

# Order of Worship for at Home Use

**December 6, 2020**

**The Second Week of Advent**

Welcome to worship with Grace@Home!

We pray that you are healthy and well as you worship this week.

If you wish to worship via the video, click this link:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ew61j6\\_FM\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ew61j6_FM_Q)

May God's peace fill Your heart and mind as we enter, with intention, into our time of worship this week. We continue to live in a strange time, yet, Immanuel, God is with us. God is for us. God will never leave us. It is right, then, that we can rest in His presence, seek His face, and rely on His grace throughout all of life.

This advent, our worship theme is "Those Who Dream." Psalm 126 says "When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dreamed." As we worship this season, we will be invited into an expectant waiting during which we will intentionally enter into a spiritual discipline of dreaming. In troubled times it is common to focus on all that is difficult, heartbreaking and fear-producing...however, our God is calling us not to see the darkness around us, but to see Immanuel... God with us... and find the light and life and hope and joy and peace and love that is found in Him. Therefore, we dare to dream.

Again this week you are encouraged to find a place where you can center your heart and mind on Christ as you worship. You might light a candle, use your own advent wreath (or set of 5 candles), bring your Bible and take a deep breath as you join in our time of worship. In addition, this week we will participate in the sacrament of communion. You are invited to gather your bread and juice/wine as we participate together in this holy time of worship.

Let us worship God together.

With God's love,

Pastor Dana

## We Gather as God's Family to Worship

Prelude "Come, Saviour of the Gentiles" J.S. Bach Dr. David Dorway  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBfghZWTw08>

Welcome  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dMAnfVpiOwc>

Welcome to worship with Grace at home. This year our theme for the season of Advent is "Those Who Dream." We join with all who dream of peace in our world, and together we look expectantly for the presence of God, Immanuel. With our sisters and brothers we are called to be a people of peace - those who dream of a better world, Christ filled and glorious. Together we will enter the Christmas story and the expectant hope of those who dream as we begin to prepare the way for God's dreams to come to pass.

Advent Candle Lighting and Call to Worship Pastor Dana Pope  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q11IJC3G\\_AI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q11IJC3G_AI)

John the Baptist said, "Prepare the way."

Family of faith, how do we prepare for worship...to enter into God's dreams?

We silence the inner critic and we let go of busy thoughts.

We make space for God to speak. We bless all that we feel.

We open ourselves up to be moved in God's directions.

We breathe in God's mercy. We exhale God's love.

We bring our entire selves - heart, mind, soul, body - into this space.

We trust that even now, God is here.

So, take a moment, and prepare the way.

Let us worship the Holy God!

I wonder, as we come into God's presence, what do we dream today?

The first pitch of the opening season, A sunny vacation with balmy beaches?

We dream of family and friends gathered home for the holidays.

Of good books and homemade meals. Clean houses and matched socks.

These are beautiful dreams, but we also have urgent dreams...

We dream of conversations and understanding across party lines.

We dream of more laughter and less fear.

We dream of more listening and fewer tears.

We dream of cures for COVID and cancers and illnesses unnamed.

We dream of peace that passes all understanding.

We dream of a real, transforming connection with our Holy God.

Today we light the candle of peace.

May it remind us that there is another way.  
And that way is God's dream for us. Amen.

Hymn #259 "Angels From the Realms of Glory" vs. 1, 2, 5  
#277 "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" vs. 1 & 3 Praise Team  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EfE1j1BwPY>

Sharing the Peace of Christ \*\*not in video\*\*

**The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you...  
and also with you.**

In this time of social distancing it is important for us to remember that in Christ we are connected to all who believe in Jesus in every time and place. As the world continues to be isolated, and many are feeling anxious, as Christians we share the peace of Christ as a way to offer hope and the joy of Christ. Again today we use the familiar words, "The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you... and also with you."

Now, or after your time of worship, reach out via text, email, phone or video call, to someone outside of your home extending the invitation to enter into the peace of Christ with our faith community.

Praise God, that His peace is with us, always!

Prayer and The Lord's Prayer Pastor Dana Pope  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAvOdJSqmyc>

Holy God, as we set out in Advent we continue to prepare for our celebrations of Your coming. We select gifts, decorate our homes, and wait expectantly. Yet, mostly our preparations are cosmetic...Help us now to understand that this journey, if done well, will require a work of spirit and soul. A preparation that is deeper, longer lasting, and much more important. Help us now to prepare our hearts for Your holy Presence.

