

We give you thanks, Holy God, for Jesus, who came to be your living Word, to baptize us with Spirit and fire, to feed the hungry, to humble the mighty, and to announce the good news of your coming realm.

With thanksgiving, we remember how, when the hour had come, Jesus took his place at the table with the apostles. He said to them, I will not eat this Passover again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God. Then Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

After supper, he took a cup, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

With thanks and praise we offer ourselves to you, sharing this holy meal, remembering Christ's dying and rising, and praying: Come Lord Jesus!

Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us — this bread, this cup, these people — Christ's body and blood, given in love for the world. Make us one in the Spirit, one in the church, and one with Christ our Lord.

Make us gentle, joyful, thankful people, serving our neighbors, worshiping you alone. Keep us in the peace of Christ until you gather us at your table in glory. Even now, a voice is crying in the wilderness: prepare the way of the Lord! Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, almighty God, now and forever. Amen.

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

HYMN

"Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates"

#213

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!

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Those who keep God's covenant and decrees walk in the paths of steadfast love and faithfulness. It is right to share our blessings in a world where justice for many is still but a dream, and mercy is but a hope seen from afar. With thankful hearts, let us joyfully share our gifts in gratitude to our God.



Oaklette United Methodist Church

"God's Body in this Community"

"Oaklette United Methodist Church through worship, education, and outreach, seeks to make the gospel of Jesus Christ real, as we minister to all people."

December 1, 2024

First Sunday of Advent



Welcome in the name of our Lord. A nurturing and well-supervised nursery is available for infants and young children. A Cry Room is also available. Please ask the greeter for further assistance and directions to these rooms. [†] = Invites persons to stand as they are able.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

BREAKTHROUGH PRAYER

Loving, sustaining God, like the mighty oak, may our branches at Oaklette church embrace those around us in this community. Use us as an instrument to welcome and shelter your people. Deepen our roots so that our branches are strong. Let the Holy Spirit flow like a river through our church, so that we may do your will. In Jesus' holy name, Amen.

OPENING SCRIPTURE

Luke 21:5-9 [CEB]

Some people were talking about the temple, how it was decorated with beautiful stones and ornaments dedicated to God. Jesus said, "As for the things you are admiring, the time is coming when not even one stone will be left upon another. All will be demolished."

They asked him, "Teacher, when will these things happen? What sign will show that these things are about to happen?"

Jesus said, "Watch out that you aren't deceived. Many will come in my name, saying, 'I'm the one!' and 'It's time!' Don't follow them. When you hear of wars and rebellions, don't be alarmed. These things must happen first, but the end won't happen immediately."

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Reader: From deep in the past, Jeremiah calls to us, "The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah."

Beloved, the days are surely coming when the yearning of the land; the longing of the sun, moon, and stars; the desperate need of the people of earth for flourishing and peace will receive their fulfillment.

People: While fear, anxiety, misinformation, and suspicion surround us on every side, we choose to watch and wait in hope, preparing our hearts to notice and cooperate with God's grace already at work in our midst.

Reader: We light this candle of hope as a sign of our commitment to pay attention and prepare for the days that are surely coming and are already here – the days when God’s kingdom of love, justice, and mercy will reign.

PRELUDE “O Come, O Come Emmanuel“

DANA MOODY

MESSAGE FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS

CALL TO WORSHIP (responsively)

Lay Reader: Children of God, pay attention! The days are coming when God’s peace will reign and all creation will flourish under the reign of our Creator.

People: The days are surely coming!

Lay Reader: Children of God, prepare your hearts! The days are coming and are already here when God will come near and show us how to recognize God’s reign among us.

People: The days are surely coming and are already here!

Lay Reader: Children of God, be alert and listen! God has come near to build the kingdom on the earth here and now. Will you join in?

People: The days are surely coming and are already here! We come to prepare our hearts to pay attention, to listen, and to follow God’s call to build the kingdom of earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, August, 2024.

OPENING PRAYER (ALL)

Father God, as we gather to worship on this first Sunday of Advent, give us hearts that are open to hope. Give us feet that stand firm on your promises. Give us eyes that are alert to the ways that you are coming among us. Give us hands that are ready to work for your kingdom. In the name of Jesus, our coming king we pray. Amen.

Long, Kim; Long, Kim. Feasting on the Word Worship Companion: 2 (pp. 259-260). Presbyterian Publishing Corporation. Kindle Edition.

