

Gather Us, O God



Advent to Gather
Advent Together

Advent Lutheran Church
8840 University City Blvd
Charlotte, NC 28213
(704) 549-1555
www.adventlu.org

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GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

Prelude

“Down to the River/Shall We Gather”

Annette Nolan

Pastoral Welcome

Opening Reflection on Matthew 22:15-22

L: For many years
we have had the mistaken notion
that all the problems of the world
can be solved with a few dollar bills.

In Jesus' time the Pharisees came to ask him if they should
pay taxes, and Jesus, looking at a silver coin,
asked whose face and name were engraved on it.

"The Emperor's," they said.

"Well then, pay to the Emperor what is his" Jesus replied.

Has God's face
ever been on a coin?
We are the coin
that bears the living likeness of God.
Giving of ourselves
with whatever that may include,
is the only legal currency
of the kingdom of heaven.

~ from the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

Confession and Forgiveness

P: As people who bear the image of God, we come humbly into the presence of our loving God to ask again for God's mercy, grace, and forgiveness.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

P: God of mercy,

C: we place our trust in tangible things—things we can see and touch—and question whether you are really there.

Forgive us, God, when we fail to recognize that you are always nearby, patiently waiting for us to recognize your presence and your glory.

Help us when we lose our way and forgive us when we forget to whom we truly belong.

God, open our eyes to see you; open our ears to hear you; open our hearts to love you; and open our hands to serve you.

P: Hear the good news: When we cry to God, looking for favor in God's sight, God answers: "I have created you and claimed you as my own. My presence goes with you always." In the power of the Holy Spirit and in the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Let live in promised presence of God's mercy!

C: Amen.

L: Where people squabble
C: **Peace be among us.**
L: Where races fight
C: **Peace be among us.**
L: Where neighbors argue
C: **Peace be among us.**
L: Where nations disagree
C: **Peace be among us.**
L: Where Christ's disciples gather
C: **Peace be our way.**
L: The peace of the Lord be with you.

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

Refrain



Ky-ri - e e - lei - son, on our world and on our way.



Ky-ri - e e - lei - son, ev-'ry day.

For peace in the world, for the health of the church, for the unity of all;
For this holy house, for all who worship and praise,
Let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.

Refrain

That we may live out your impassioned response to the hungry and the poor;
That we may live out . . . truth and justice and grace,
Let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.

Refrain

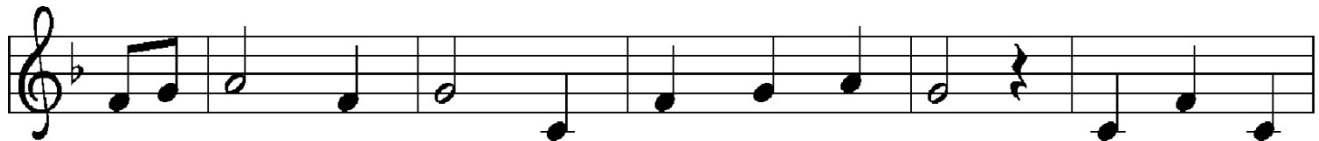
Prayer of the Day

L: Sovereign God, raise your throne in our hearts. Created by you, let us live in your image; created for you, let us act for your glory; redeemed by you, let us give you what is yours, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

The First Reading

Isaiah 45: 1-7

The Gospel Acclamation



Al-le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the



words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

The Holy Scripture

Matthew 22:15-22

The Message

Pastor Ward Misenheimer

Song of the Day

“Lift Every Voice”

Traven Harrington

The Iona Abbey Creed

L: Now let us confess our faith with the words of the Iona Creed:

**C: We believe in God above us,
maker and sustainer of all life,
of sun and moon, water and earth,
of the breadth and beauty of all humanity.**

**We believe in God beside us, Jesus Christ,
the Word made flesh, born of a woman, servant of the poor,
tortured and nailed to a tree.**

A man of sorrows, he died forsaken.

He descended into the earth to the place of death.