As we light the candle of peace today we confess that we wish that peace was something we could come by easily...buy, order online or... that we could find it on a map, downloaded in an app, or vote for it on a ballot. We wish that peace was as easy as a one-time choice. However, what we know is that peace involves work and intention. Everyday decisions made over and over again that bring us more deeply into life in Christ, more fully into relationship with one another.

Today we confess that we have fallen short. We have not chosen peace, or lived into Your dreams for us. We are hesitant to ask for transformation because we are unsure if we are ready for it or even want it... forgive us. Help us to boldly put our

trust in You and by faith, believe in Your goodness and love. Teach us Your ways, help us to prepare and step into the transformation and truth that You dream of for us, O God.

Holy God, as we gather at Your throne of grace, in the warmth of Your peace, we lift up to You the concerns and worries and the praises and petitions that are on our hearts. So many people are suffering these days. With our continued separation, businesses struggling, people out of work, children continuing to learn at home, and so many dealing with illnesses both physical and mental, we pray for Your hand to be upon all of us. We pray for healing miracles... By Your hand, and by medicine...we ask that You would bless and provide, work in mind, body or circumstance. We ask for the Holy Spirit to move in mighty ways, our Advocate, healer, our comforter. Holy God, we pray for guidance, wisdom and discernment and energy as well as the invitations and willingness to act in the power of Jesus' name to provide for those in need. May we be a light - shining brightly - in our dark world.

By Your grace we ask that You would continue to reveal Yourself in our dreaming. Help us to keep awake to Your work in and around us and by Your grace lead us into deeper understanding of what it means to prepare the way as those who dream.

We thank You gracious God, for hearing our prayers, those spoken and left in our hearts and souls. We pray all of these things in Jesus name as we pray the prayer that He taught us, saying: 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 temptations, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and glory forever, Amen.

### **We Listen to God's Word**

Hymn/Praise

“Jesus Loves Me”

\*\*not in video\*\*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C63z5hCd7bc>

Children's Message

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zG6\\_01EvUyQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zG6_01EvUyQ)

Today's children's message begins with the tools we use for cleaning. A broom, a mop, a rag and some cleaning liquids are all part of the things we use to clean. The first question to ask the children is, "do you know how to use these?" The anticipated answer is yes, of course. But the next question is why should we use these things? The answers will vary, however, the idea that we should clean when things are dirty or messy and we clean to make our place ready for someone or for ourselves will surely be part of the response.

Cleaning is really getting our stuff and our places ready for use. Sometimes we clean for ourselves and other times we are cleaning to make our place ready for use by another. Today we are looking at the message of John the Baptist who tells us during Advent to, "prepare the way of the Lord". Preparing the way for Christ this Christmas means we need to clean up our lives so we are not distracted, we need to polish off the dark spots of our life and be ready for the goodness of God when it comes to our lives. If we are distracted by all the things that clutter our lives and the darkness we let in then we run the risk of missing God when He comes because we are lost in the mess.

Special Music      "Angels We Have Heard on High" arr. M. Hanson      Quartet  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxPz0wZepD0>

Reading of the Word      Mark 1:1-8  
Message      "Dreamers...Prepare the Way"      Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wj4BSRf-8Wc>

This morning we are looking at the opening passage of the Gospel of Mark. Mark is unique because he does not deal with the birth of Christ, rather the beginning of his Gospel starts with John the Baptist preaching the coming of Christ and calling people to repentance so the way may be made ready for Christ. Mark begins with action and throughout his Gospel, actions speak louder than words. Listen now to the introduction of Jesus Christ as it comes to us through the words of God found in the Gospel of Mark, Chapter 1:1-8.

1    *The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.*

*It is written in Isaiah the prophet:*

*"I will send my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way" —*

*<sup>3</sup> "a voice of one calling in the desert,  
'Prepare the way for the Lord,  
make straight paths for him.'"*

*<sup>4</sup> And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup> The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. <sup>6</sup> John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup> And this was his message: "After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. <sup>8</sup> I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."*

Mark begins his gospel with the preaching of John making it clear that you, the reader, understand that Christ is coming. What is really interesting here is that Mark begins with the testimony of John and its impact on the people who were waiting for the coming of the Messiah. He does not start with Jesus at Christmas; he starts with the promise or prophecy that we should get ready.

