

Midweek Advent Service

Fierce Judgment, Final Grace

December 16, 2020

6:30 p.m.

AS WE GATHER

Our midweek Advent worship will focus on God's message given to us from the voice of the prophet Micah. Micah calls us to marvel at God's uniqueness and extravagant mercy in Jesus. What a blessing that in Jesus, God's fierce judgment gives way to final grace!

PRELUDE

"O Sing of Christ"

David Maxwell

WELCOME

✠ PREPARATION ✠

OPENING HYMN

341 Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates (vv. 1-4) (sung by soloist)

- 1 *Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates!
Behold, the King of glory waits.
The King of kings is drawing near;
The Savior of the world is here.
Life and salvation He doth bring;
Therefore rejoice and gladly sing.
To God the Father raise
Your joyful songs of praise.*
- 2 *A righteous Helper comes to thee;
His chariot is humility,
His kingly crown is holiness,
His scepter, pity in distress.
The end of all our woe He brings;
Therefore the earth is glad and sings.
To Christ the Savior raise
Your grateful hymns of praise.*
- 3 *How blest the land, the city blest,
Where Christ the ruler is confessed!
O peaceful hearts and happy homes
To whom this King in triumph comes!
The cloudless sun of joy is He
Who comes to set His people free.
To God the Spirit raise
Your happy shouts of praise.*

4 *Fling wide the portals of your heart;
Make it a temple set apart
From earthly use for heav'n's employ,
Adorned with prayer and love and joy.
So shall your Sov'reign enter in
And new and nobler life begin.
To God alone be praise
For word and deed and grace!*

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Please stand

INVOCATION AND CALL TO WORSHIP

(from Micah 4:1-5)

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen.**

Pastor: It shall come to pass, in the latter days that the mountain of the house of
the LORD will be established as the highest of the mountains.

People: **Then many nations will say:**

Pastor: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the
God of Jacob”

People: **“That He may teach us His ways and that we may walk in His paths”**

Pastor: They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into
pruning hooks.

People: **Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn
war anymore.**

Pastor: God's fierce judgment:

People: **Gives way to final grace!**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: Lord God, merciful Father, pour out Your Holy Spirit and deliver us from all evil. Open our eyes so we see our sin and selfishness. Inspire our repentance so we return to You.

People: **Amen.**

Pastor: Returning to our gracious Lord, let us confess our sins.

Silence for reflection and confession

Pastor: Merciful Father,

People: **We confess that we do not live according to Your Word and instead we follow gossip and slander, pride and pretense. We have become smug and self-righteous. Bring us out of our sin and clothe us with the garments of salvation, won for us through Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Pastor: Our God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love! Out of that love He sent Jesus to shed His blood for us. By faith we stand forgiven, restored and empowered to live new lives. Therefore, I proclaim to each of you: Christ redeems you and restores you. Christ loves you and forgives you! God's fierce judgment gives way to final grace!

People: **Amen. Thanks be to God!**

HYMN OF RESPONSE

341 Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates (v. 5) (sung by soloist)

5 *Redeemer, come and open wide
My heart to Thee; here, Lord, abide!
O enter with Thy grace divine;
Thy face of mercy on me shine.
Thy Holy Spirit guide us on
Until our glorious goal is won.
Eternal praise and fame
We offer to Thy name.*

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PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Pastor: Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

✂ WORD ✂

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Micah 6:1-8

(Act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with Your God)

¹ Listen to what the LORD says:

"Stand up, plead your case before the mountains; let the hills hear what you have to say.

² Hear, O mountains, the LORD's accusation; listen, you everlasting foundations of the earth. For the LORD has a case against his people; he is lodging a charge against Israel.

³ "My people, what have I done to you? How have I burdened you? Answer me. ⁴ I brought you up out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery. I sent Moses to lead you, also Aaron and Miriam. ⁵ My people, remember what Balak king of Moab counseled and what Balaam son of Beor answered. Remember [your journey] from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the righteous acts of the LORD."

