



Scandalous Mercy in the Family Line
December 3, 2023
The First Sunday of Advent



MEDITATIONS

“Ever since the child was born, there have been people who have gotten drunk on him no less than a man can get drunk on hard liquor. Or if that metaphor seems crude, all the way down the twenty centuries since that child was born, there have been countless different kinds of people who in spirit, who have been grasped by him, caught up into his life, who have found themselves in deep and private ways healed and transformed by their relationships with him, so much so that they simply have no choice but to go on proclaiming what the writers of the Gospels first proclaimed: that he was indeed the long expected one, the Christ, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace – all these curious and forbidding terms that Christians keep on using in their attempt to express in language one thing and one thing only. That in this child, in the man he grew up to be, there is the power of God to bring light into our darkness, to make us whole, to give a new kind of life to anybody who turns toward him in faith, even to such as you and me.”

- Frederick Buechner – The Hungering Dark

“Come all ye faithful, and all ye who would like to be faithful if only you could, all ye who walk in darkness and hunger for light”

- Frederick Buechner

Readings for the coming week

These readings are provided as a personal, family, or group worship resource. Use them along with your worship guide as resources for readings, prayers and hymns. Set in the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), a schedule of daily Bible readings in accord with the Church year, these scripture readings are designed around a three-year cycle that will take you through the Old Testament once, the New Testament twice, and the Psalms frequently.

| | Psalm | Old Testament | New Testament |
|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Monday, December 4th | Psalm 79 | Micah 4:1-5 | Revelation 15:1-8 |
| Tuesday, the 5th | Psalm 79 | Micah 4:6-13 | Revelation 18:1-10 |
| Wednesday, the 6th | Psalm 79 | Micah 5:1-5a | Luke 21:34-38 |
| Thursday, the 7th | Psalm 85:1-2,8-13 | Hosea 6:1-6 | I Thessalonians 1:2-10 |
| Friday, the 8th | Psalm 85:1-2,8-13 | Jeremiah 1:4-10 | Acts 11:19-26 |
| Saturday, the 9th | Psalm 85:1-2,8-13 | Ezekiel 36:24-28 | Mark 11:27-33 |

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WELCOME

Second City Church is a community that exists to worship the Triune God and to celebrate, in word and deed, the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Harrisburg.

Thank you for joining us in worship today. We hope this guide will help you participate in our service. If you have any questions about our worship, faith, or how you can be a part of our mission to serve God and neighbor in Harrisburg, be sure to talk to our pastor. If you would like to indicate your presence to us, please fill out the form on the back page of this bulletin and place it in the offering plate or give it to a greeter.

For Parents:

Children of all ages are welcome to remain with us as we worship. We like the noise; it helps us remember we are alive. The following services are available for you and your children to get the most out of your time of worship:

Infant & Toddler Care

Infant and toddler care is available on the first floor of the east wing of our building. Ask one of our greeters if you need help locating this room. Nursery staff are well-trained, have undergone required background checks, and will maintain a safe environment for your child(ren). Ask the nursery workers for a copy of our policies for more information.

Children & Worship

Children & Worship is for children ages preschool through 2nd grade and meets in a worship space below the sanctuary during the sermon. This time is designed to prepare them for more fully participating in our liturgy when they are older. They are dismissed during the announcements and return during the offertory. New families are welcome to tour the space before or after a service if desired. This week's lesson is *Advent*.



LITURGY OF PREPARATION

Words of Welcome

Lighting the Advent Candle

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world;
the one who follows me will not walk in darkness but have the light of life."

We light these candles as a sign of the coming light of Christ.

I will lead the blind by a road they do not know, by the paths they have not known
I will guide them. I will turn the darkness before them into light,
the rough places into level ground.

These are the things I will do and I will not forsake them.

Isaiah 42:16

Come, Lord Jesus, our light and our salvation.

Let us walk in the light of the Lord.

Call to Worship

In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for
our God.

Isaiah 40:3

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
and in his Word I hope.

My soul waits for the Lord
more than those who watch for the morning.

There is no darkness with you, O Lord.

O Israel, hope in the Lord!

For with the Lord there is steadfast love,
and with him is plenteous redemption.

