1st Sunday in Advent: Hope



10 A. M. Worship for Sunday, December 3, 2023

First Memorial Presbyterian Church of Dover, New Jersey

***Gathering and Focusing during Prelude:*** **- Rachel Persenaire**

***Thank you for choosing to worship our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ with us today!***

***\*We invite you to stand if you are able for those portions of the liturgy marked with an asterisk.***

xx

***Sung Approach to Worshiping Our God:*** **- Rachel Persenaire**

All:*VERSE 1:* ***Watchman, tell us of the night,***

***What its signs of promise are.***

***Traveler, o’er yon mountain’s height,***

***See that glory beaming star.***

***Watchman, does its beauteous ray***

***Aught of joy or hope foretell?***

***Traveler, yes; it brings the day, Promised day of Israel.***

- Words by John Bowring, 1825. Now in the public domain.,

***Opening Words:* - Rachel Persenaire**

Rachel: The days are surely coming, says the Lord,

when I will fulfill my promise to my people!  **(**Jeremiah 33:16)

All: ***Justice and righteousness will fill the land***

***and all will live in peace and safety.***

- The Opening Words (above) are as found on pages 2. of Advent Companion

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***Lighting the First Candle of the Advent Wreath:***

Leader 1: Today we light the first of our Advent candles, the candle of hope.

(We LIGHT one purple candle)

All: ***“O Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in you.”*** (Psalm 39:7)

Leader 1: Across the centuries, the people of God waited in hope

for the promised Messiah, the Savior.

As the time came near for the promise to be fulfilled,

the Lord sent an angel to tell the priest Zechariah

that Zechariah and his wife would have a son.

That son, to be named John,

would announce the coming of the Messiah

and prepare Israel to welcome the Savior.

All: ***“O Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in you.”***

Leader 2: John would proclaim the dawn of hope for Israel.

He would baptize people as a sign of repentance,

preparing them for the savior, the Lamb of God,

who was coming to take their sins away.

When the right time came,

God’s promise was fulfilled in the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

All: ***“O Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in you.”***

Leader 3: We have seen the promise fulfilled.

The Savior has come!

He has died and risen to set us free.

Now we wait in hope for his return on the Last Day.

Jesus has promised, “Surely I am coming soon!”

All: ***O Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in you.”***

***Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!***

***Choral Anthem:*** “Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah” – Wayne L. Wold

***Call to Confession:***

Alan**:** Let us confess our sins to God, trusting in his mercy

for the sake of Jesus our Lord. Let us pray as with one voice…

***Corporate Prayer of Confession:***

All: ***Almighty God, you have called us to a living hope in Jesus.***

***Yet so often we do not reflect that hope in our lives.***

***We turn away from the promises of your Word.***

***We walk in our own selfish ways***

***instead of following in Jesus’ footsteps***

***We do not love others as we should,***

***and we are not always willing***

***to share our hope with the people around us.***

***Have mercy on us and forgive us.***

All: ***Amen…***

*(We pause here for a few moments of silent, personal confession…)*

***Assurance of Pardon:***

Alan: God has had mercy on us.

He sent his Son to be our Savior and for his sake forgives our sins.

I announce to you that your sins are forgiven in the name of

the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit Amen.

All: ***“O Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in you.”***

- The Lighting of the Advent Wreath, Call to Confession, Prayer of Confession and Assurance of Pardon (above) are as found on pages

13 & 14. of THE LIGHT OF GRACE by Creative Communications for the Parish, a division of Bayard, Inc. Written by Carol Geisler.

***\*Hymn of Praise No. 2:*** – Charles Wesley, 1744

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

***\*A Historic Confession of Faith:***

All: ***I BELIEVE IN GOD, the Father almighty,***

***creator of heaven and earth.***

***I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST, God’s only Son, our Lord,***

***who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,***

***suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died,***

***and was buried; he descended to the dead.***

***On the third day he rose again;***

***He ascended into heaven,***

***he is seated at the right hand of the Father,***

***and he will come to judge the living and the dead.***

***I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, the holy catholic Church,***

***The communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,***

***The resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.***

- THE APOSTLES’ CREED (Ecumenical Translation)

***\*Celebrating the Peace Jesus Came to Bring:***

**- Rev. Alan R. Schaefer**

Alan: “The days are surely coming” says the Lord,

“when I will fulfill my promise:

I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David;

and he shall execute justice and righteousness.

All: ***He shall bring peace to our hearts,***

***that we may hope for his peace in the world.***

Alan: The peace of Christ be with you all!

All: ***And also with you!***

Alan: Without moving from where you now stand,

please take the next few moments to share a warm greeting

and a sincere sign of God’s peace with those around you.

