Bynum

### Gathering

#### LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE

Reader 1: The days are coming when the world will change. We wait in Advent hope.

Reader 2: We wait in darkness for light. We wait in brokenness for *shalom*. We wait hoping for the peace, justice, and righteousness that the Messiah promises to bring to our lives and to the world.

Reader 3: As we light the first Advent candle, Lord, teach us to hope.

Instrumental: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

#### \* CALL TO WORSHIP

Liturgist: In you, Lord my God, I put my trust. I trust in you; do not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me.

**All: No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame.**

Liturgist: Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me,

**All: for you are my God and Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.**

*Psalm 25:1-10*

\* **All Singing: 61 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"**  
*Singing verses 1, 2, and 4*

\* GOD'S GREETING

\* GOD'S PEOPLE GREETING ONE ANOTHER

\* **All Singing: 56 “Come Thou Long Expected Jesus”**

*Children ages 2–7 may come forward for a brief word and blessing before they leave for “God Loves Me” and “Children in Worship.”*

CHILDREN’S BLESSING

Children: The peace of Christ be with you.

**All: And also, with you.**

## Reconciliation

Liturgist: Remember, Lord, your great mercy and love, for they are from of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways: according to your steadfast love remember me,

**All: for you, Lord, are good.**

*Silent Confession and Reflection*

Liturgist: Good and upright is the Lord; therefore, he instructs sinners in his ways. He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way. All the ways of the Lord are loving and faithful toward those who keep his covenant.  
*Psalm 25:1-10*

\* **All Singing: 689 “There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy”**

Liturgist: “The days are coming” declares the Lord, “when I will fulfill the good promise I made to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah.

**All: “In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David’s line; he will do what is just and right in the land. In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will live in safety.**

Liturgist: “This is the name by which it will be called: the Lord our Righteous Savior.”  
*Jeremiah 33:14-17*

Choir: “Freedom is Coming” South African folk song

Freedom is coming, oh yes, I know.  
Jesus is coming, oh yes, I know.

Liturgist: Romans 13:11-14

## Proclamation

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

**All Singing: 429 “Don’t Be Afraid”**  
*Singing twice*

Scripture: Luke 21:25-36

Minister: The Word of the Lord.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

Sermon: Impatiently Waiting

\* **All Singing: 476 “The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns”**

THE INSTITUTION  
THE THANKSGIVING

THE INVITATION  
THE COMMUNION

**All Singing: 480** “Wait for the Lord”  
**All Singing: 833** “There is a Redeemer”

THE ACCLAMATION

\* **All Singing: 78** “Of the Father’s Love Begotten”  
*Singing verse 5*

**Christ, to you, with God the Father and the Spirit, there shall be hymn  
and chant and high thanksgiving and the shout of jubilee: honor, glory,  
and dominion and eternal victory evermore and evermore. Amen.**

## Dedication

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

#### OFFERING

1. General Fund
2. Denominational Ministry Shares

OFFERTORY “Hark! The Glad Sound”  
“Hark! The Glad Sound”

Michael Burkhardt  
Paul Manz

\* **All Singing: 959** “Glory Be to the Father

### PRAYER OF DEDICATION

## Sending

#### \* BENEDICTION

Minister: May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else. May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones. *1 Thessalonians 3:12-13*

**All: Amen.**

Postlude: “Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying”

Johann Walther

### Worship Leaders

Organist:	Dora Diephouse	Advent:	Batkiewicz Family
Pianist / Vocalist:	Erin Pacheco	Liturgist:	Dorothy Wassenaar
Saxophones:	Danielle & Aaron Murawski	Prayer:	Clay Carlson
Percussion:	Clay Carlson		
Choir Director:	David Baar		
Accompanist:	Beverly Baar		
Minister:	Roger Nelson		

Hymns are from *Lift Up Your Hearts* (Faith Alive Christian Resources, 2013)  
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[www.hope-crc.org](http://www.hope-crc.org)

Text: Luke 21:25-36  
Title: Waiting Impatiently  
Date: 11.28.21  
Roger Allen Nelson

As it turns out I'm not very patient.

This summer while riding my bike I was hit by a car. As a result, I've got issues from the top of my head to the bottom of my feet. And, I'm impatiently working on and waiting for healing. I'm impatiently trying to get my life back.

For Sandi (my wife) there's a profound sense of gratitude.

She lived through the fear: Will he live? Will his brain be in a bucket? Will he lose his leg? Will he be himself? And now, seeing my recovery (such as it is) she knows a deep gratitude for how far I've come.

Therefore, she's patient and positive about the process. When I'm frustrated about not being able to walk without a limp, or pain, or imbalance, she'll remind me that four months ago I couldn't get to the bathroom by myself. When I'm impatient about what I can't do she'll point to what I can do and that I should pretty much just shut up.

My impatience is rooted in what I've lost.

Sandi's patience is rooted in what's been recovered.

I'm stuck with frustrated longing.

Sandi sees with expectant hope.

I wait with impatience.

She waits with gratitude.

Dear friends, a biblical spirituality is marked by waiting.

Scripture is full of images of waiting for God ~ sometimes with hopeful expectation and sometimes with impatience and frustration. When God comes will all hell break loose or will God slip in quietly? Will the seas toss and the heavens shake? Will we faint from terror? Will fig trees bloom or will God come like a thief in the night?

