

Order of Worship for December 3, 2023

The **Great “O Antiphons”** used in the service this morning have been used in the Christian Church in the days before Christmas since the 8th Century and are the basis of the Christmas hymn, “*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*”. The author of these antiphons is unknown.

Prelude:

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

Advent Call for Repentance

P: Blessings on Him who comes as King, whom comes in the name of the LORD.

C: **Praise to our God, and peace to His people on earth.**

P: I will hear what the LORD God has to say.

C: **A voice that speaks for peace.**

P: Peace for all people and for His friends,

C: **And those who turn to him in their hearts**

P: His help is near for those who fear Him.

C: **And His glory will live in our land.**

P: Blessings on Him who comes as King, whom comes in the name of the LORD.

C: **Praise to our God, and peace to His people on earth.**

P: We bless You, O God, for Your Word of promise, for the coming of Your Son through the waters of Baptism and the Bread of Life. We look to His coming in glory.

Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 64:1-9

R: Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down,
that the mountains might quake at your presence—
as when fire kindles brushwood
and the fire causes water to boil—
to make your name known to your adversaries,
and that the nations might tremble at your presence!

When you did awesome things that we did not look for,
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.

From of old no one has heard
or perceived by the ear,
no eye has seen a God besides you,
who acts for those who wait for him.

You meet him who joyfully works righteousness,
those who remember you in your ways.

Behold, you were angry, and we sinned;
in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved?

We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.

We all fade like a leaf,

and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
There is no one who calls upon your name,
who rouses himself to take hold of you;
for you have hidden your face from us,
and have made us melt in the hand of our iniquities.
But now, O Lord, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.
Be not so terribly angry, O Lord,
and remember not iniquity forever.
Behold, please look, we are all your people.
R: This is the Word of the Lord.
C: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Lesson: Mark 13:24–37

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark the thirteenth chapter.

C: Glory to You, O Lord.

P: [Jesus said:] “In those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

“But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the cock crows, or in the morning—lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake.”

P: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

THE GREAT "O ANTIPHONS" OF ADVENT

FIRST ANTIPHON – SAPIENTIA

O Wisdom, proceeding from the mouth of the Most High, pervading and permeating all

creation, mightily ordering all things: Come and teach us the way of prudence.

P: Behold, the name of the Lord cometh from far:

C: And let the whole earth be filled with His glory.

Congregation sings:

*O come, Thou Wisdom from on high, Who ord'rest all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show, And teach us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

SECOND ANTIPHON – O ADONAI

O Adonai and ruler of the house of Israel, who appeared to Moses in the burning bush and gave him the Law on Sinai: Come with an outstretched arm and redeem us.

P: Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Alleluia! **C: Make His paths straight. Alleluia!**

Congregation sings:

*O come, O come, Thou Lord of might, Who to Thy tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times didst give the Law, In cloud, and majesty, and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

THIRD ANTIPHON – O RADIX JESSE

O Root of Jesse, standing as an ensign before the peoples, before whom all kings are mute, to whom the nations will do homage: Come quickly to deliver us.

P: Rejoice greatly, O Jerusalem. **C: Behold thy King cometh.**

Congregation sings:

*O come, Thou Branch of Jesse's tree, Free them from Satan's tyranny
That trust Thy mighty pow'r to save, And give them vict'ry o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

FOURTH ANTIPHON – O CLAVIS DAVID

O Key of David and Scepter of the house of Israel, You open and no one can close, You close and no one can open. Come and rescue the prisoners who are in darkness and the shadow of death.

P: Come, O Lord, and make no tarrying: **C: Loosen the bonds of Thy people Israel.**

Congregation sings:

*O come, Thou Key of David, come, And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high, And close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

FIFTH ANTIPHON – O ORIENS

O Dayspring, splendor of light everlasting. Come and enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

P: Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined:

C: Our God shall come. Alleluia!

Congregation sings:

*O come, Thou Dayspring from on high, And cheer us by thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, And death's dark shadow put to flight.*

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.

SIXTH ANTIPHON – O REX GENTIUM

O King of the nations, the ruler they long for, the cornerstone uniting all people:
Come and save us all, whom You formed out of clay.

