

Order of Worship for November 30, 2025

Prelude

P: The Lord be with you,

C: and also with you.

Opening Hymn: *“Prepare the Royal Highway”* - Hymn #343

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism: Charles Lucas Wandschneider

Advent Preparation

P: Lord God, in this Advent season, we hail the coming of Your Son, the promised One, the conquering One.

C: We know and confess, O Lord, that it is because of our sins that He had to come to our earth, for without His coming, we would be lost forever.

P: We have been at war with You, O God.

C: We rebel against Your commands and resent Your rule.

P: Yet you spoke to us through Your holy prophets, promising to us an end to the warfare and peace for our lives.

C: In tenderness You cried to us of forgiveness and mercy, of pardon and acceptance.

P: Not only did You speak to us, O God, but in the fullness of time You sent Your Son who came to comfort us.

C: He fulfilled the words spoken of Him: “He will not cry or lift up His voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed He will not break, and a dimly burning wick He will not quench.”

P: Come to us, Advent Savior, and bring us comfort:

C: The comfort of peace with you and peace with one another.

P: Come to us, Advent Savior, and bring us comfort:

C: The comfort of Your power in our lives that we may follow You and Your will for our lives.

P: Come to us, Advent Savior, and bring us comfort:

C: The comfort of our acceptance by You, that we may bring comfort to the comfortless and strife-torn lives You place in our pathways.

P: And then, O God, come at the end of time, that we may be comforted forever in Your eternal Kingdom; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord.

C: Amen.

Hymn of Comfort: *“Comfort, Comfort Ye, My People”* - Hymn #347

Service of the Word

Psalm 25:1–10 (In unison)

To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul. O my God, in You I trust; let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me. Indeed, none who wait for You shall be put to shame; they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous. Make me to know Your ways, O LORD; teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long. Remember Your mercy, O LORD, and Your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to Your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of Your goodness, O LORD! Good and upright is the LORD; therefore, He instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble His way. All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness for those who keep His covenant and His testimonies. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Prayer:

P: Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come, that by Your protection we may be rescued from the threatening perils of our sins and saved by Your mighty deliverance; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen

Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 2:1-5

R: The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem: It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us his ways and that we may walk in His paths.”

For out of Zion shall go the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Epistle Lesson: Romans 13:8–14

Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Besides this you know the time that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Gospel: Matthew 24:36–44

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew the twenty fourth chapter.

C: Glory be to You, O Lord.

[Jesus said:] “Concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this; that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord

C: Praise be to You, O Christ.

Sermon Hymn: “Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers – Hymn #515

Sermon: “Expect the Unexpected” - Matthew 24:36–44

One of the most famous sketches from Monty Python’s Flying Circus involves the unexpected. During a sketch, someone exclaims that they “didn’t expect a Spanish Inquisition!”, often in irritation at being vigorously questioned by another. Then, suddenly, three men jump out dressed in red robes and say, “nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition!”

We’re full of expectations this time of year. Will the final be what I expected and studied for, or will it be over material it seems I’ve never seen before? Will I find new toys under the tree, or will I just find socks and an ugly sweater? Will the family all get along, or will old arguments be dredged up again? How will new additions to the family change the dynamics? How will family members who can’t make it by death or distance affect the family celebration? What are you expecting for Christmas this year?

All of the Christmas stories are full of unexpected occurrences, things happening against expectations. Angels appear to an old priest, a teenage girl, the girl’s fiancée, and shepherds out in the fields. The teenage girl becomes pregnant without knowing her husband, and her relative becomes pregnant in her old age. An angry king, traveling scholars from the east, an emperor’s

decree all come together to create the story we take for granted. It's a story full of unexpected events for the people in the story.

God didn't do things in the expected way, though. Jesus came in humility, made himself nothing, coming as a baby who couldn't care for himself, but was dependent on his parents. He came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. He did that by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. The disciples didn't always realize what Jesus was doing.

Jesus came in a way that no one was expecting, coming as a baby to a humble peasant couple. He came not to overthrow the powers that be through violence, but to show the world a new way, a way of humility and peace. He came to save the whole world, not just the people of Israel. He came to save from sin and death, not from political oppression. He came in an unexpected way. More importantly, what he did is beyond our expectations. The Creator of Everything came to live among us and save us.