***Children’s Message:*** **- Megan Quinones**

***Sung Prayer for Illumination:***   - Clara H. Scott, 1895

“Open My Eyes That I May See”

1. ***Open my eyes, that I may see***

***Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me.***

***Place in my hands the wonderful key***

***That shall unclasp and set me free.***

Refrain: ***Silently now, I wait for Thee, Ready my God,***

***Thy will to see. Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!***

1. ***Open my ears, that I may hear Voices of truth Thou sendest clear;***

***And while the wave notes fall on my ear, Everything false will disappear.***

Refrain: ***Silently now, I wait for Thee, Ready my God,***

***Thy will to see. Open my ears, illumine me, Spirit divine!***

1. ***Open my mouth, and let me bear Gladly the warm truth everywhere;***

***Open my heart, and let me prepare Love with Thy children thus to share.***

Refrain: ***Silently now, I wait for Thee, Ready my God,***

***Thy will to see. Open my heart, illumine me, Spirit divine!***

- Words & Music by Clara H. Scott, 1895—Now in the public domain**. Hymn No 324 in THE PRESBYTERIAN HYMNAL**

***Scripture Lesson:* - Megan Quinones**

***The Gospel According to Luke***

***Chapter 1: verses 67 thru 79***

**Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church… -** Revelation 2:7

67 **Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit**

**and spoke this prophecy:**

68 **“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,**

**for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.**

69  **He has raised up a mighty savior for us**

**in the house of his servant David,**

70 **as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,**

71  **that we would be saved from our enemies**

**and from the hand of all who hate us.**

72  **Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,**

**and has remembered is holy covenant,**

73  **the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us**

74  **that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,**

**might serve him without fear,**

75  **in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.**

76 **And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;**

**for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,**

77  **to give knowledge of salvation to his people**

**by the forgiveness of their sins.**

78 **By the tender mercy of our God the dawn from on high**

**will break upon us,**

79  **to give light to those who sit in darkness and**

**in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”**

- THE NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION (of the Bible-a translation)

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Megan:**This is the Word of the Lord…**

All: ***Thanks be to God!***

***Adult Message:* - Michael Hoy**

***Call for the Offering and Prayer of Dedication:***

Alan:We are grateful to have you with us as we worship together

on this First Sunday in Advent;

and we hope you will be stewardship partners with us

in our ministry here and around the world

as you have been partners with us in our worship,

whether here, in our sanctuary,

or somewhere safe or convenient to you on your computer.

If you worshiped with us on your computer, and are able

and willing, please consider mailing an offering to our church

office this week @ 51 West Blackwell Street, Dover NJ 07801.

*Invitation to the offering:*

Trusting in the sure promises of Christ,

and grateful for the Spirit’s sustaining power,

let us bring our tithes and offerings to God.

Let us pray together…

All: **God of righteousness,**

**you have saved us from the worst the world can do**

**and have promised to redeem the whole creation**

**when Christ comes again.**

**In faith and hope we offer our gifts of money and self,**

**that we may be part of what you are doing in the world even now,**

**as we watch for Christ’s coming in glory.**

***Amen.***

- The Invitation to the Offering & Prayer of Dedication (as above) are as found on page 264

of Feasting On the Word, Liturgies for Year A, vol.2.

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***Offertory:*** Instrumental **- Rachel Persenaire**

***Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper:***

***Invitation:*** *(open to all who believe)*

***Consecration:***

***Consummation:***

***Appreciation***

***Joys and Concerns:***

***Prayers of and for the People and Lord’s Prayer:***

Alan**:**

…We are grateful to know that as we begin a new liturgical year today,

the cycle of liturgical celebration begins anew,

and that you will be with us to inspire us

and to hear another year’s worth of our prayers

as you have heard this one

which we gladly follow with Jesus’ prayer when he taught us to pray…- Written by Alan R. Schaefer, revised 2023

All: ***Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name…***

***\*Hymn of Parting No. 9:*** – John Henry Neale, Henry Sloane Coffin

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

***\*Charge and Benediction:***

Alan:**(**I charge you…) that since we have been justified by faith,

we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Through him we have also obtained access by faith

into this grace in which we stand,

and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

(So) May the God of hope

fill you with all joy and peace in believing,

so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope

Amen?

All: ***Amen.***

- The Charge & Benediction (above) are as found on pages 25 of Feasting On the Word, Liturgies for Year A, vol.2.

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***Postlude:* - Rachel Persenaire**

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Unless otherwise noted, most of the bulletin / liturgy is written by the Pastor, the Rev. Mr. Alan R. Schaefer, H. R.



**OUR NEXT CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION**

**IS *CHRISTMAS* EVE, DECEMBER 24th AT 6:00 p. m.**

**OUR NEXT LORD’S DAY CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION WILL BE ON JANUARY 7, 2023.**

**FIRST MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND CONGREGATION**

**51 West Blackwell Street, Dover, NJ 07801**

**A member congregation of Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey,**

**The Synod of the Northeast, and**

**The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A.**