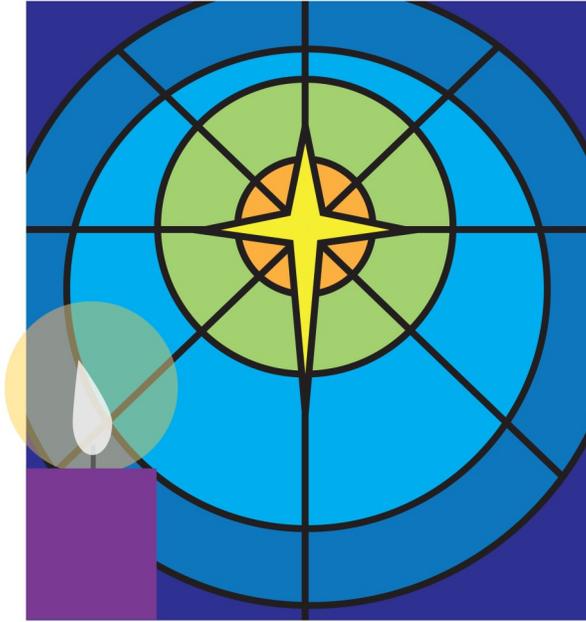


WEBSTER GROVES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



FIRST SUNDAY
OF
Advent

Service for the Lord's Day
November 29, 2020
9:30 a.m.

OUR MISSION
We seek to live Christ's love,
welcome all people and joyfully serve God.



Service for the Lord's Day

✦ *When this symbol precedes an element of the service, please rise in body or spirit.*

Advent (“arrival”) is a time of preparation for the joyous festival of Christmas. There is, too, in Advent, the anticipation of Christ’s final return. For the early church, the focus during Advent was one of penitence, but today the season focuses on reflection, meditation, and the hope that Christ’s return to the world will usher in a new age of peace and justice. We light candles to mark our weeks of waiting, and to remember the promises of God spoken throughout history. While the liturgical color of the season is traditionally purple, both a royal color and one of penitence, many traditions have also used blue, a color suggesting the dark night sky and anticipating the dawn of a new day in Christ.

PRELUDE

“Advent Suite”

arr. Paul Tate

Shawn Portell, organ

WELCOME AND COMMUNITY LIFE

~GATHERING FOR GOD’S WORD~

✦ LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Adeline Lamb, Liturgist

We are in the deepest blue of nighttime, waiting--anxiously, expectantly--for the dawn.

Tear open the heavens and come down, God of new beginnings!

People of God, have hope: God has promised that a new day is coming!
Today, we light this candle of hope as a sign of the coming light of Christ.

We light this candle in many places, aching to be together.

We light this candle, holding fast to the hope that the night will pass, that our isolation will end, and that Christ is on the way.

We praise you, O God of new beginnings, for turning despair into hope.

We praise you, O God, for bringing cosmos out of chaos.

We praise you, O God, for bringing light out of night.

Let us walk in the light of the Lord.

HYMN

“O Come, O Come Emmanuel”

arr. Sherdonna Denholm

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 Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell Thy people save,
And give them victory o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

3. *O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,
And order all things, far and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And cause us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

✦CALL TO CONFESSION

A voice is crying out in the wilderness:
Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.
Trusting in God's grace, let us confess our sin.

✦PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**God of the future,
You are coming in power to bring all nations under your rule.
We confess that we have not expected your kingdom,
for we live casual lives, ignoring your promised judgment.
We accept lies as truth,
exploit neighbors,
abuse the earth,
and refuse your justice and peace.**

**In your mercy, forgive us.
Grant us wisdom to welcome your way,
to seek things that will endure,
and to keep awake to all the signs of your arrival.
Amen.**

✦ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Every valley is lifted up; every mountain, made low.
Now the glory of the Lord is revealed,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.
In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!
Thanks be to God!