P: Behold, the Lord shall come and all His saints with Him. Alleluia!

C: And in that day, the light shall be great. Alleluia!

Congregation sings:

*O come, Desire of nations, bind In one the hearts of all mankind;
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease, And be Thyself our King of Peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

SEVENTH ANTIPHON – O EMMANUEL

O Emmanuel, our king and our Lord, the anointed for the nations and their Savior:
Come and save us, O Lord our God.

P: Drop down, ye heavens from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness:

C: Let the earth open and bring forth salvation.

Congregation sings:

*O come, O come, Emmanuel And ransom captive Israel, That mourns in lonely exile here Until
the Son of God appear. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

Sermon: “Anticipation” - Mark 13:33-37

I remember when they did the ketchup commercials using the background music of Carly Simon singing “Anticipation.” You’d see all kinds of people, young and old alike, waiting expectantly as the ketchup seemed to take forever to get out of the bottle. “Anticipation” is certainly something on peoples’ minds now that Thanksgiving is over. Nothing now “stands in the way” of our expectations of Christmas—company from out of town or a visit to grandparents, weeks off from school, the presents under the tree, and maybe even a good bonus from work. There are always those thoughts of anticipating the so-called “perfect” Christmas. Anticipation!

But do we want to anticipate? I’ve noticed that in recent commercials for the ketchup there is no more “anticipation.” The ketchup is in plastic squeeze bottles so that even the most thick, rich ketchup can be squirted out right away—no waiting!

“No waiting.” We seem to love that in our world. Think of how often people get new computers or upgrade their old ones so they don’t have to spend a few extra seconds waiting for something to show up on their screen. Ames is great because you might have to wait at the most ten minutes for normal daily traffic unlike the gridlock people have to face in cities like Chicago or D.C. Even if we have to wait in traffic, we have good stereo systems in our cars or we can whip out the cell phone and not let those minutes seem wasted. I notice how many students use cell phones to fill in the minutes it takes to walk between classes. If we have to

wait, then at least we look for ways to fill in the time, anything to not be wasting time. “Anticipation” is replaced by busywork.

Jesus talks in our Gospel lesson to His disciples during Holy Week, just days before He was to die. As He anticipated His own death, He prepared His disciples to anticipate the end of the world.

Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. It’s like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: “Watch!”

In track, athletes are taught to get into a special position before they begin a sprint. The same is true for football players to begin a play in a set position. Swimmers get into a crouch as the race starts. Baseball players are taught to get low and balance on their toes, ready to go either direction for the ball. Jesus seems to be putting us on our toes, getting us to anticipate when he comes again.

Getting into a set position certainly helps one to be ready for a race. It can be the difference between winning and losing. But you can only hold that position for so long. Muscles will tighten up and you need to relax if the start of the race is delayed.

So it is with anticipating Christ. People in the New Testament who lived when Jesus was alive anticipated Jesus returning in their lifetime. Paul says in our epistle lesson, “Therefore you do not lack anything as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.” In Romans 13 Paul said, “The hour has come for you to wake from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.” Peter says. “The end of all things is near.” But this is 2,000 years later. Can we be expected to wait especially when there is so much in our daily lives that needs to be done?

Our American dream is to be able to get to a comfortable standard of living so that we can relax, settle down, and be ready for retirement. But do we find ourselves “retiring” from God? It’s one thing to go to church when the kids are in Sunday School and when we want our youth to be involved with peers at church. But we get busy with other things, or we just want to relax. Maybe it would be different if we knew for sure that Jesus was coming in a few weeks. But do we have the luxury of anticipating Him all the time?

I remember in college coming home for a weekend without warning my parents. I wanted to surprise them. They were glad I came, but my mother insisted that the next time I tell

her ahead of time. It wasn't that she wanted the warning so she could get things ready, but she said, "I missed all the joy of anticipating your coming."

Think of the joy we can have anticipating Christmas—not the crazy rush to make our homes like Martha Stewart's or the pressure of getting the right gifts, but the joy of looking forward to seeing relatives, the anticipation of some quiet time, or the fun of doing things together as a family. Jesus warns us in our text to fill us with joyful anticipation, to give us a boost, to get us energized for His coming.

