

Straight from the "Hart"

Worship Service from November 28, 2021
Advent Begins with Hope



Opening Prayer

Lord, in this new season, we offer ourselves in anticipation of the joy and excitement of welcoming King Jesus into the world once again, and to help heal the brokenness of his world. Now as we worship, we lift our heads and awaken our souls to prepare room in our hearts for you -- filling us with the brilliant light of your kingdom so that everything else fades into its proper place. Amen.

Apostle's Creed

The first hymn is a prayer for Jesus to come to us and be the ensign, the leader who obviously stands out among the people.

Music (vv 1,2,4) O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Call to Worship (L - Lay Reader, C - Congregation)

Let's continue to call our hearts to worship...

L: Something stirs deep within us – a longing -- a hope,

C: A thirst for joy... a hunger for peace... a yearning for blessing.

L: We know the hopes and fears that are deep within us.

C: They will be answered by angel songs and Baby sighs.

L: It is Advent - the season anticipating -- "arrival".

C: A season of waiting... hoping... yearning.

L: It is Advent --

C: A time of longing for home.

Advent Candles

Call to the Candles

We Lift the Light

(to tune of All Hail the Power of Jesus Name)

We lift the light of hope, O God, your presence burning bright.
In praise we sing the gift you bring: Our hope complete in Christ.
In praise we sing the gift you bring: Our hope complete in Christ.

Candle of Hope Presentation by Jerry Weaver (no script available) on how hope has helped him in life... (below left)



Special Music Response - *The Same Power*

Mary Jo Bell, and Randy Bell and Piano Paul sing a response...(above right)

Theme

Hope. Do you remember this poem?

Star light, star bright,
First star I see tonight,
I wish I may, I wish I might,
Have this wish I wish tonight.

Is that what biblical hope is like? [No] Is biblical hope like what wished for at Christmas when we were kids, hoping we would get the present we wanted when we wrote our little list to Santa Claus? we hope we get for Christmas? [No]. We wish for things, but we never know for sure if we will really get them until we unwrap the presents. We wish for things, but even if we do get them, we don't know for sure if they are going to be good as we think they are -- and we end up playing with the box instead...

No, our hope is built on our God who has chosen to reside with and within his people -- with a power that cannot be defeated by anything. The prophets, no matter what circumstances were going on in the nation, no matter what they saw going on around them, looked forward with such certainty -- that they sometimes spoke of the future as if it had already happened - in the past tense. It was just a matter of waiting for the past to become present in the future. (That sounds like a movie sequel, doesn't it? -- (*Back to the Future*)). Today we will hear one of those

predictions from the prophet Jeremiah (spoken with certainty, it wasn't spoken in the past tense in this case) but with the same kind of certainty -- and it indeed did come to pass in the birth of Jesus, and then later we'll hear another prediction from Jesus about his return for which we are still waiting. Both predictions -- absolutely certain. We don't have to wish - or hope (in the non-biblical sense) In the biblical sense -- we don't have to worry. We know it is going to happen -- it isn't a matter of "if", but "when" Jesus comes to us.

Because wishing on a star is just wishing, but like the wise ones learned as they traveled to see the infant, the Star that leads us to Christ's coming is a sure thing -- a promise we can count on... Let's read responsively the promise given through Jeremiah that has already been fulfilled --

Responsive Reading (L - Lay Reader, C - Congregation)

L: The Lord proclaims: You have said about this place,

C: "It is a wasteland, without humans or animals."

L: Yet in the ravaged and uninhabited towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem,

C: the sounds of joy and laughter... will again be heard.

L: So will the voices of those who say, as thank offerings are brought to the Lord's temple,

C: "Give thanks to the Lord of heavenly forces, for the Lord is good and his kindness lasts forever."

L: I will bring back the captives of this land as they were before, says the Lord of heavenly forces. This wasteland will again become pastures for shepherds to care for their flocks. The time is coming when I will fulfill my gracious promise with the people of Israel and Judah. In those days and at that time, I will raise up a righteous branch from David's line, who will do what is just and right in the land.

C: In those days, Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is what [it] will be called: The Lord Is Our Righteousness.

(Selected verses from Jeremiah 33:10-16(CEB))

Intro to Special Music

Timothy R. Matthews composed the tune for the Seasonal Singer's special

music. He was the son of a pastor, and he served as a pastor himself in England for most of his life. He composed the services for his church and wrote over 100 hymns. He earned a reputation for writing simple but effective tunes. His sons, Norton and Arthur Percy also came to be known as composers of hymn tunes.

The lyrics come from Emily Elliott, a minister's daughter, for whose church she wrote several hymns which eventually became published. She spent much of her time working in rescue missions and with children in Sunday Schools, served as editor of *The Church Missionary Juvenile Instructor*". Her aunt Charlotte authored the hymn "Just As I Am", her uncle also wrote hymns. Emily's translation of Silent Night was quite popular in England. Her hymns, including this one were published in a large print hymn collection entitled "Under the Pillow", which was specifically intended for use in hospitals -- a fitting song for that use as it tells us Jesus left the grandeur of heaven to be with us in our suffering. *Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne* was first used in St. Mark's Church in Brighton, England in 1864, and is used to teach that the Nativity comes within a much broader story of Christ's life, and that like so many hymns of the season, it points beyond Christ's coming at Christmas to his second coming, and the author uses the refrain pull the singer and listener into the story, giving them opportunity for a personal response to all he has done for us -- in the manger, on the cross, in sending the Spirit, and in his coming again.

Special Music Seasonal Singers *Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne*



Intro to Bible Reading

Jesus predicted the destruction of the Temple, and by analogy, of himself. People asked how they could know when this would all happen. And Jesus

warned them about what would happen after he died. Imposters would claim to be him returning, all kinds of violent, terrifying, natural and human-caused events would occur, believers would be hated and persecuted. Now listen to the words of Jesus.

Bible Reading

[But don't worry! You will be saved by being faithful to me.] And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with tremendous power and glory. When these things start to happen, stand up and hold your heads high; because you are about to be liberated!"

[Then Jesus told them a] parable: "Look at the fig tree, Indeed, all the trees. As soon as they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves that summer is near. In the same way, when you see these things taking place, you are to know that the Kingdom of God is near! Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will certainly not pass away. "But keep watch on yourselves, or your hearts will become dulled by [thinking about eating or drinking] and the worries of everyday living, and that final Day will be sprung upon you suddenly like a trap! For it will close in on everyone [on earth]. Stay alert, always praying that you will have the strength to escape all the things that will happen and to stand in the presence of the Son of Man, [and that the Son of Man will be pleased with you.]"

(Luke 21:18-19,28-31,33-36 (CJB or [CEV]))

Music Lyric Commentary

In that reading, you just heard Jesus tell his disciples -- when everything is going wrong, to stand up and lift their heads high. So I am going to have you stand up because this is a place in the service where we normally stand and sing a song so we can stretch before we take a run at the sermon... Except today we won't sing, but I do want to talk about a hymn by Georg Weissel. In my head -- (and probably only there, I didn't capture enough time to research it) is a connection between Jesus' words here, and David's words in Psalm 24 where he says, Lift up your heads, you gates, lift them up, you ancient doors, the king of glory may come in. Lifting up heads (tops) of gates is an allusion to gates with a portcullis, a heavy grating which is lifted and lowered in vertical grooves to block a gateway entrance. David was using this image to refer to the opening of the



temple gates allowing everyone to come in to worship, and also the opening of our hearts to the king who is waiting to come to us, and when he arrives, he will be able to come in because we have opened up to him.

It was this text to which Weissel refers when he penned “Lift up your heads ye mighty gates... the King of kings is drawing near, the Savior of the world is here, fling wide the portals (that is another fancy word for an entrance or door) fling wide the portals of your heart, make it a temple set apart... Redeemer come and with us abide, our heart to you are open wide. The hymnwriter, David, and Jesus, are all referring to Jesus coming to us -- in different ways and in different times of history or future -- but when he comes, his hope is that our hearts will be prepared for his grand entrance... whenever that may be. You may be seated again

Sermon Invitation to Preparation

And we don't know when that is going to be. We know it is going to happen, we just don't know when. Jesus says the signs of his coming kingdom can be seen as clearly as the coming of summer -- which granted -- here in Michigan isn't always that clear -- things start to bud and then we get frost. Anybody surprised by this first snow? [No] That is what we all say, isn't it? It is nearly December, we've had signs for weeks now -- flakes in the air, a chill in the bones -- we listened and looked at the weather reports, we heard them predict it that it was coming. And yet, at least for me (apparently not for any of you) but at least for me -- I woke up and my body and psyche had this reaction of [expression of “ugh”] still surprised. Yeah, we knew it was coming, but I was still surprised.