I want to think with you this morning about waiting for God's coming. What should we expect? What can we learn from this relatively obscure text? How should we wait? To quote Barbara Brown Taylor:

*"Be on guard," Jesus said. "Be alert at all times." Not so you will know when to grab your crash helmet and head for the basement, but so you will know when the kingdom is near. So you will not miss God when God comes.*

And, let's begin with that confession: God comes.

God seeks humanity – not the other way around. The initiative is God's. The activity is God's. The movement is God's. The gap between God and creation is porous, permeable, and from the first scenes in the Garden of Eden to the last chapters of Revelation – where

God makes his dwelling with people – scripture can be read as the coming of God. Again and again and again God comes....

God comes to Noah,  
God comes to Abraham,  
God comes to Moses,  
God comes to Isaiah,  
God comes to Sarah,  
God comes to Mary,  
God comes to Paul,  
God comes...

You get the idea.

In Luke's gospel God comes as baby snuggled-up and smuggled-in in the womb of a young woman from the Palestinian West Bank. There are singing angels, bleating sheep, and shining stars, but the public announcement that God has come doesn't happen until years later when in the temple Jesus reads from the prophet Isaiah:

*The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.*

And then he rolled up the scroll, sat down, and announced, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." There was no ambiguity or equivocation, no smoke or mirrors....

Jesus announces that the kingdom of God has arrived and the next few years, and the next 15 chapters of Luke are filled with the images, stories, and teachings of that kingdom. This is what it looks like when God comes.

But, here in our text, the Roman Empire still has its boot on the throats of Hebrews, prisoners are still bound, and the poor are little more than transactional pawns. You can imagine that the followers of Jesus wondered when things would be put to rights. You can imagine that they were frustrated, worried, and restless. They were impatiently waiting for the kingdom. They were wondering if this was all there was?

In response Jesus launches into a little apocalypse.

He gives a picture of God's coming. Each of the gospels includes a similar sermon. In our text Jesus has already announced that the time is near, "nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven." But, God will come.

*At that time, they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things began to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.*

Jesus is either announcing that God will come at the last days, or that on the cusp of crucifixion and resurrection the kingdom will more fully break in during their life time. Whenever or however, the expectation is still that God will come.

Mr. Burger has been a friend for 40 years. We worked at Roseland Christian Ministries together and he was always easy going, talkative, quick with a laugh and a story, and (literally) big, soft, and squishy. Mr. Burger grew up in the south, his family came north looking for work, but he never lost that deep-south-Bible-belt-slow-drawl-colloquial-gospel-talk. To engage Mr. Burger in conversation is to enter into an amazing stringing together of phrases, sayings, and quips from black gospel music and black preaching. He would squeeze out every ounce of syrup and every bit of good news and then break into song. Today he does it from a motorized wheel chair which seems to increase the drama.

One of the phrases that I learned from Mr. Burger is that God is an “on-time God.” “He may not come when you want him but he’ll be there right on time. He’s an on-time God.”

What it means, to borrow from Burger, is that when you can’t make a way, God will make a way. When you’re laid up on your sick bed, when don’t have the rent check, when you’re down to your last nerve, God will come....

God will come to save.  
God will come to fix.  
God will come on time.  
So, be patient....

Just like sprouting trees promise that summer is coming so to watch for God’s coming. Don’t be weighed down with anxiety but wait with expectation. God’ll be on time. Be patient....

Did I mention that I’m not particularly patient?

Some 2000 years later we’re still waiting for the Son of Man to come in a cloud with power and great glory. Plenty of nations are in anguish and perplexity. Plenty of people faint from terror and are apprehensive about what is coming on the world. And we’re still waiting for the Son of Man. The on-time God feels late.

So look, I think there’s something helpful here in the way Sandi has approached my recovery. She has hope that’s rooted in experience. She’s seen healing, she knows gratitude, she knows an expectant hope because of what she’s seen in the past.

Likewise, we still hold out hope for the coming of God in the future because of God’s coming in the past. Sure, there are times of impatience, but because we experience God in creation, in expressions of *shalom*, and in the mystery of God born in Bethlehem we wait with expectant hope. We wait for the coming of God because in the sharing of bread and wine, in the waters of baptism, in the pages of scripture, and in the life of a community we sometimes catch a glimpse of God. We still wait for God to come – no matter what God’s timing.

Fred Craddock puts it this way:

*Eschatological thinking is vital to faithful conduct and to hope which resists cynicism. There will be an end to life as it now is, an end that comes as judgement and redemption. Whether we go or God comes, personal theological preferences do not alter eschatology, and contemplation of that fact should have some sanctifying influence.*

That's a lot of big theological words, but it is to say that we would believe and behave in a way that keeps an eye on God's coming. And in doing we would be found faithful. May it be so with us.

There's an old chestnut that on a bright May day in 1890 the Connecticut House of Representatives was in session and the delegates were able to do their work by natural light. But then the skies grew dark, clouds blotted out the sun, and the day turned as night. Some legislators thought it was the Second Coming and a clamor arose. There were those who wanted to adjourn, those who wanted to pray, and those who wanted to prepare for the coming of the Lord.

But the Speaker of the House rose to the occasion with a measured logic and a hearty faith saying, "We are all upset by the darkness and some of us are afraid, but the Day of the Lord is either approaching or it is not. If it is not, there is no cause for adjournment. And if the Lord is returning, I, for one, choose to be found doing my duty. I therefore ask that candles be brought."

Dear friends, when God comes let us be holding a candle in this present darkness.

Let us wait with an expectant hope,  
    longing for God's coming,  
    and remembering what God has done in the past,  
    even as we tend to the work of the day.

Amen.