⁶ With what shall I come before the LORD and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? ⁷ Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? ⁸ He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

ANTHEM

Hope Was Born This Night

by Ben McDonald and Dave Frey

1. *Tonight I see a star shine and its splendor fills up the sky.
It's the same that appeared and the wise men revered when hope was born this night.
Out upon the snowy fields there's a silent peace that heals.
And it echoes the grace of our Savior's embrace because hope was born this night.*

- Refrain:* *Glory to God in the highest!
Peace on earth, good will toward men.
Let all of the world sing a chorus of joy
because hope was born this night.*

2. *I can hear the Christmas bells ring as softly a church choir sings.
It's the song used to praise the Ancient of Days when hope was born this night.
There are angels in this place and my heart resounds with the praise.
Like a shepherd, so scared, I'll rejoice and declare that hope was born this night! (Refrain)*

EPISTLE

Philippians 2:5-11

(Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus)

⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross! ⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Please stand

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the first chapter.

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

HOLY GOSPEL

John 1:1-14

(The Word became flesh)

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

² He was with God in the beginning.

³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

⁶ There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. ⁹ The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

¹² Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-- ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

SERMON HYMN

333 Once He Came in Blessing (sung by soloist)

- 1 *Once He came in blessing,
All our sins redressing;
Came in likeness lowly,
Son of God most holy;
Bore the cross to save us;
Hope and freedom gave us.*

- 2 *Now He gently leads us;
With Himself He feeds us
Precious food from heaven,
Pledge of peace here given,
Manna that will nourish
Souls that they may flourish.*

- 3 *Soon will come that hour
When with mighty power
Christ will come in splendor
And will judgment render,
With the faithful sharing
Joy beyond comparing.*

- 4 *Come, then, O Lord Jesus,
From our sins release us.
Keep our hearts believing,
That we, grace receiving,
Ever may confess You
Till in heav'n we bless You.*

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Please stand

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: Creator God, stretch out Your hand in healing and protection over all that You have made, Lord, in Your mercy,

People: **Hear our prayer.**

Pastor: Just God, grant Your Spirit to the nations and send Your light to the dark places of the world. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: **Hear our prayer.**

Pastor: Suffering God, inspire all people by Christ's cross and bring forth resurrection and life. Lord in Your mercy,

People: **Hear our prayer.**

Pastor: Saving God, sustain all who suffer and release those imprisoned by pain or disease. Lord in Your mercy,

People: **Hear our prayer.**

Pastor: Renewing God, take us and empower us to live according to Your will, making us shine with the love of Jesus, Lord, in Your mercy,

People: **Hear our prayer.**

Pastor: Arriving God, keep us steadfastly trusting Your Word, just as You kept Your powerful prophet Micah. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: **Hear our prayer.**

Pastor: Give us ears to hear, O God, and eyes to watch, that we may know Your presence in our midst during this holy season of joy as we anticipate the arrival of Jesus Christ.

People: **Amen.**

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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

BENEDICTION

(from Micah 7:18-20)

Pastor: No god is like our God!

People: The Father, Son and Holy Spirit!

Pastor: Pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression.

People: He does not stay angry forever:

Pastor: Because He delights in steadfast love.

People: He casts our sin into the depths of the sea.

Pastor: God's fierce judgment:

People: Gives way to final grace! Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

362 O Sing of Christ

- 1 O sing of Christ, whose birth made known
The kindness of the Lord,
Eternal Word made flesh and bone
So we could be restored.
Upon our frail humanity
God's finger chose to trace
The fullness of His deity,
The icon of His grace.
- 2 What Adam lost, none could reclaim,
And Paradise was barred
Until the second Adam came
To mend what sin had marred.
For when the time was full and right
God sent His only Son;
He came to us as life and light
And our redemption won.
- 3 He came to that which was His own,
But He was not received;
Yet still through Him God's glory shone,
And some His name believed.
To these He gave the right to be
The heirs of heav'n above,
Born not of human ancestry
But born of God in love.

(continued on next page)

4 **Lord Jesus Christ, You deigned to dwell
 Among us here on earth
As God with us, Emmanuel,
 To bring this holy birth.
Though rich, You willingly became
 One with our poverty,
That we might share Your wealth and name
 For all eternity!**

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POSTLUDE

“O Lord, How Shall I Meet You”

Jeffrey Biersch

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Serving at Chapel

Preacher:	Adam Rouse
Liturgist:	Theodore Laesch
Singers:	Kathy Glenn KaRynn Calvin
Organist & Accompanist:	Carolyn Rusnak
Joyful Noise Director:	Carolyn Rusnak
Instrumentalists:	Meagan Purcell, violin Zach Oliver, guitar Ellory Glenn, bass guitar Glenn Lackey, percussion