There is no darkness with you, O Lord.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

There is no darkness with you, O Lord.

based on Psalm 130:5-7

Surely the Lord is coming soon.

Amen. Come Lord Jesus!

Revelation 22:20

Gathering Hymn - *Come Light Our hearts*

For you, O Lord, our souls in stillness wait
For you, O Lord, our souls in stillness wait
Truly our hope is in You
Truly our hope is in You

O Lord of life, our only hope
Your radiance shines
On all who look to You in the dark
Emmanuel come, come light our hearts

For you, O Lord, our souls in stillness wait
For you, O Lord, our souls in stillness wait
Truly our hope is in You
Truly our hope is in You

O Joy above all other loves
In you we find more than enough
We come as we are, O heal and restore
Come light our hearts

O Joy above all other loves
In you we find more than enough
We come as we are, O heal and restore
Come light our hearts

For you, O Lord, our souls in stillness wait
For you, O Lord, our souls in stillness wait
Truly our hope is in You
Truly our hope is in You
Truly our hope is in You

Confession Hymn -

○ holy child of Tamar, descend to us we pray.
Cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.
○ holy child of Tamar, descend to us we pray.
Cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.

Confession of Sin

Let us confess our sins before God and one another.

God of salvation, in Christ you have done great things— our hearts are filled with joy. By your power you lifted us out of the wasteland of sin and brought us with joy and laughter into your kingdom. Salvation is your gift to us. But we confess that often we try to replace your gift with our own efforts.

**We try to complete what is already perfect;
we try to add to what is already full;
we try to earn what we already have.**

Forgive us our sins. Help us to rest on your grace.

Help us to live grateful lives in return.

For Jesus' sake alone, Amen.

○ holy child of Tamar, descend to us we pray.
Cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.
○ holy child of Tamar, descend to us we pray.
Cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.

Words of Forgiveness & Peace

In the tender mercy of our God,
the dayspring from on high shall break upon us,
to give light to those who dwell in darkness
and in the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

- *Luke 1:78-79*

People of God: Jesus Christ, our Lord, whose coming we announce in this season, is our peace. In Christ, we are made right with God.

Thanks be to God!

Passing of the Peace

[Invitation for congregation to share a sign of peace with one another]

Hymns of Praise and Adoration

O Come, Messiah Come

O come! O come Messiah!
O come! Our Alleluia!
O sing! O sing Hosanna!
O come! Messiah come!

O come! O come Messiah!
O come! Our Alleluia!
O sing! O sing Hosanna!
O come! Messiah come!

Comfort and joy
Alpha, Omega He
Sorrow and toil
No longer rulers be

O come! O come Messiah!
O come! Our Alleluia!
O sing! O sing Hosanna!
O come! Messiah come!

Comfort and joy
Alpha, Omega He
Sorrow and toil
No longer rulers be

O come! O come Messiah!
O come! Our Alleluia!
O sing! O sing Hosanna!
O come! Messiah come!
O come! Messiah come!
O come! Messiah come!

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

Come, thou long expected Jesus
Born to set thy people free
From our fears and sins release us
Let us find our rest in Thee

Israel's strength and consolation
Hope of all the earth thou art
Dear desire of every nation
Joy of every longing heart

Born Thy people to deliver
Born a child and yet a King
Born to reign in us forever
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring

By Thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone
By Thine all sufficient merit
Raise us to Thy glorious throne

We are waiting
We are waiting
We are waiting for You
[6x]

By Thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone
By Thine all sufficient merit
Raise us to Thy glorious throne

We are waiting
We are waiting
We are waiting for You
[3x]



LITURGY OF THE WORD

Living Our Faith

Psalm Reading

Psalm 145:8-21

- ⁸ The Lord is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
- ⁹ The Lord is good to all,
and his mercy is over all that he has made.
- ¹⁰ All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord,
and all your saints shall bless you!
- ¹¹ They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom
and tell of your power,
¹² to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds,
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.
- ¹³ Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
and your dominion endures throughout all generations.
[The Lord is faithful in all his words
and kind in all his works.]
- ¹⁴ The Lord upholds all who are falling
and raises up all who are bowed down.
- ¹⁵ The eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their food in due season.
- ¹⁶ You open your hand;
you satisfy the desire of every living thing.
- ¹⁷ The Lord is righteous in all his ways
and kind in all his works.
- ¹⁸ The Lord is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth.
- ¹⁹ He fulfills the desire of those who fear him;
he also hears their cry and saves them.
- ²⁰ The Lord preserves all who love him,
but all the wicked he will destroy.
- ²¹ My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord,
and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever.

