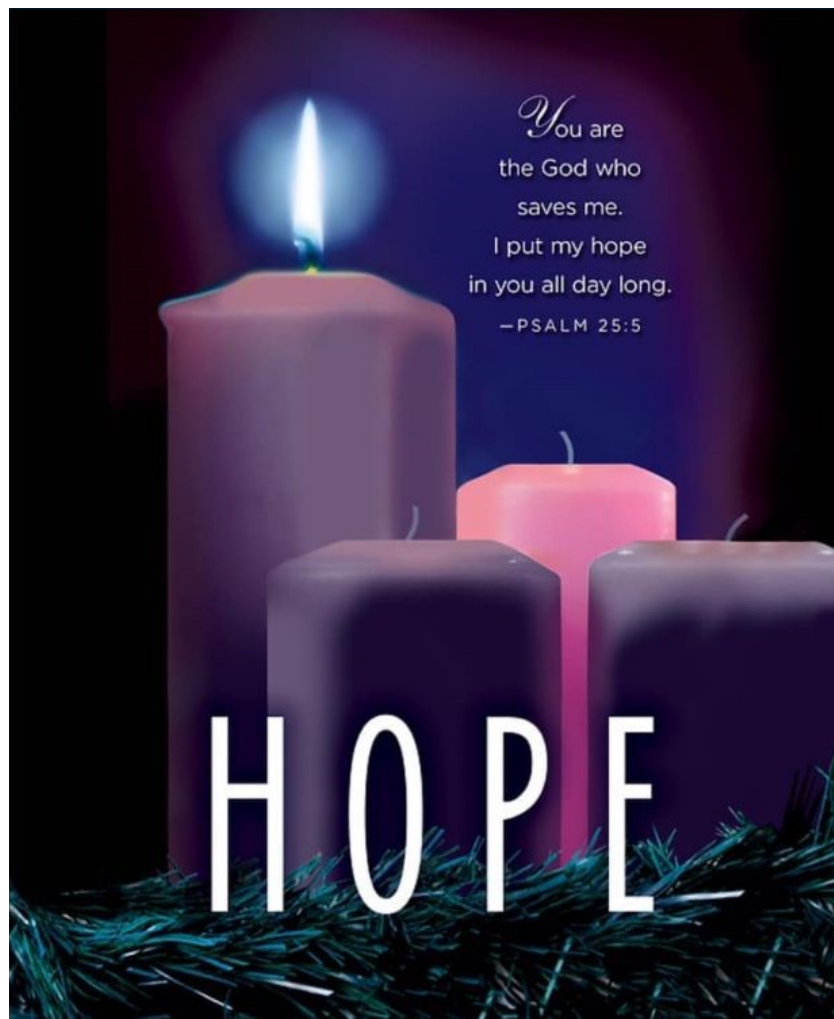


The First Sunday of Advent



November 29, 2020
10:30AM

We Gather in the Lord's Name

Instructions for standing, sitting, and kneeling are rubrics from the Book of Common Prayer. Any person who is unable to stand or kneel is welcome to sit for any part of the service regardless of the printed instruction. Please feel comfortable using any posture you wish.

Advent Candle Lighting

Reader 1 According to tradition, each candle has a special meaning. The first one, usually purple, is called the candle of hope. People in the Old Testament knew that God had promised to send a Savior. And we're filled with hope because we know that Jesus came to Earth on the first Christmas so he could tell people about God and die for our sins. As we get ready to light the first candle on our Advent wreath, let us listen to a reading from Romans.

Reader 2: I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13.

Sharing: Share some ways that you're filled with hope because you know Jesus or how Jesus makes a difference in your lives. **Amen.**

After sharing, the first blue candle is lit and all say,

People: One candle, burning bright, Chasing away the darkness for light
One candle, glowing light, The blessing of God, giving new sight.

Processional Hymn: #59

Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding

Please Stand and Sing

1 Hark! a thrill-ing voice is sound-ing: "Christ is nigh," it seems to say;
2 Wak-ened by the sol - emn warn - ing, from earth's bond-age let us rise;
3 Lo! the Lamb, so long ex - spect - ed, comes with par-don down from heaven;
4 so when next he comes with glo - ry, and the world is wrapped in fear,
5 Hon - or, glo - ry, might, and bless - ing to the Fa - ther and the Son,

1 "Cast a - way the works of dark-ness, O ye child-ren of the day."
2 Christ, our sun, all sloth dis - pel - ling, shines up - on the morn-ing skies.
3 let us haste, with tears of sor - row, one and all to be for - given;
4 may he with his mer - cy shield us, and with words of love draw near.
5 with the ev - er - last-ing Spi - rit while un - end - ing a - ges run.

Introduction

Celebrant: Welcome to the first Sunday in Advent online. For public safety, we have closed our doors for public access to in-person worship. But we are here with you online, in prayer and in spirit.

The church begins its new worship year today on Advent 1. The word "advent" is Latin meaning "the coming." It refers not only to the birth of Jesus celebrated at Christmas but to the second coming of Christ in judgment. For the next four weeks, we will have these end of the world readings because that is when Christ returns in judgment.

Let us reach out to each other as best we can to dispel the darkness. Let us remind each other of the goodness that is in us.

And let us support and be a blessing as we battle the isolation with online encounters, the telephone, and good old fashioned letters.

Opening Acclamation

Celebrant: Blessed be God who forgives all our sins..

People: **God's mercy endures for ever Amen.**

Collect for Purity

Celebrant: Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: 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.**

Kyrie: #85

Please Stand and Sing

The musical notation for Kyrie #85 consists of three systems, each with two staves. The first staff of each system is labeled 'Cantor or Choir' and the second is labeled 'All'. The lyrics are written below the staves.

System 1:
Cantor or Choir: Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son.
All: Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son.

System 2:
Cantor or Choir: Chri - ste e - le - i - son.
All: Chri - ste e - le - i - son.

System 3:
Cantor or Choir: Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son.
All: Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son.

Collect of the Day

Celebrant: God be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Celebrant: Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

We Hear God's Word

First Lesson: Isaiah 64:1-9

Please be seated.

Reader: A reading from the book of Isaiah.

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence!

When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him.

You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.

We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.

Yet, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.

Reader: The word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18

Reader: Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; *

People: **shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.**

Reader: In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, *

People: **stir up your strength and come to help us.**

Reader: Restore us, O God of hosts; *

People: **show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.**

Reader: O LORD God of hosts, *

People: **how long will you be angered despite the prayers of your people?**

Reader: You have fed them with the bread of tears; *

People: **you have given them bowls of tears to drink.**

Reader: You have made us the derision of our neighbors, *

People: **and our enemies laugh us to scorn.**

Reader: Restore us, O God of hosts; *

People: **show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.**

Reader: Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, *

People: **the son of man you have made so strong for yourself.**

Reader: And so will we never turn away from you; *

People: **give us life, that we may call upon your Name.**

Reader: Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; *

People: **show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.**

Second Lesson: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Reader: A reading from Apostle Paul's letter to the Corinthians.

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 has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind - just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you-- so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Reader: The word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

1 Come, thou long - ex - spect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo - ple free;
 2 Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art:
 3 Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king,
 4 By thine own e - ter - nal Spi - rit rule in all our hearts a - lone;

from our fears and sins re - lease us, let us find our rest in thee.
 dear de - sire of ev - ery na - tion, joy of ev - ery long - ing heart.
 born to reign in us for ev - er, now thy gra - cious king - dom bring.
 by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

Gospel: Mark 13:24-37

Please stand.

Reader: The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to Mark.

People: **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

Jesus said, "In those days, after that suffering, 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. Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. 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 forth 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 tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

"But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; 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 slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake - for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."

Deacon: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Praise to you, Lord Christ**

Sermon

Please be seated.

Gratitude and Hopefulness

Sometimes in the life of a preacher, we need to consider the secular events and the needs of the people more so than the demands of scripture in the lectionary. One such occasion was September 16, 2001, five days after the World Trade Center. Today is the first Sunday in Advent. Our theme in the readings is hopefulness, but we are in the middle of a global pandemic, and frankly, the statistics in the spread of this disease are very discouraging right now.

One of my responsibilities as your priest is to be your cheerleader. Not to serve as a comedian or Pollyanna, but to help you see the goodness in God's beautiful world, amid anxiety, suffering and even despair. We are all sick and tired of being cooped up and isolated. Whatever we had as a "normal" life before has been tossed into a cosmic blender. Everything has gone helter-skelter. There is no more "normal." People are depressed and fearful. Young and old could die from exposure to this thing. Going to Walmart has become a game of Russian Roulette.

Lately, my role as cheerleader for you reminds me of the 1998 Italian comedy-drama, "Life is Beautiful," where a father and son are imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp. The father attempts to shield his son from the horrors all around by comedy, uplifting narrative and love brought from a well of despair. While I cannot shield you from the world around us, I can lift you up and point you in directions that will bring you life, health, wholeness, and beauty. That is my job today.

This week, we tried to celebrate the national holiday of Thanksgiving. The holiday commemorates a disastrous time early in the European arrival to North America. In September, 1620, a hundred or so Puritans set sail from England. After a harsh first winter, half of the colonists died. Only four adult women lived through the first winter. The local Wampanoag tribe had observed this shrinking colony closely for a year and by the following fall, they showed up in the settlement with a feast of venison, turkey, shellfish and vegetables. The feast was a harvest festival, a time to fatten up before winter, and a recognition from compassion of the suffering of these hundred souls who now numbered about fifty. The colonists were starving. The Native Wampanoags fed them and gave them hope.

Thanksgiving and hope are the twin virtues born out of love and compassion. Paul's first letter to his church in Corinth reflects my thanksgiving here as well, "I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind." I have seen your love for one another, and I have witnessed your compassion in this community. What we need to do now is give birth to thanksgiving and hope because in these dark times it is way too easy to fall into the despair and self-pity that we find in the readings from Isaiah and the psalm.

Hear the lament of the Israelites who understood that their exile to Babylon was God's punishment for their sinfulness.

But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed.

We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.

You can almost envision the rabbis shaking their fist at God in the psalm.

O LORD God of hosts, how long will you be angered despite the prayers of your people?

You have fed them with the bread of tears; you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

You have made us the derision of our neighbors, and our enemies laugh us to scorn.

And there are times today when we want to join those Israelites so long ago. We want to shake our fist at God and ask, "How long O Lord, will you be angered despite the prayers of your people?"

The statistics of our present troubles show that we may have two or three difficult months ahead of us. Winter will be upon us soon and it may be impossible to dispel the darkness with holiday cheer. What can we do besides lament and fear the disease?

I have a suggestion, and it's going to cost you about fifty cents a week. Do this for twelve weeks and it will literally rewire your brain. Your soul will be uplifted. By the time Lent rolls around, you will be able to praise God with your whole being. You can stand up tall and encourage others. You will be a witness to the power of God for all those around you.

Lest you think I am just puffing you up with a lot of religious nonsense, this activity was studied at the University of California – Berkeley. Functional MRI scanning was used to demonstrate changes in the way the same person processed emotional information. Psychologists with standardized tests showed that the study group had improved measurably. This is something you can easily do for fifty cents and a little bit of time every week. Do you want to give this a try?

I know this is a virtual online service, so I am hoping you are out there saying "amen" to this question. "Let's do it."

Here's what you need to do. Pick someone from the parish address book or someone else you know. Write a letter to them giving them praise and thanksgiving for specific things about them that you notice. Do NOT use any negative emotions and do NOT use the words "we" or "us." Your thanksgiving letter should use all "I" or "you" statements. It is about your sense of gratitude.

You can decide whether or not you want to mail the letter later. Sometimes you will and sometimes you won't. That's ok. The point is that you wrote the letter. Do this for twelve weeks and you will be a changed person. Maybe next spring, we can all get together and write our own psalm of praise and thanksgiving to God.

Three months and you will be changed. Three months and the power of God working in you will do far more than you can ever ask or imagine.

Silence for reflection after the sermon.

The Nicene Creed

All in unison; Please stand as you are able.

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: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from 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. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He 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.

Prayers of the People

Please kneel, sit or stand.

Reader: As we have offered gratitude for God's grace upon this community, let us now offer our gifts to the Lord, trusting that by the power of the Holy Spirit, we will be led to ever more faithful fellowship and service.

Reader: For peace from things that separate us from one another and for our salvation.

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Reader: For the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of the holy churches of God, especially...

People: **Whirlwind Mission, Watonga St. Stephen's, Guymon St. Stephen's, Montevideo, Uruguay ; Diocese of Washington; St. George's Cathedral, Georgetown, Guyana.**

Reader: For this holy gathering and for those who enter with faith, reverence, and fear of God.

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Reader: For...

People: **Michael, our Presiding Bishop; Poulson, our Bishop; Bob and Tom, our clergy; Tim & Jennifer, our wardens; vestry, delegates, all who minister in Christ, and for all the holy people of God. Lord, have mercy.**

Reader: For the world and its leaders, our nation and its people. We pray for our leaders, especially...

People: **Donald, our President; Mike, our Vice-president; Markwayne, our Congressman; James & Jim, our Senators; Kevin, our Governor; and Marlon, our Mayor. Lord, have mercy.**

Reader: For prisoners, the oppressed, all those in need or suffering, especially...

People: **Barbara & Family, Blackwell Family, Brad, Brewer Family, James & Shirley, Judy, Sherri, Bea, Eathen, Linda, John, Angie, Brian, Glen, Dante, Marilyn, Gary, Ann, Connie, Jan, Thomas, Cedric, Mary-Margaret, Jean, Barry, Cliff, Gabriella, Esther, all those affected by the pandemic, all the front line workers involved with patient care, and those whose suffering is known only to God.**

Reader: We pray for those in the armed services. We pray for those who have died (*especially...*)

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Reader: For ourselves, our families, and those we love. We pray for those in our parish, especially ...

People: **Jackie, Brett, Carl, Marissa Jane.**

Reader: Also those who are traveling, (*especially...*)

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Reader: Bless all those everywhere who give themselves to the service of others; that with wisdom, patience, and courage, they may minister to the suffering, the friendless, and the needy for love of him who laid down his life for us.

People: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader: Remembering our most blessed Mary and all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ.

People: **To you, O Lord.**

Reader: Heavenly Father, you have promised to hear what we ask in the Name of your Son: accept and fulfill our petitions, we pray, not as we ask in our ignorance, nor as we deserve in our sinfulness, but as you know and love us in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: **Amen.**

Confession and Absolution

Please kneel, sit or stand.

Celebrant: Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Silence may be kept.

Celebrant and People:

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

Celebrant: Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

Peace

Please stand as you are able.

Celebrant: The peace of Christ be always with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Announcements, Birthdays & Anniversary Blessings

Please be seated.

Offertory

During this time we make an offering to the church to help maintain its mission in the world, and we fully offer ourselves to be Christ in the world around us at this time. The offering of bread and wine are brought to the altar.

Offertory Sentence:

Celebrant: But do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

Hebrews 13:15, 16

Offertory Anthem:

In this very room

Lora Sellers

Doxology:***Praise God from whom all blessings flow****Please stand as you are able.*

*3 Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise him, all crea - tures here be - low; praise him a - bove, ye heaven - ly host: praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

The Great Thanksgiving**Sursum Corda***Celebrant:* The Lord be with you.*People:* **And also with you***Celebrant:* Lift up your hearts.*People:* **We lift them to the Lord***Celebrant:* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.*People:* **It is right to give him thanks and praise.****Sanctus: #S-125*****Holy, holy, holy Lord****Please stand, sit, or kneel.*

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Lord's Prayer:

Celebrant: And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray:

Celebrant and People: **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, for ever and ever. Amen.**

Fraction Anthem: #S-157

Lamb of God

Please remain seated.

The musical notation is written on six staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are as follows:

- Staff 1: O Lamb of God, that ta - kest a - way the
- Staff 2: sins of the world, have mer - cy up - on us.
- Staff 3: O Lamb of God, that ta - kest a - way the
- Staff 4: sins of the world, have mer - cy up - on us.
- Staff 5: O Lamb of God, that ta - kest a - way the
- Staff 6: sins of the world, grant us thy peace.

Breaking of the Bread

A period of silence is kept.

Celebrant: The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

Communion Hymn:

We Go Out To Do Our Work

Ken Yadan.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Celebrant: Let us pray.

Celebrant and People: **Eternal God, you have graciously accepted us as living members of our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Savior. Amen.**

Blessing

Celebrant: May Almighty God, by whose providence our Savior Christ came among us in great humility, sanctify you with the light of his blessing and set you free from all sin. **Amen**

Closing Benediction:

Celebrant: Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! **Amen.** *(Ephesians 3:20–21)*

And the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you now and for ever more.
Amen

Sending

Celebrant: Let us go forth in the name of Christ..

People: **Thanks be to God**

Recessional Hymn: #68

Rejoice! rejoice, believers

Please stand as you are able.

1 Re - joice! re - joice, be - liev - ers, and let your lights ap - pear!
2 See that your lamps are burn - ing, re - ple-nish them with oil;
3 Our hope and ex - pec - ta - tion, O Je - sus, now ap - pear;

The eve - ning is ad - vanc - ing, and dark - er night is near.
look now for your sal - va - tion, the end of sin and toil.
a - rise, thou Sun so longed for, a - bove this dark - ened sphere!

The Bride - groom is a - ris - ing, and soon he will draw nigh;
The mar - riage - feast is wait - ing, the gates wide o - pen stand;
With hearts and hands up - lift - ed, we plead, O Lord, to see

up, watch in ex - pec - ta - tion! at mid - night comes the cry.
rise up, ye heirs of glo - ry, the Bride - groom is at hand!
the day of earth's re - demp - tion, and ev - er be with thee!

Sending

Deacon: Let us go forth in the name of Christ..

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Poinsettias for the 2020 Christmas Altar



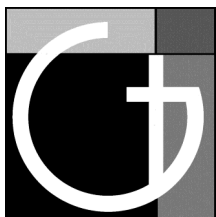
**Please make checks payable to:
Grace Episcopal Church with altar guild
on the memo line and bring/mail it,
along with this form, to the Parish Office.**

Name of Donor: _____

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

**All donations must be received in the office no later than
Monday, December 15th, in order to be listed in the Christmas bulletin.**



Grace Episcopal

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