That is the same with everything -- we know it is going to come. We just know. Someday the roof is going to leak, the furnace is going to break -- things don't last forever -- it may be tomorrow, it may be in 30 years -- know way to know for sure -- and if it doesn't fail before its time, you see signs of aging, of limping along, but when you get that first drip, or you find yourself cold in the house -- we still can't help but find ourselves amazed that the time for roofing or furnace actually came. Right? (I can related to both of those by the way 😊)...

We've entered a new season -- a new year, actually, in the Christian calendar. Did it catch you off guard? We've heard Christmas songs in stores for at least several weeks now, houses all around me have their lights up and some have

candles in their window sills and trees with their lights shining out other windows. We spent time at the church getting it all decorated -- it wasn't always like this. Christmas season used to wait at least until Thanksgiving was over. Then it was Halloween, and now I don't even think they are waiting for Halloween.

Maybe that is why some of us aren't quite ready to start yet -- we've been lulled to sleep by the "it's way too early to be doing this" song. It seems everyone had officially started the season except for the church! And now that it is upon us, some of us haven't yet woken up to the fact that the king is now at the door ready to make his entrance. Like all the snow in the air that never stuck --- and all of a sudden it accumulates -- but because of these false "it's coming, it's coming, it's coming" we got complacent about all that "wolf-crying" that never landed.

Maybe another reason some of us aren't ready is something that I've noticed among at least some people throughout my ministry. We tend to move from feast day to feast day. When Christmas ends, we jump to -- through -- the 12 days of Christmas (outside of that one song) and arrive at Epiphany, when that day ends, we jump to Easter, and then to Pentecost -- we hardly notice that these are not days, but they are seasons -- seasons that are proclaiming a message between those high holy feasts.

When the more recognized season of Lent comes, I have been hearing it more and more now, this popular phrase, "I'm giving up Lent for Lent" -- we don't even want to observe that season -- but at least we still recognize it as a season, but we don't want to participate in it. And this season of Advent, is often seen more as a frantic scramble to get ready for the festival more than a time of preparing ourselves to be ready for the coming Christ.

Jeremiah, Isaiah, Micah, Malachi, John the Baptist many more prophets, and Jesus himself -- all of preparing for Christ's coming and the Day of the But so often we've jumped the season to the festival -- thinking the season is only for those who have faith -- and if we put ourselves in the stories we put ourselves in the role of the speaker -- preparing it for everyone else, proclaiming the news... so that they too can receive Jesus and his kingdom and experience the

Advent	is
preparing others	

-- and spoke Lord.

don't at all,

festival the way we experience it. And that certainly is one proper application of many of these texts.

But I think it is also important to point out that many of these speakers, many of these prophets, Jesus himself -- often were not speaking to a secular culture -- they were speaking most often to God's people. Perhaps the message is that we should not be so quick to jump to the end of the season, to the festival assuming that our days of preparation are done and completed because we did that last year or the year before ... and we don't have to

preparing
ourselves

do it anymore. We think that our heart home is completely ready and all we need to do is to help others prepare their heart homes for God's arrival in Christ. Maybe we need to consider that we too, as God's faithful, still have work to do in waiting, and reflecting, and applying, and adjusting our lives to allow God to come more fully to us, and to our collective life together. Joseph Campbell wrote, "We must be willing to get rid of the life we planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us."

The series title, "Longing for home" has a double meaning, as does today's sermon title, "An invitation to preparation".

Whether we experienced it in our own lives or not, "home" is a vision of that place where we feel we can love and be loved, we can trust and be relied on, it is where we feel secure, where we are safe to relax and be ourselves, where we can be comfortable in our own skin, where all is well... and nothing outside can even threaten to take that away from us. That is -- home.

In these last couple years, I think most of us would probably admit that our lives got thrown a bit by the surprising arrival of a pandemic that still hasn't completed its course. Beyond the (what to me) are obvious health dangers, it has also wreaked havoc on economies and politics and policies and a sense of united community and all the rest of which we are too well aware, and all the more, it makes us long for -- "home". Based on the Christmas song, a lot of people feel that place is grandma's house -- because we get on a bitter cold sleigh behind a horse with bells on it and go over a river and through the woods to get there. Home, then, is someplace we go, and if that is true, then the invitation to prepare

means to pack our bags and do whatever we need to in order to make the trip and be a good family guest when we arrive. In this sense, then, in the context of a Christian church sanctuary, the place is to heaven that we are going, and the invitation to prepare means doing whatever it takes to be able to get there when the time comes to go.

But there is another meaning to the titles. And many of you know this because you *are* “grandmother’s house”. You don’t go -- everyone else comes to you! And that takes a whole different kind of preparation, doesn’t it? You are not going to that environment, you are the one who has to create that welcoming, loving, fun, safe environment. So in the context of a Christian church sanctuary, the place is not heaven, it is here among us, and in our hearts -- and we are not the guests who get to go and stay, we are the ones who have to create the environment that is hospitable, not only for others, but for God’s coming again this season in King Jesus.

And when we look at the culture we have created on this globe, it can be discouraging. Our environment isn’t what we are hoping it would be. Jesus names many discouraging, terrifying things to come, but he isn’t trying to scare us, but to give us hope in the midst of the worst of seasons -- he is saying look at the trees -- Keep your heads up -- even in a dark, dreary, dying landscape -- look for signs of spring and life and growth -- look for signs of the end -- and know that humanity’s history is not in the hands of the self-centered, greedy, power-mongers who in their own self-interest create misery and chaos and oppression for everyone else. Sin’s dominion is not the end, but it will come to an end when Jesus Christ sets up his rule of love and rightness and it is practiced through-out his kingdom. When days seem struggle-ly and chaotic, know that your redemption, your freedom from all this -- is drawing near.

Looking to the
Future

Now, Jesus is not trying to give us signals that will distract us into future speculation and making predictions and as if we could outguess God’s timing. A seminary assignment had me going through the Archives of the denominational magazine during the World Wars (mostly World War II). I was drawn to the

section where people wrote in to the magazine theological questions to be answered by the magazine's editor. Almost every question in every issue during those years focused on two topics. One was tithing. Because as some of you may know, or at least know because you know history, during those wars, people not fighting overseas had to come together and unite by sacrificial rationing (just to name one thing) and they did not have a whole lot of anything -- in order to help afford and supply the troops to fight our battle for us overseas. In those economic difficulties, they sincerely wanted to know -- I don't think they were looking for loopholes --, they sincerely wanted to know what they must do to please God balanced against surviving in days of scarcity and an uncertain future.

Of course, the other topic was Christ's second coming. The same devastating circumstances that caused people to wonder about their giving also made them wonder if they were in the last days because the international scene sounded an awful like those descriptions in the Bible about the last times.

Make no mistake. The coming is like a thief in the night -- we can be ready, or we can be caught unawares -- we cannot be ready by trying to outguess the day or night the robber is going to show up.

The intent of Jesus' words, and the prophets matter, was not to create a blueprint to read future, but rather to inspire courage to live and fully each day in this present time. To paraphrase one commentator: In a final sense word, Christ comes only at his second coming. special sense, he is constantly coming [to and] of every one of us... so [we] all are called upon

**The future shapes
the present**

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continually like people who [at] any moment are prepared to stand before Christ. (Norval Gelenhuys)

That means lifting our heads -- that means being aware and wary of temptation and sin straying into our life; living purpose-fully and diligently and faithfully -- in times that feel flush (times that feel full) -- when we feel encouraged and assured and eager to tackle each day -- when there seems to be progress in eliminating oppression and dehumanizing policies and practices that cheapen lives and

deprive them of the opportunity to enjoy a life of respect, fairness, and freedom... -- AND -- in times that feel like everything is not flush but flushed away, when violence, and discrimination, and prejudice and bullying intimidation rise up to bring injustice, inequality, unfairness, where love and compassion give way to hate and indifference. Live faithfully and fully in *both* types of times.

Someone said, "Love never dies a natural death. It dies of blindness and errors and betrayals. It dies of illness and wounds; it dies of weariness, of witherings, of tarnishings." (Anaïs Nin) In other words, it dies of neglect -- and distraction and impatience, and allowing evil self-interests to prosper and overwhelm our God given instincts to care for one another.

There are some levels where we have no control over what goes on in our world. On the other hand, Albert Einstein said, "In matters of truth and justice, there is no difference between large [issues] and small problems, for issues concerning the treatment of people are all the same." Over what we do have power and influence, then, to use the question of Peter, what kind of people ought we to be? And in case they didn't know the answer, he answers the question for them (isn't that nice of him? He said, You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming... (2 Peter 3:11-12a)

In other words, we should not try to make the world worse to speed his coming, (I've actually heard that before – the worse it is, the closer the day gets, so let's make it worse.) Nor should we rejoice that evil abounds because we think it means the day is nearer. When we are caught by his coming, we should be caught being busy bringing God's restoring love and grace in his world to the best of our abilities.

Listen again to the prophet: "Look! The days are coming – Yahweh's word – when I will fulfill the promise which I made... In those days and at that time I will cause to spring forth a righteous branch for David, and he will execute justice and right in the land. In those days Judah shall be preserved, and Jerusalem shall dwell in safety; and this is the name by which she will be called...(Pause) (Jeremiah 34:14-16)

Jeremiah paints the picture of that day when the legitimate ruler, the ideal king, the righteous shoot in the line of King David, who will deliver and bring security to

the people, and the people would so embody the values of that (unlike the history of that city – or any city) that the city of God would be called --- (Pause)

And as move toward Christmas, we are called once again to gratefully look back and recapture his coming, the birth of this shoot, this branch, this chosen king and all the hope-filled promises that came with him. But not just back -- it also calls us to look forward to his return when those hope-filled promises will come to *complete* and *universal* fulfillment, and the city of God will be called --- (Pause)

I've been a pastor in a number of places now. They all have their community name -- their village or town or city name, right? We all name our cities. Most all of them also have a label of who they are, or what they accomplished, or hope to become. Some of the place labels where I've lived: Where Neighbors Care (Alden) The Birthplace of Professional Hockey and One of the best 100 places to live (Houghton) Gateway to the Beautiful Keeweenaw Peninsula (Hancock) The Mushroom Capital (Mesick) Gateway to the Chain of Lakes (Quincy) and the closest I could find for Hartland - and I don't know how widespread or official it is -- that was a little vague in my research, couldn't really figure it out -- but it said: A community connected, inspiring a higher quality of life. (Hartland Living) That's pretty good for Hartland, isn't it? That's almost a church motto there.

Jeremiah takes that old city, that city that (seemingly) is constantly corrupting itself and its people -- and suffering the consequences. They say Jeremiah ministered during the 4 most tumultuous decades of that nation's history -- and it has had some bad history -- haven't we all? (not blaming them)... And at the point we read today, the city was deserted and in ruins (thanks to the Babylonian Empire).

And yet -- with a confident hope in his God -- and in anticipation of the new appointed and anointed king, he gives it a new label -- a label that would define the character of the place It will be called: Yahweh (God) is our Righteousness. What a city -- what a **home** that will be...

The season of Advent invites us, calls us, to live in the hope of joyful expectation of this new thing God promises to do through the constantly coming Savior. He comes every year, he comes every day. And one way he comes to us is through the practice of Communion.

Communion

Invitation *All* who seek Christ's forgiveness, who seek to be free of sin's power, and who desire him to come afresh to their heart is welcome to participate. Let's prepare our hearts by singing about our grateful desire for his deliverance...

Prayer Music *Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus*

Confession Let's continue to prepare our hearts through a time of confession.

Almighty Lord of Christmas, we want to be alert, we want to hold our heads high -- we want to be an expectant people with hope as our stronghold. But sometimes, we look around and shudder at the signs we see: Anxieties bombard us from every direction, our hearts turn cold and afraid. We have to admit we have done our share of wrong. We have tarnished the gift you freely give. We have buried you so deeply in our hearts, under the tinsel and the presents, under the schedules and business of life -- we have lost sight of you. We fail to follow, we neglect the teachings, we take your love for granted, turning it from an overwhelmingly gracious gift to an assumed entitlement of privilege. Forgive us.

Assurance Jesus, you came into our world with all of its sorrows. Reawaken us to be alert to your presence in the midst of struggles within and all around us. Tell us again that your love always wins. You fulfill all your promises, and the days of fulfillment are surely coming even as you come to us again this Christmas season with your hope, peace and wholeness. Open our minds, hearts, and spirits to the bright potential you give us in each moment of life -- for you, who causes Light to shine out of darkness will surely shine in our hearts and cleanse us from all sins and restore us to your glorious light. Free us from captivity to sin and fear and death and enable us to a live in the hope and joy of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Pastor's Lord, let your peace and mercy pour down like rain. We marvel at your wonderful deeds and lift our heads and hearts in expectation, yearning for the coming day of the Lord and standing before your Son, Jesus Christ.

We seek your presence in our lives. In Scripture, we find you in the most unlikely of places, in an empty tomb, in the stable of an overfilled inn. Likewise, help us to find you not only where we expect -- in the opportune times of life, but also in the unexpected times and places -- be it isolated and alone, or filled with hustle and bustle... let us find you in the grandeur of nature, or in the most

spartan of environments. We stand before you, opening our lives to you as we remember how your redemption came, and continues to come to us.

Praises and Petitions And it is because we remember who you are and what you have done and continue to do that we lift up our praises and concerns for our world, for each other, and for ourselves. Today, specifically, we continue to pray * for the Gruenbergers, * for Warren Bonneville, * and for the family and friends of Mike Norman -- all covid related * and for the family and friends of Arbie Gibson whose funeral is Wednesday, * and Bert Honour asks we pray for Valerie Carpenter, who can receive and body will accept a heart transplant, * and for Gar Lemon, who had some quickly developing cellulitis on his left head; * and any others that you lay on our hearts and minds. We know there are others who have been mentioned in weeks past that we did not bring up again this week, and there are things that we have kept only in our minds and hearts and never shared with anyone, but we know that you know each need, and every joy as well; and we lift them to you, knowing that in your timing and in your way you will answer every prayer.

God of all the prophets, in the clamoring noise or in the awkward silences, you announce Christ's coming to us. Guard our hearts. Remind us that we are loved. Tune our spirits to sense your presence again during this holy season as we both remember -- and anticipate -- the coming of Jesus Christ, who is always with us. The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. You created light out of darkness and breathed life into the earth, into us. When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. You delivered us from captivity to sin by a new covenant through your Son Jesus Christ. In the fullness of time, you sent him to be our Savior and at his birth the angels sang glory to you in the highest -- and peace to your people on earth. And so, with your people on earth and all the

company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending 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.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ whom you sent in the fullness of time to come among us as the servant Emmanuel (God with us). As Mary and Joseph were turned away to a stable, so Jesus traveled through Galilee, willingly humbling himself in obedience to your will, knowing and accepting that he too would be turned away -- rejected -- even to death on a cross. And yet through that rejection he gave birth to your church and became a light to the nations. And so, in remembrance of your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

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

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here and at home, and on these gifts of bread and cup. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ. By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world until Christ comes in his final victory and we feast at his heavenly banquet. We pray this through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and forever.

Amen.

And now, with the confidence of the children of God, let us pray **Lord's Prayer**

As the Word became flesh, so too, on that night long ago when Jesus gave himself up for us, he took the bread, lifted it up, gave thanks for it, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, this is my body which is broken for you -- as often as you eat it, eat it in remembrance of me. (Take your bread and eat)

And when the supper was over, he took the cup, he gave thanks, and then he gave it to his disciples, saying, take and drink from this cup. This is my blood, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. As often as you drink it, drink in remembrance of me. (Take and drink).

Prayer Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world and the strength of your spirit, to give ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let's stand for our closing song which reminds us that in Christ, God was, is, and will always be with us.

Music (2x) Emmanuel, Emmanuel

Blessing

Now as you go, [raise you heads high, alert and firm in th`e faith.] Give yourself fully to the worthwhile work of the Lord. Be an example of how to longingly, expectantly, prepare your heart's home for God's presence, welcoming his coming with the rise of each day. Amen.