On the third day he rose from the tomb.

**He ascended into heaven to be everywhere present,
and His kingdom will come on earth.**

**We believe in God within us,
the Holy Spirit of Pentecostal fire,
Life-giving breath of the church,
Spirit of healing and forgiveness,
Source of resurrection and of eternal life. Amen**

Prayers of the Faithful

L: Lord, look on your world. We know the world is so fractured and filled with chaos and crises of our own making. Teach us to pray, and when we struggle to pray, may your Spirit intercede with the words we cannot find. Come, Holy Spirit!

A brief silence.

L: Lord of all the nations, give to the leaders of the world and of our country a vision of the future that is both imaginative and realistic, and respectful of human rights and dignity. Help us to bear witness in everyday life to the values of the gospel and to be involved in the work of freedom, integrity and justice. May we be those who build up a community that foreshadows our heavenly homeland. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

L: Lord of all compassion, you call us to hold the needs of our sisters and brothers as dear to us as our own needs. We pray for all of our sisters and brothers who seek comfort, healing, refuge, rest, peace, wholeness, community, acceptance, and unconditional love.

We especially pray for

- Lemont Bell
- Jamie Bruckmann
- Freda Christ
- Chris Cochran
- Marie Cochran
- Paul Coleman
- Inez Easley
- William Ensley
- Emma Fettig
- Eileen Folkerth
- Dwight Hartsell
- Dick Kuklantz
- Waylon Kuklantz
- Phyllis Lester
- Ray Matthews
- Hilda Mertz
- Justin Mertz
- Rick Messina
- Joan Moeller
- Clyde Mullis
- Tyler Oddman
- Nadine Osborne
- Dot Park
- Will Rhynes
- Calvin Roberson
- Shannon Roberson
- Hope Brown Russell & family
- Richard Schulz
- Mark Steele
- Mary Faith Strickland
- Jake Thrower
- Bill Toney
- Eva Toney
- David Townsend
- Herbert Watson
- Tammy Whaley
- Beverly Williams
- Lewis Williams
- Lisa Williams

L: We now pray aloud or in the silence of our hearts for those we wish to name (*give time for community to pray*).

L: We remember and celebrate the lives of those who have died, especially . . .

Hal Merriott, former Advent member

Myra Steele, sister-in-law of Jennifer Frisina

Michael Mason, nephew of Brenda Reid

Betty Murphy, aunt of Mona Ingolia

David Grace, uncle of Jennie Henderson

Tyrone Brunson, brother of Chris Jackson

. . . By your Holy Spirit, comfort their families, and all who grieve, give peace to those who mourn, strengthen all through the promise of eternal life in Christ Jesus.

L: We pray for all communities and all people who have been impacted by the devastating wildfires. We pray for all the communities impacted by hurricanes this fall. Strengthen and protect all firefighters, first responders, and relief workers.

L: Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

L: Lord of all healing and care, we pray for all healthcare professionals and relief workers, especially those who find themselves on the frontlines to bring healing, comfort and care to all impacted by the coronavirus. Strengthen, encourage, and empower us to be people of peace in the midst of anxiety, impatience, worry, dread, and a hunger for life to be normal again. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

L: Lord, take the time and gifts you have entrusted to us, and teach us how to use them to give others the abundant life of Jesus – so that your people may rejoice in the new life you give, for you are the life-giver and we are your servants.

C: Amen.

The Lord's Prayer (sung)

C: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil, for the kingdom, the pow'r and the glory are yours, now and forever.

SENDING GOD'S PEOPLE

Benediction

L: May you never feel alone in the struggle for justice and peace. May you know the support of family, friends, and people who feel as passionately about the world as you do.

May you feel a part of the great cloud of witnesses, who through the ages, did God's work and prayed for the coming of the Kingdom.

May you never feel alone.

And if you do, may you carry in your heart the words of Jesus, who told his friends: "I am with you always."

C: Amen.

Dismissal

L: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Sending Song

"Beautiful Savior"

Advent Ringers