You see, John the Baptist was the prophet that was promised to come and prepare the way for the messiah. John the Baptist was prophesied; the means predicted by the prophets Malachi and Isaiah. The faithful people of God knew that before the Messiah would come there would be a prophet who would come and tell the people, remind the people, that the messiah, the savior was about to come. And so, Mark begins with the message of John, the prophet, the one sent from God to tell the people to get ready.

So, who is John? Well, he is kind of a nut case that is who he is. He lives in the desert and he eats desert food. People who live in the desert are generally dirty people. They have to live off the land, they have to search for water to survive and they tend to be loners because other people don't want to live in the desert. And that is how it has been for thousands of years.

That is until then they invented air conditioning and along comes Bugsy Segal, gambling, and cheap housing prices. Now everyone wants to live in the desert. But we aren't really living in the desert. We are living in air-conditioned buildings and driving in air-conditioned cars that just happen to be in the desert. Living in the desert is dry, dirty business.

John was a guy living like a hermit, preaching a message that the people ought to come out to the desert, repent of their sin, turn back to God and wash themselves so that when God comes, they won't be so dirty. That is, washed on the outside with water, but also washed on the inside with repentance.

So, why is the story of a hermit in the desert with a wild message so important to Mark? Why does God put the people and the wild man before the coming of Jesus in his Gospel? That is the question that Christians should ask when they read the beginning of Mark. Mark is the shortest gospel with the most action of all the writings in the New Testament. It is an Indiana Jones type story when compared to the rest of the New Testament. Actions speak louder than words for Mark so we should pay attention to the actions of John to understand his message.



In Mark's gospel John is really telling the people to get ready because God is coming. That is John's message. If you are not ready you will miss the event when it happens. John the Baptist has one job, that is, to get people ready for the coming of God so they don't miss it when He comes. He knows God is on his way and he has been given the job of making sure that the people are ready. And that is how it is for us today.

The truth is, you have to be ready for opportunity when it comes. Opportunity may not give you a second shot. God comes to us; we don't make God come to us. He just does. He comes to us because he loves us. Just like when we walk through the pet store or the SPCA to pick out a puppy or kitten. We walk and we look and then we stop and bend down and pick up that one that grabs our heart. We pick it up, we hold it, we fall in love with it and then we decide to take it home for no other reason than our compassion and love for a helpless animal.

God comes to us; He bends down, and he swoops us up. We can't make him do it, he just does. But we have to be ready. We have to be present; we have to be paying attention or we will not be present, either spiritually or physically when God comes looking.

So, John challenges us. Get ready! Clean up your act and get involved in your faith. That way you will recognize God when he comes. You will go to him when he swoops down to pick you up.

He does come to us, but sometimes we run away because we are unprepared to see a good thing when it bends down before us. Just like the kitten that swats away the hand that comes to embrace her, or the dog who bites the hand that comes looking to pick him up. Sometimes we run away, we lash out and in doing so we miss the tremendous opportunity when it is offered.

As we dream of heaven on earth, as we dream of heavenly peace, we must remember that dreamers stay awake so we can see God when He comes and be part of the dream come true. We must also, as dreamers, work to prepare the way for God. We do this so we and others don't miss God's grace when it comes.

John pleads with the people to be ready so that they won't miss God. John baptizes the people giving them an action that lets them know that, symbolically they are ready.

Part of this is following John's example in our lives John is the fact that when we are ready and we have prepared ourselves for the coming of Christ, our lives point to Jesus and recognize that Jesus is the one that the world has been waiting for. John prepares the way by getting out of the way. He doesn't say, "look at me, I am a great preacher, even Jesus comes to me when He wants to get baptized". John is a witness to the majesty of God almighty and all that God is doing through Jesus Christ. When people want to give John the credit, when people want to call John the one, he points to Jesus and gets out of the way. He says, "there is one coming whose sandals I am not fit to untie!"