✦PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

May hope, peace, joy, and love be yours in abundance.
And may the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

ANTHEM

“Come Thou Long Expected Jesus”

arr. Sherdonna Denholm

*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.*

~PROCLAIMING GOD'S WORD~

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Let us pray:
Holy God, our hope and strength,
by the power of your Spirit
prepare the way in our hearts
for the coming of your Word,
so that we may see the glorious signs
of your promise fulfilled;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING Isaiah 64:1-9

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence—²as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil— to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! ³When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. ⁴From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. ⁵You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed.

⁶We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. ⁷There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. ⁸Yet, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. ⁹Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING Mark 13:24-37

²⁴“But in those days, after that suffering,
the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light,
²⁵and the stars will be falling from heaven,
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

²⁶Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. ²⁷Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

²⁸“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³²“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

SERMON

Rev. Hannah Zyla

SILENCE FOR REFLECTION

~RESPONDING TO GOD’S WORD~

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Session has received into membership of this congregation Janice and Steve Hanson and Bryce Rawers.

Jan, Steve, Bryce: in baptism, you were claimed by God,
marked as Christ’s own forever, and joined to his body by the Holy Spirit.
You come to us then, not as strangers,
but as friends in Christ and members of the household of God,
wherever and however we gather.
We rejoice that you now desire to join with this congregation
in the worship and mission of the church.

Here these words from scripture:
There is one body and one Spirit,
just as you were called to the one hope of your calling,
one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
one God and Father of all,
who is above all and through all and in all.

Holy God,
thank you for calling us to be your people and joining us to Christ’s body, the church,
even in strange and uncertain times.
We praise you for leading Jan, Steve, and Bryce to this congregation.
Empower us by your Spirit, that we might love one another as Christ loved us,
honoring him in all that we say and do, giving our lives in service to others,
through Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Jan, Steve, Bryce:
Welcome to this ministry that we share in Jesus Christ!

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A voice is crying in the wilderness:
let us prepare the way of the Lord.
Come quickly, Lord; **our hope is in you.**
We pray for the church...

Let us be a sign of your promised realm
and make us ready to meet our Savior Christ
when he comes again in glory.

Come quickly, Lord; **our hope is in you.**

We pray for the world...

Make a way in the wilderness of the world.
Bring justice and equality to every land
and let all creatures know your saving love.

Come quickly, Lord; **our hope is in you.**

We pray for this community...

Send messengers of your way among us
to kindle in us a passion for what is right
and cleanse us from all corruption.

Come quickly, Lord; **our hope is in you.**

We pray for loved ones...

Let your tender mercy shine on them.
Give light to those who wait in darkness
and guide their feet into the path of peace.

Come quickly, Lord; **our hope is in you.**

Prepare your way in us, O Lord,
that we may rejoice and be glad
when your reign of glory comes;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

OFFERING INVITATION

All things in heaven and earth belong to God,
who is coming in glory to reveal a new creation.
Let us offer our lives to the Lord.

OFFERTORY

“Of the Father’s Love Begotten”

arr. Sherdonna Denholm

*1. Of the Father's love begotten
E're the worlds began to be
He is Alpha and Omega,
He the Source, the Ending he,
of the things that are, that have been,
and that future years shall see,
evermore and evermore!*

*2. This is he whom heav'n-taught singers
sang of old with one accord,
whom the Scriptures of the prophets
promised in their faithful word;
now he shines, the long expected;
let creation praise its Lord,
evermore and evermore!*

*3. O ye heights of heav'n, adore him;
angel hosts, his praises sing:
all dominions, bow before him
and extol our God and King;
let no tongue on earth be silent,
ev'ry voice in concert ring,
evermore and evermore!*

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Here we are Lord,
standing before you in our weakness and strength.
Here are our gifts, meager and mighty.
Here are our hearts, hurting and healing.
Take us as we are and use us and our offerings
in service of every new thing you are doing. 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 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.**

HYMN

"He Has Come to Reign"

Sherdonna Denholm

*1. For the Lord our God He is strong to save
From the depth of sin, from the deepest grave.
Ever faithful is his abounding word.
Fear not, my child, I've overcome the world.*