Jesus talks in our text about the man who leaves his servants in charge of his place. Picture young people whose parents have left them in charge on their own while dad and mom are gone. If they mess up the place, they won't look forward to their parents coming back. They would rather go on with their business, messing things up. But if they decide while their parents are away to fix things up, then they are anxious for the day their parents are back, wanting to show them what they did. They are like the child who can't wait to get home and show mom and dad what he drew for them in school.

That is the way we can watch for Jesus, because we can't wait to show Him what we are doing. As a congregation we support our friend Kebede and his family as missionaries in Ethiopia. We can't wait to show Jesus what we are doing in that mission. We can't wait to show Him what we are doing to share His love with our families—helping aging parents, taking time to listen to our children, letting a husband or wife know how important they are to us. We can't wait to show Him how we want people to share the faith we have, people from all over the world, people in our own community. People hurting after a divorce, students who so easily get distracted from God, and many people in this community who are searching for the answers we can only find in Christ Jesus.

We prepare to celebrate Christmas. As we do that we anticipate Jesus' coming again. He won't "plop" out of the bottle we squeeze. We can't control Him; we can't control history like that. Only God can. Thank God that only God can because otherwise we would be in deep trouble. But we can anticipate His coming which, because He came on Christmas, we know is a question not of "if," but "when." He's coming!

Offerings and Voluntary

Sharing Our Ministry

Prayer for Advent:

P: O Wisdom, proceeding from the mouth of the Most High, ruling over the universe unto the ends of the earth with tenderness and power, come and teach us the way of wisdom.

C: Lord, come soon.

P: O Lord, Head of the house of Israel, Who appeared to Moses in the burning bush and gave

him the Law on Mount Sinai, come open-armed to redeem us.

C: Lord, come soon.

P: O Branch of Jesse, arising as a sign among the nations, before Whom kings will keep silence and to Whom nations will call for help, come to deliver us and delay no longer.

C: Lord, come soon.

P: O Key of David, Scepter of the house of Israel, You open that which no one can close and close that which no one can open, come and deliver the prisoners lying in deep captivity and in the shadow of death.

C: Lord, come soon.

P: O Morning Star, Splendor of eternal light and Sun of righteousness, come and enlighten those living in darkness and in the shadow on death.

C: Lord, come soon.

P: O King of the nations. You answer their longing; O Cornerstone, You reconcile nations opposed, come and save us whom You made from dust.

C: Lord, come soon.

P: O Emmanuel, our King and Lawgiver, Hope and Savior of all nations,

C: Lord, come soon.

(Special concerns)

P: Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of Your only-begotten Son, that by His coming we may be enabled to serve You with pure minds; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Epistle Lesson: 1 Corinthians 1:3–9

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge—even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you—so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Service of the Sacrament

P: Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.

C: From the house of the Lord, we bless you.

P: Hear our prayer, dear Father in heaven, for we have sinned against you.

C: We have not loved You above all else, we have not loved others as we love ourselves.

P: Lord, have mercy upon us.

C: Christ, have mercy upon us.

P: Lord, have mercy upon us,

C: And grant us Your peace.

P: “While we were yet helpless, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. God shows His love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Since therefore we are now justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God ... We rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received our reconciliation.” (Romans 5:6, 7-9, 11) You are forgiven. Be at peace.

C: “**Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ**” (Romans 5:1).

The Words of Our Lord:

Lord’s Prayer:

Agnus Dei: (*“Lamb of God”*) p. 163

Distribution of Holy Communion:

Choir Anthem: *“Where Shepherds Lately Knelt”*

“Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence” - **Hymn #621**

“Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending” - **Hymn #336**

Prayer After Communion:

P: Christ Jesus, we thank You for answering the call to come into our world, become one of us, and bring about our salvation. We thank You for now for coming to us right now in this precious Sacrament. Help it to sustain us until the day You return.

C: **Amen.**

Blessing: (Pastor)

C: **Amen**

Closing Hymn: *“Come Thou Long Expected Jesus”* - **Hymn #338**

Postlude: