

PROCESSIONAL HYMN 633

The Advent of our King

OPENING RESPONSES

In the name of the Father and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

We wait in hope for the coming of Christ,
the light of the world

Come Lord Jesus.

The true light, which enlightens everyone
is coming into the world.

Come Lord Jesus.

The light shines in the darkness
and the darkness will not overcome it.

Christ, shine in your church today.

WELCOME

THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

As our three candles are lit, we sing:

The Holly and the Ivy

Are dancing in a ring

Round the berry-bright red candles

And the white and shining King

And one is for God's people

In every age and day

We are watching for his coming

We believe and we obey.

And two is for the prophets

And for the light they bring.

They are candles in the darkness,

All alight for Christ the King.

And three for John the Baptist.

He calls on us to sing:

'O prepare the way for Jesus Christ,

He is coming, Christ the King.'

We light this candle remembering John
the Baptist. A man ready to commit all he
had and all he was to proclaiming the
coming of the Messiah.

Remind us Lord to be like John the

**Baptist. Ready to proclaim you with all
we are and using all we have, that others
might come to know your love.**

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

**Almighty God, to whom all hearts are
open, all desires known, and from whom
no secrets are hidden: cleanse the
thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration
of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly
love you, and worthily magnify your holy
name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

THE BEATITUDES

**Show us your ways, O Lord,
teach us your paths.**

*Blessed are the poor in spirit,
For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

*Blessed are they that mourn,
For they shall be comforted.*

*Blessed are the meek,
For they shall inherit the earth.*

**Show us your ways, O Lord,
teach us your paths.**

*Blessed are they that hunger and thirst
after righteousness,
For they shall be filled.*

*Blessed are the merciful,
For they shall obtain mercy.*

**Show us your ways, O Lord,
teach us your paths.**

*Blessed are the pure in heart,
For they shall see God.*

*Blessed are the peacemakers,
For they shall be children of God.*

*Blessed are they which are persecuted for
righteousness' sake,
For the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.*

**Show us your ways, O Lord,
teach us your paths.**

CONFESSION

A voice cries out in the wilderness,
'Make straight the way of the Lord.'
So let us listen, and turn to the Lord in
penitence and faith.

**Lord our God, in our sin we have avoided
your call. Our love for you is like a
morning cloud, like the dew that goes
away early. Have mercy on us; deliver us
from judgement; bind up our wounds and
revive us; in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

ABSOLUTION

May the God of love bring you back to
himself, forgive you your sins and assure
you of his eternal love in Jesus Christ our
Lord. **Amen.**

KYRIE (*stand*)

Lord, have mercy (x2)

Christ, have mercy (x2)

Lord, have mercy (x2)

COLLECT

O Lord Jesus Christ, who at your first
coming sent your messenger to prepare
your way before you: grant that the
ministers and stewards of your mysteries
may likewise so prepare and make ready
your way by turning the hearts of the
disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that
at your second coming to judge the world
we may be found an acceptable people in
your sight; for you are alive and reign with
the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

READING: Isaiah 35.1–10

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

The wilderness and the dry land shall be
glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus it shall blossom
abundantly, and rejoice with joy and
singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be

given to it, the majesty of Carmel and
Sharon. They shall see the glory of the
LORD, the majesty of our God. Strengthen
the weak hands, and make firm the feeble
knees. Say to those who are of a fearful
heart, 'Be strong, do not fear! Here is
your God. He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense. He will come
and save you.' Then the eyes of the blind
shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf
unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a
deer, and the tongue of the speechless
sing for joy. For waters shall break forth
in the wilderness, and streams in the
desert; the burning sand shall become a
pool, and the thirsty ground springs of
water; the haunt of jackals shall become a
swamp, the grass shall become reeds and
rushes. A highway shall be there, and it
shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean
shall not travel on it, but it shall be for
God's people; no traveller, not even fools,
shall go astray. No lion shall be there, nor
shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there, but the
redeemed shall walk there. And the
ransomed of the LORD shall return, and
come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy
shall be upon their heads; they shall
obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and
sighing shall flee away.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: 146:4-10

4 For when their breath goes from them
they return a | gain · to the | earth:
and on that day | all their | thoughts |
perish.

5 Blessèd is the man whose help is the |
God of | Jacob:
whose hope is | in the | Lord his | God,

6 the God who made|heaven · and|earth:
the sea and | all | that is | in them,
+7 who keeps | faith for | ever:
who deals justice to | those that | are
op|pressed.

8 The Lord gives | food · to the | hungry:
and | sets the | captives | free.

9 The Lord gives | sight · to the | blind:
the Lord lifts up | those · that are |
bowed | down.

10 The Lord | loves the | righteous:
the Lord cares for the | stranger | in
the | land.

READING: James 5.7–10

A reading from the letter of James.

Be patient beloved until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

HYMN 664 *The Saviour Will Come*

GOSPEL READING: Matthew 11:2-11

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths; all flesh shall see the salvation of God

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to Jesus, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?’ Jesus answered them, ‘Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me.’ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: ‘What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written, “See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.” Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from

heaven, was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

INTERCESSIONS

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Merciful Father,
accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

PEACE

In the tender mercy of our God, the dayspring from on high shall break upon us, to give light to those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,
and also with you.

OFFERTORY HYMN

In the stillness, I call your name,
Through the quiet, you feel the same.
No thunder speaks, no heavens part,
Yet I know you hold my heart.

I've searched the skies, I've prayed in tears,
Wrestled with doubts and faced my fears.

But in the silence, faith remains,
For in the waiting, love sustains.

*When God is silent, I'll still believe.
His hand is steady, though I can't see.
Through every shadow, his light will shine.
I'll trust his timing, his will, not mine.*

Like Job, I sit in the ash and wait,
Yet I know his plans are never late.
When answers hide, his word is clear,
Be still and trust, for he is near.

The mountains move at his command,
The seas obey the Maker's hand.
If he is quiet, I'll lean in more,
His whisper heals, his love restores.

Chorus

In every silence, his truth remains,
Through every trial, he breaks the chains.
I'll walk by faith, not by sight,
For in his silence, he brings new light.

PREPARATION OF THE TABLE

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation:
through your goodness we have this
bread to set before you, which earth has
given and human hands have made.
It will become for us the bread of life.

Blessed be God for ever.

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation:
through your goodness we have this wine
to set before you, fruit of the vine and
work of human hands. It will become for
us the cup of salvation.

Blessed be God for ever.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the power,
the glory, the splendour, and the majesty;
for everything in heaven and on earth
is yours.

**All things come from you,
and of your own do we give you.**

EUCHARISTIC PRAYER E

The Lord is here.

His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

Father, we give you thanks and praise through your beloved Son Jesus Christ, your living Word, through whom you have created all things; who was sent by you in your great goodness to be our Saviour.

By the power of the Holy Spirit he took flesh; as your Son, born of the blessed Virgin, he lived on earth and went about among us; he opened wide his arms for us on the cross; he put an end to death by dying for us; and revealed the resurrection by rising to new life; so he fulfilled your will and won for you a holy people.

And now we give you thanks because you prepared the way of your Son Jesus Christ by the preaching of your servant John the Baptist, who proclaimed him as the Lamb of God, our Saviour.

Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and singing:

SANCTUS (*sung*)

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.

Hosanna in the highest.

We praise and bless you, loving Father, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; and as we

obey his command, send your Holy Spirit, that broken bread and wine outpoured may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends and, taking bread, he praised you. He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:

Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine. Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:

Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did, in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross. Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation, we proclaim his death and resurrection until he comes in glory.

Christ is the bread of life:

When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus, until you come in glory.

Lord of all life, help us to work together for that day when your kingdom comes and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth. Look with favour on your people, gather us in your loving arms and bring us with St Stephen and all the saints to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father, for ever and ever.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray;
Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven. Give us today our
daily bread. Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver
us from evil. For the kingdom, the
power, and the glory are yours now and
for ever. Amen.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

We break this bread to share in the body
of Christ.

Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.

AGNUS DEI (*sung*)

Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace, grant us peace.

GIVING OF COMMUNION

Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away
the sin of the world. Blessed are those
who are called to his supper.

Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but
only say the word, and I shall be healed.

HYMNS DURING COMMUNION

655 *The Lord will come and not be slow*

265 *Hark the glad sound!*

532 *Open our eyes, Lord*

PRAYERS AFTER COMMUNION

We give you thanks, O Lord, for these
heavenly gifts; kindle in us the fire of your
Spirit that when your Christ comes again we
may shine as lights before his face; who is
alive and reigns now and for ever. **Amen.**

Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us with the
body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and
bodies to be a living sacrifice. Send us out
in the power of your Spirit to live and
work to your praise and glory. Amen.

NOTICES

HYMN 405

Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending

CONCLUDING ACCLAMATION

With love and compassion,
come, Lord Jesus.

With judgement and mercy,
come, Lord Jesus.

In power and glory,
come, Lord Jesus.

In wisdom and truth,
come, Lord Jesus.

BLESSING

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine
upon you, scatter the darkness from
before your path, and make you ready to
meet him when he comes in glory;
and the blessing of God Almighty, the
Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be
among you and remain with you always.

DISMISSAL

As we await our coming Saviour,
go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.