But today we hear about Jesus coming again. And this time, it's not just what will happen that we don't expect. It's when it will happen.

For many of us, life is rather predictable. We get into our daily and weekly routines. Most of the time we know what to expect and when to expect it. We plan for changes to our schedules due to things such as doctor appointments and holidays. We like it that way. If we have to change something in our routine, especially at the last minute, it may throw us off-kilter not only for that day, but for the rest of the week. It is easy to become stressed when our schedules suddenly change.

Sometimes the unexpected timing can be a joy. We talk about a mother expecting a child, but no one knows for sure when the baby will come until they do. Even if there's a due date, even if there's a date scheduled for a C section or induction, there's plenty of room and time for the unexpected to occur.

Today Jesus is calling us to prepare for a surprise. With our predictable lives, this sounds hard to do. But it really isn't. Just knowing that Jesus is coming is enough. Christ's return will be joyous. It isn't meant to stress us out. It gives us hope—hope that one day “swords will be beaten into plowshares” and “all tears will be wiped away.”

A little over 2,000 years ago, people in the occupied territories of Judea and Galilee were not expecting the Son of Man to come among them. Oh, many of the Jews living there under foreign occupation hoped and longed for the coming of the messiah, a victorious warrior and king like David who would throw off the Roman yoke and make Israel again a world power. But no one was looking for the Messiah who actually came, the Son of Man who was born in poverty, taught us to love our enemies and died on a Roman cross.

Today is the first Sunday in Advent, a special season of the Church Year. Advent comes from the Latin word *adventus*, which means “coming” or “arrival.” We often think of Advent as a time to prepare for the coming of Christmas. And in a sense, that’s true. During Advent, we do look back in time to the first coming of Christ, when he was born in Bethlehem over 2,000 years ago. But more than being retrospect, Advent looks forward in time to the Second Coming—or Advent—of Jesus on Judgment Day. Advent is all about getting ready for the coming of Christ on the Last Day (which will be the beginning of all days) when he will set the world right and make all things new.

But while we’re expecting Jesus to come again, we don’t know when that will be. No one knows the day or the hour. Despite all of the attempts to pin down an exact date or time, based on various vagaries of calendars, none of them have been accurate. Jesus didn’t return in the year 1000 AD, or on Y2K. He didn’t return in 2012 when the Aztec calendar reset. He didn’t return during the Great Disappointment in 1844. He didn’t return in September as a pastor on TikTok predicted. We expect that day will come, but we don’t know when it will come. We only know we’re one day closer than we were yesterday.

If we knew when he was coming, we would know when to get ready. But because we don’t know when, we have to always be ready. We have to always stay awake and alert.

When the prophet Micah names Bethlehem as the place from which salvation will come, our Christian ears hear "birthplace of Jesus." But if we were in the prophet's day, we'd likely hear "home of King David." That's what Micah's listeners would have held on to: that out of this tiny village came Israel's greatest king. And that king himself was a surprise: the youngest and smallest of Jesse's boys seemed more fit to tend sheep than lead a nation. It's a reminder that with God the least can become the greatest, and that we should expect the unexpected.

The season of Advent begins on the Sunday closest to today, November 30, which is the day we remember Andrew, the brother of Peter. And he probably couldn’t have expected everything that happened to him. He couldn’t have expected what would happen when he and his brother and James and John are called away from their fishing boats. He couldn’t have expected what would happen when he brings a boy with five loaves and two fish to Jesus as they’re looking out at a crowd of 5000. But Jesus gave him purpose beyond his expectations.

We can’t always know what to expect in life. We don’t know what will happen, or when things will happen. But we know God is in control. We don’t always know what the future holds, but we know who holds the future. What a wonderful promise.

Prayer of the Church:

P: Lord, in Your mercy.

C: **Hear Our Prayer.**

Sharing Our Ministry

Offering & Voluntary

Service of the Sacrament

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up Your hearts.

C: We lift them up to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord.

C: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

Words of the Lord

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

Distribution: *“O Bride of Christ, Rejoice”* – **Hymn #335**

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

Closing Prayer: Come, then, O Jesus, from our sins release us. Keep our hearts believing, that we, grace receiving, ever may confess until in heaven we bless You.

C: Amen.

Blessing: (Pastor)

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: *“The Advent of Our King”* - **Hymn #331**

Postlude