*2. In the darkest night, on the lowest hill.
Though I feel him not he is faithful still.
He is coming in all his righteousness.
I will wait for him in this loneliness.*

Chorus

*He has come to reign in our broken hearts
We will doubt and fear no more.
He has come to reign in our broken hearts
All we lost he will restore.*

*3. When trials come and weigh you down.
You can catch a glimpse, you can hear the sound
of the angels singing heaven's song
Saying, "Child, hold on. It won't be long."*

Chorus

*He has come to reign in our broken hearts
We will doubt and fear no more.
He has come to reign in our broken hearts
All we lost he will restore.*

*4. The true and living God we serve.
His truth will stand the only word.
He has come to reign, God's only son.
Jesus Christ, our king. He has overcome.*

✦CHARGE

✦BENEDICTION

1. *The word dwelt among us. His glory is with us.
The Savior is born. The curtain is torn.
Rejoice! His kingdom is near.
The true creator resides in a manger.
Emmanuel, the world we will tell.
Rejoice! The king is here.*

2. *The light in the darkness, and life in all fullness.
He made himself known to make us his own.
Rejoice! The kingdom is near.
We wait for his coming. We hope for his returning.*

Chorus

*Come, let us behold him. Come, let us adore him.
Sing and rejoice for Jesus has come.
The babe who came in glory shall reign.
Rejoice! The king is here.*

3. *For God so loved us he gave his son for us.
Born to die. Exalted on high.
Rejoice! His kingdom is near.
His love came down to us. His grace rests upon us.
Emmanuel! The world we will tell.
Rejoice! The king is here!*

Chorus

*Come, let us behold him. Come, let us adore him.
Sing and rejoice for Jesus has come.*

WELCOME Sherdonna Denholm, singer-songwriter

Sherdonna is an American singer-songwriter and hymn writer who integrates thought-provoking lyrics with a rich, soulful, folk sound. Her writing is honest and without pretense, weaving together beautiful melodies and textures. Her voice is pure and soothing, and her songs speak to the heart of the human experience.

As a wife and mother of three teenage sons, Sherdonna seeks to find beauty in the ordinary of everyday life. Since 2012, she has independently recorded and produced 3 full length albums and a Christmas EP. She ran a successful crowdfunding campaign for her latest album, Beyond the Veil, which is a collection of original hymns and spiritual songs. She loves telling her story through music and encouraging others to find and use their unique gift.

Whether in a theater, coffee shop, home, or a church, Sherdonna is consistent as a performer and brings honest and vulnerability to each unique setting. She has been a guest artist for the "notes From Home" series at the Sheldon Concert Hall in St. Louis. Her music has been featured multiple times of Women of Substance radio and their #1 Podcast as well as Under The Radar Media.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Jan and Steve Hanson: *Almost two years ago, we moved to Webster Groves from Denver, Colorado, where we were members of Montview Boulevard Presbyterian Church. During our 46 years of marriage we have lived in Florida, North Carolina, Michigan, California (twice), Maryland (twice), Virginia, Washington, Colorado, and Missouri. Steve has retired twice, first from the Marine Corps and then as a teacher of high school math (mostly advanced placement statistics). Jan is a medical educator, currently a professor at Washington University. Our oldest daughter Heather and her husband Ryan live in New York with their two sons, Jackson (6 ½) and Jonah (2 ½). Our youngest daughter Lindsey and her husband Hernan live in Connecticut with their son David (1 ½). We enjoy traveling, reading, gardening, fishing, and hiking in the mountains. We're happy to live in Webster Groves and to have found this church!*

Bryce Rawers: *I moved to St. Louis for work in 2019 and have been a Midwesterner for a decade. I was born and raised a Lutheran in San Diego. I'm happy to have found a place to worship at Webster Groves and am excited to join you all.*

(Editor's note: Bryce and Pastor Hannah went to college together!)