Gloria Patri

***Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen. Amen.***

Old Testament Reading

Genesis 38

Read during the sermon

The Word of the Lord:
Thanks be to God.

New Testament Reading

Ephesians 2:4-7

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

The Word of the Lord:
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew:

Glory to you, O Lord!

Matthew 1:1-6

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

² Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, ³ and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, ⁴ and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, ⁵ and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, ⁶ and Jesse the father of David the king.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ!

Sermon

Rev. Peter Rowan - Scandalous Mercy in the Family Line

Creed

Let us affirm the faith of the Church:

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe 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;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended to heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

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

The Apostles' Creed

Offering of Prayers of the People

○ Wisdom, coming forth from the mouth of the Most High, pervading and permeating all creation, you order all things with strength and gentleness: Come now and teach us the way to salvation.

Come, Lord Jesus.

○ Adonai, ruler of the house of Israel, you appeared in the burning bush to Moses and gave him the law on Sinai: Come with outstretched arm to save us.

Come, Lord Jesus.

○ Root of Jesse, rising as a sign for all the peoples, before you earthly rulers will keep silent and nations give you honor: Come quickly to deliver us.

Come, Lord Jesus.

O Key of David, scepter over the house of Israel, you open and no one can close, you close and no one can open: Come to set free the prisoners who live in darkness and the shadow of death.

Come, Lord Jesus.

O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light, sun of justice: Come, shine on those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death.

Come, Lord Jesus.

O Ruler of the nations, monarch for whom the people long, you are the cornerstone uniting all humanity: Come, save us all, whom you formed out of clay.

Come, Lord Jesus.

O Immanuel, our sovereign and lawgiver, desire of the nations and Savior of all: Come and save us, O Lord our God.

Come, Lord Jesus.

God of grace, ever faithful to your promises, the earth rejoices in hope of our Savior's coming and looks forward with longing, to his return at the end of time. Prepare our hearts to receive him when he comes, for he is Lord forever and ever. **Amen.**

Offering of Gifts

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16

Friends and members of Second City Church support the extension of God's Kingdom with gifts of bread, wine, talents and resources. Guests are not expected to contribute. Tithes and offerings may be placed in the offering plates, boxes on the wall as you leave, or can be made electronically. Instructions for setting up online giving are available at the donation boxes.



Doxology

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise him all creatures here below
Praise him above ye heavenly host
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost
Amen.*



LITURGY OF THE TABLE

The Prayer of Great Thanksgiving

Invitation

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right for us to give thanks and praise.

Praise God for His Mighty Acts

Holy are you, God of Jesse, for the branch of our salvation is rooted in you. To Abraham you promised to raise up a people bound to you in love, and though the household of David you brought life great than our imagining in a child of grace, Jesus our Lord. Though we deny your love for ourselves and seek to limit the reach of your mercy to others, you beckon us to repentance, open our eyes to new life, and embrace us to join your family of faith. In your Son's death we see the depth of our sin; yet in his resurrection we see the extent of your grace. You bless us beyond reckoning, for you welcome us into the company of prophets and apostles and saints on earth and in heaven, with whom forever we sing your praise.

Sanctus

Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Praise for Christ's Sacrifice



Calling on the Holy Spirit and Lord's Prayer

We pray in the name of Jesus, who taught us:

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 debts as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,

for ever and ever.

Amen.

Invitation to the Table

Christ our passover has been sacrificed for us.

Therefore, let us keep the feast!

Sharing Holy Communion

Second City Church welcomes all baptized Christians who have made a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ in a Christian church to join us in this sacrament. Non-communicants can come forward and ask for a blessing. If you need to receive communion in your seat, ask a fellow worshiper to let the communion servers know. If you are unable to receive wine, you will find a chalice containing non-alcoholic grape juice at the station the pastor is serving. The communion bread is gluten-free.