How sad it is when we miss the opportunity for Grace and how sad it is when we run from God. We think we have it all worked out so, why would we need God? At Christmas there are those who are offended by the words, “merry Christmas” as if grace is hurtful or God’s goodness is something to avoid. Has the world been that bad to you that you cannot see blessing? Has your heart been so damaged that you cannot see through the pain? Grace is here. You can find it in the gifts of others, and you can find it in the love of God. If you cannot see that it is time to prepare the way, to open your heart to God and to others. If you know people who are running away, show them grace and love this Christmas ... that is preparing the way.

Mark's story begins with John because John challenges us to be ready when God comes. John reminds us that God is coming, and we ought to be ready. This is what we dreamed of; now will we be ready when the dream comes true? Folks prepare the way for the grace of God. It’s coming, be ready.

### **We Respond to the Voice of God**

Presentation of our Tithes & Offerings

Pastor Dana Pope

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PFz6aIDaOzw>

We are blessed with many opportunities to give of our time talents as well as our resources...this is not about funding the church or fundraising, it is an act of worship. We respond to God’s Word, His love for us, and His mercy by giving of ourselves. We give all sorts of things, including our hearts, our finances, our time and our gifts. Let us now participate in God’s kingdom by returning God’s tithes and our offerings to the church via mail or online giving, using text to give or the following link:

<https://onrealm.org/gracepclv/-/give/now>

Offertory

“Unto Thee, Dear Lord, Do We Give Thanks”

Handel/Hancock

Praise Team

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EX4OMpdGV6I>

Offertory Prayer

Pastor Dana Pope

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eN4pP\\_yLW\\_I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eN4pP_yLW_I)

Holy God, bless us as we offer these Your tithes and our offerings. As we wait expectantly in this Advent season, make us evermore aware of our many blessings and the opportunities we have to share our resources, energies and talents. As we give out of our gratitude, we pray that all we offer would be used to bless Your people and bring peace and hope to our world. Amen.

Sacrament of Communion

Pastor Dana Pope

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4l4TZZEu3QU>



“My Shepherd Shall Supply My Need” R. Hughes

Dr. David Dorway

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWnFGEY6wz8>

## **We Go with God to Love and Serve**

Closing Hymn #258 “Go, Tell It on the Mountain” vs. 1 & 2 Dr. Lisa Elliott

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R9-cjFeZvxs>

Benediction

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jknCbQmWdi4>

As you prepare the way for Christ this Christmas,  
Go in peace,  
And know you go nowhere by accident.  
So, go with the power of God Almighty,  
The love of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
And, with the fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit.  
And, for heaven’s sake,  
Make a difference.

Postlude

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” arr. N. Harmon

Dr. David Dorway, Organist

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LtsbivKEcZ4>

Acknowledgements

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7bGnGxM\\_l68](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7bGnGxM_l68)

**As you continue to worship this week, please keep the following people in prayer, and reach out to one another in word or deed.**

## **In Need of Prayer**

Dolores Harris (Merrill Gardens )

Alice Black (Skilled Nursing at Las Ventanas)

Judy Aitken, Becky Aldridge, Fred & Mickie Bratschie, Bernard Busswell, Bill Carlston, Bob & Joan Clark, Tanner Cordon, Carol Daniel, Ann Donithan, Rosamaria Duenas, Jill and Robert Eaton, Pennie Everhart, Joice Franklin, Mary Gafford, Terry Glaser, Charlene Harper, Greta Hougnon, Pam Kodey, Lara Kolberg, Dorell Koon, Carole McKinnis, Sherrie Miles, Audrey Mitchell, Maggie O’Donnell, Alice Oiler, Dodi Palmer, Taylor Palmer, Mary Phillips, Russ & Pat Reid, Aminta & Jorge Santanilla, Bruce Simon, Marty Swartout, Nick Vogelzang, Mike Walsh, and Dick Wohletz

**In Memoriam:**

Jack Crockett 3/18/2020

Randy Innis 3/18/2020

Clark Trapp 3/18/2020

Ruthy Stull 3/19/2020

Ted Phillips 4/1/2020

Violet Cross 4/4/2020

Bill Franklin 5/4/2020

Greg Holt 5/7/2020

Carol Mohr 5/25/2020

Priscilla Taylor 7/4/2020

Louis Romero 8/8/2020

Bettye Hodgkins 8/11/2020

Gary Oiler 8/23/2020

Donna Gibson 9/14/2020