HYMN “People Look East”

#202

1. People, look east. The time is near of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today: Love, the Guest, is on the way.
2. Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is planted there.
Give up your strength the seed to nourish, that in course the flower may flourish,
People, look east and sing today: Love, the Rose, is on the way.
3. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more light the bowl shall brim,
Shining beyond the frosty weather, bright as sun and moon together.
People, Look east and sing today: Love, the Star, is on the way.
4. Angels announce with shouts of mirth him who brings new life to earth.
Set every peak and valley humming with the word, the Lord is coming.
People, look east and sing today: Love, the Lord, is on the way.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

All: Holy God, we confess that we are busy with many preparations. We are busy with

parties, with feasts, with giving. We are busy cleaning house and wrapping presents. We are busy with the stuff of the holiday. And we confess that our busyness may be misplaced, that we spend more time preparing for things than preparing for You. Draw us back to the center, which is You. Remind us that our hearts and souls have work to do, too. Enable us to let go of that which does not matter, and to see what does matter. This we pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Written by T. Anne Daniel in The Africana Worship Book, Year B (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2007), 164

ANTHEM “Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

CHANCEL CHOIR

SCRIPTURE

Luke 21:25-36 [CEB]

“There will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars. On the earth, there will be dismay among nations in their confusion over the roaring of the sea and surging waves. The planets and other heavenly bodies will be shaken, causing people to faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world. Then they will see the Human One coming on a cloud with power and great splendor. Now when these things begin to happen, stand up straight and raise your heads, because your redemption is near.”

Jesus told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees. When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see these things happening, you know that God’s kingdom is near. I assure you that this generation won’t pass away until everything has happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will certainly not pass away.

“Take care that your hearts aren’t dulled by drinking parties, drunkenness, and the anxieties of day-to-day life. Don’t let that day fall upon you unexpectedly, like a trap. It will come upon everyone who lives on the face of the whole earth. Stay alert at all times, praying that you are strong enough to escape everything that is about to happen and to stand before the Human One.”

SERMON “The End of the Beginning”

Rev. Ned Alderman

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

How can we thank you, O God? For sun and moon and stars, for breath and life and all things good, for your steadfast promise and your faithful love, for the day that is surely coming when all things will be made new. With saints, with angels, and with the whole creation, we join the ancient and eternal hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

OFFERING PRAYER

Gracious God, in this season of anticipation, we offer our gifts with hopeful hearts. As we prepare for the fullness of your kingdom, may these offerings be a sign of our readiness and desire to live attentively. Use them to bring justice, righteousness, and joy to our world. Surprise us with your presence and help us to look up, to pay attention, and to embrace the hope you bring. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise him all creatures here below. Praise him above ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

HYMN

“God Almighty, We are Waiting”

W&S #3047

1. God Almighty, we are waiting for a Savior to appear.
Meet us in our desert journey; give a sign that you are near.
Burning bushes, parted waters, food aplenty in the wild.
As we look for signs and wonders, help us see you in a child.
2. God Incarnate, we are waiting for the feast day of your birth.
Looking back and looking forward to the Christ's return to earth.
Help us to proclaim the gospel, 'til the world is reconciled.
Let us set your holy table for each woman, man, and child.
3. God the Spirit, we are waiting for your presence here and now.
Humbled by our sinful weakness, at your mercy we will bow.
Search our hearts and make us ready, speak in language strong and mild,
Help each one of us, your people, to receive you like a child.

SENDING FORTH

Go in peace, live in love, and seek to be holy in all that you do. May the God of mercy keep you, the Holy Spirit cheer you, and Christ in glory greet you, now and at the day of his coming.

GOING FROM VILLAGE TO VILLAGE

POSTLUDE

“Glory to God”

Dana Moody

Today's service is being broadcast on Facebook Live at 11:00 am. You can access the service through the Oaklette Church Group on Facebook. You can also access the sermon through the Oaklette UMC Facebook page. If you are unable to use Facebook Live a link can be sent to you by email after the Facebook Live Worship has been recorded, but we will need your email address to do this. The Facebook Live service will also be downloaded to our website on Monday morning.

The flowers on the altar today are presented to the glory of God by Joe Peele in memory of his wife, Sylvia.

The Food Basket on the altar is presented to the glory of God.



PARTNERS IN MINISTRY TODAY

Members of the Church

Nursery Care Providers: Lisa & Brooks Ryno

Prayer Partner: Shellene Castellow

Advent Reader: Aldor Payette

Lay Reader – Brenda Swoope

Audio–Visual Operator – Danny Castellow

Facebook Live Recorder: Bright Tsevi

Greeter: Joanne Rooks

Pastor: Rev. Ned Alderman

Administrative Assistant: Eileen Ballance

Financial Secretary: Edna Bess

Coastal Virginia Dist. Superintendent: Rev. Beth Givens

Resident Bishop, Richmond Area: Bishop Sue Hauptert–Johnson