Closing Prayer

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

Benediction

Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Closing Hymn-Soon and Very Soon

Soon and very soon we are going to see the king
Soon and very soon we are going to see the king
Soon and very soon we are going to see the king
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, we are going to see the king

No more crying there, we are going to see the king
No more crying there we are going to see the king
No more crying there we are going to see the king
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, we are going to see the king

No more dying there we are going to see the king
No more dying there we are going to see the king
No more dying there we are going to see the king
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, we are going to see the king

Hallelujah, Hallelujah, we are going to see the king
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, we are going to see the king

Dismissal

As we await our coming Savior,
go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen



ATTRIBUTIONS

Come Light Our Hearts

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Advent Prose

RORATE CAELI, Based on Isaiah 45:8

O Come, Messiah Come

Words and Music by Isaac Wardell
Arrangement by Isaac Wardell, Mason
Neely and Bifrost Arts
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Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

Words by Charles Wesley (1744)
Music by Rowland H. Prichard (1811)

Sanctus

Gloria in Excelsis

Mary Consoles Eve

Words and Music by Katy Bowser, Kenny
Hutson, Sandra McCracken and Flo Paris
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Music and Velveteen Songs
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Soon And Very Soon

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ALTAR FLOWERS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Altar Flowers

The altar flowers on December 3, 2023 are sponsored in loving memory of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. C.A.White, by Nevin White.

Request for Help with Set Construction for Children's Play

The set for the children's play will be delivered to the church on December 16th at 11 am. Cindy Russo is requesting a few extra hands to help put the set together. Please call Cindy at 717-579-7750 if you can help.

Schedule of Practices for Children's Christmas Play December 17th

The children will perform a Christmas play on Sunday, December 17th at 6 pm. Please plan to attend and support our kids! Here are the details for practices from now until showtime:

Sunday, December 3rd: 9:00 - 9:45 am and 11:45 am - 12:15 pm

Sunday, December 10th: 9:00 - 9:45 (costume distribution) and
11:45 am - 12:15 pm (practice)

Sunday, December 17th: 11:45 am - 1 pm. Pizza will be served!

The evening of Sunday, December 17th, children should arrive at church in costume at 5:15 pm. Contact Cindy Russo with any questions at 717-579-7750.

Cookie Reception and Christmas Caroling After Children's Play

Plan to stick around after the play for a Christmas cookie reception! After the reception, we will enjoy Christmas caroling around the neighborhood. The expected time frame for Christmas caroling is from 7 to 8 pm.

Christmas Eve Worship Services

This year Christmas Eve is also the last Sunday in Advent. We will have our normal Lord's Day worship service at 10 am and then our Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols service at 6 pm.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Christmas Gifts for Residents of Paxton Ministries

In prior years our church has received a list of requested gift items for the residents of Paxton Ministries. If you'd like to donate something this Christmas season, please see today's bulletin insert for requested gift items. Gifts can be donated at the church by December 10--place them in the designated box outside the Social Hall. They can also be dropped off at the Paxton Street Home at 2001 Paxton Street by December 11. Paxton Ministries sincerely thanks our church for supporting its residents!

Christmas Poinsettias

If you'd like to honor a loved one by ordering Christmas poinsettias, please complete the order form in today's bulletin and return it to the church office.



PRAYER REQUESTS

Prayer Requests

Please continue to pray for the following people:

Mary Watts

Gordon & Elaine Zubrod

Christine Zubrod Perrin

Chuck & Michelle Bagley

Dottie Roden

Clair Webster

Barb Koller

Joe Sawanowich



Social Media

Please consider liking, following and subscribing to our social media! Also, when you see, read or watch something you like, share it with your friends. It's a helpful way to let others know we are here!

Facebook



Instagram



YouTube



Your contact information

If you are our guest and would like to indicate your presence with us, or if you'd like to make us aware of a change in your contact information, fill out this form and place it in the offering plate.

- ☐ Visitor
- ☐ Regular Attendee
- ☐ Member

Name(s):

Address (please include city and zip):

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Prayer
Requests: _____

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