

Advent 1: November 29th, 2020 9am
The Bright Star of Bethlehem
“Star of Creation”

Gather

Call to Worship – Kathy Amon assistant

P. In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. **C. Amen.**

A. Jesus, Bright Star of Bethlehem, light of creation,
C. Shine now and enlighten the whole world.

A. Jesus, Bright Star of Bethlehem, light of hope,
C. shine now and heal hopeless hearts!

A. Jesus, Bright star of Bethlehem, light of unity,
C. Shine now and gather us all as one!

A. Jesus, Bright Star of Bethlehem, light of joy,
C. Shine now and bring your gladness!

P. Shine now, Bright Star of Bethlehem, and bring your light and your life to us!
C. Amen.

Opening Song "A Hallelujah Christmas" v. 1

*I've heard about this baby boy
Who's come to earth to bring us joy
And I just want to sing this song to you
It goes like this, the fourth, the fifth
The minor fall, the major lift
With every breath I'm singing Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah*

Confession and Forgiveness

P. Advent Lord,

C. Forgive us for our sinfulness and the spiritual blindness that prevents us from appreciating the wonder of the world you have made. Forgive us for taking without giving and for reaping without sowing. Shine your light upon us, O Lord, and open our eyes to see, our lips to praise and our hands to share. Guide us along the pathways of life on this earth until you bring forth a new heaven and a new earth when you Son comes again in glory. Amen.

P. Hear the Good News: Jesus Christ is the light of the world. He is the Bright star of Bethlehem. When he was born to save us he shattered the darkness of our sin, bringing forgiveness, love and grace. In him, you are a new creation.

C. Amen. Alleluia!

Song of Praise tune “We three kings”

*Come, we, now to worship the Lord,
Heavenly King by all adored,
Humble offspring of a virgin,
Star of the ancient skies.
O star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect light.*

The lighting of the advent wreath (Newtons)

Family: Today we light the first candle of our Advent wreath, We begin this season of anticipation and expectation as we remember God’s creative power and light.

(light candle)

Family: At the dawn of creation, God said, “Let there be light!”

C. Advent Lord, shine your light on us! Alleluia!

Prayer of Day

A. Jesus, Bright Star of Bethlehem, as we gather in worship this day, give us joy in knowing that you created all that exists and, by the light of your grace, you have recreated us and made us your own. Lead us to rejoice in your creative work all of our days. **C. Amen.**

Word

Readings (Lou Meyer)

Psalm 19: 1-6

God’s glory is on tour in the skies, God-craft on exhibit across the horizon. Madame Day holds classes every morning, Professor Night lectures each evening. Their words aren’t heard, their voices aren’t recorded, but their silence fills the earth: unspoken truth is spoken everywhere. God makes a huge dome for the sun—a superdome! The morning sun’s a new husband leaping from his honeymoon bed, the daybreaking sun an athlete racing to the tape. That’s how God’s Word vaults across the skies from sunrise to sunset, melting ice, scorching deserts, warming hearts to faith.

Colossians 1:15-20

We look at this Son and see the God who cannot be seen. We look at this Son and see God’s original purpose in everything created. For everything, absolutely everything, above and below, visible and invisible, rank after rank after rank of angels—*everything* got started in him and finds its purpose in him. He was there before any of it came into existence and holds it all together right up to this moment. And when it comes to the church, he organizes and holds it together, like a head does a body.

He was supreme in the beginning and—leading the resurrection parade—he is supreme in the end. From beginning to end he's there, towering far above everything, everyone. So spacious is he, so roomy, that everything of God finds its proper place in him without crowding. Not only that, but all the broken and dislocated pieces of the universe—people and things, animals and atoms—get properly fixed and fit together in vibrant harmonies, all because of his death, his blood that poured down from the cross.

Gospel Acclamation: Song: “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

O Little Town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!

Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars go by.

Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light.

The hopes and fears of all the years are meet in thee tonight.

John 1:1-14

The Word was first, the Word present to God, God present to the Word. The Word was God, in readiness for God from day one. Everything was created through him; nothing—not one thing!— came into being without him. What came into existence was Life, and the Life was Light to live by. The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness; the darkness couldn't put it out.

There once was a man, his name John, sent by God to point out the way to the Life-Light. He came to show everyone where to look, who to believe in. John was not himself the Light; he was there to show the way to the Light.

The Life-Light was the real thing: Every person entering Life he brings into Light. He was in the world, the world was there through him, and yet the world didn't even notice. He came to his own people, but they didn't want him. But whoever did want him, who believed he was who he claimed and would do what he said, He made to be their true selves, their child-of-God selves. These are the God-begotten, not blood-begotten, not flesh-begotten, not sex-begotten.

The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, generous inside and out, true from start to finish.

Children's Message - Sue Peters

Hello, boys and girls! I'm happy to see you. It will be Christmas—Jesus' birthday-soon! To get ready for Jesus' birthday, we come to church to talk about Him and His Father, God. Each week of Advent, we will have an action of the day that will teach us something about Jesus and God the Father.

Our first action of the day is Creation Hands (cup your hands back and forth like you are shaping a snowball. Let's pretend we have playdough in our hands, we can roll it, squish and squeeze it, build it up, and flatten it. What do you like to create out of playdough?

You know who else likes to create things? God does! He loves to make things. What things has God made? Yes! He made the Earth, mountains, sky, the Sun and stars, oceans, fish and all the animals. His favorite thing to make is people! God made you and He made me. Our Big God created everything, but he cares about little you and little me too. He even knows the number of hairs on top of my head.

Everything God has made points to His Son, Jesus. God's creation glorifies Jesus. Jesus is the Star of God's creation! Everything God made listens to Jesus, even the wind and the waves listen to Him. When Jesus comes back to Earth, He will be the king of all God's creation

Take some time this week to go on a walk to interact with God's creation. Mom and Dad talk about how creation tells us about Jesus. Do the action of the week, creation hands to remind us that everything God has made points us to Jesus

Let's pray: Dear Father God, thank you for creating the world. Thank you for creating me too. Most of all, thank you for sending Your Star of Creation, Jesus. I love you. Amen.

Drama - 9am Julia Sheets

In these monologues the woman speaks to her departed grandma as if she were present right there in the room with her. The woman enters with the top portion of the artificial tree in her hands. She stops and surveys the scene and the tree. She looks at the base of the artificial tree and wonders...

Scene: living room. An artificial Christmas tree is partially assembled.

"I can't believe that I am using an artificial tree. My Grandma would be absolutely appalled. She would have never stood for such a thing." (She fights with the top portion of the tree...trying to get it into place but fails. And then she pauses, a bit choked up...)

"Grandma...you always had the most beautiful Christmas trees! I remember how we used to go with Grandpa and cut down a tree each year. It was always the Sunday afternoon after Thanksgiving. We'd drive to that small forest out west of town. It was owned by Grandpa's friend. We would drive in the pickup back into the woods. We would then trudge through the snow on foot...looking for just the right tree. What an adventure! It was always so quiet, so beautiful, so serene." (pauses) "And Grandpa, he was picky with a capital P. I'd point to trees. You would point to trees. He would take a quick look and say..." Hah not that one!" and we would keep on looking. Then, when he finally found the one, he would cut it down with his old saw. We'd pile it into the pickup and head back to town. You would make us up some hot chocolate to get ourselves warm, while Grandpa wrestled with the tree and got it into a stand.

Once it was all set up, Grandpa would stand back and say..." Now isn't that a pretty piece of God's creation right here in our living room". (Woman smiles and giggles)

“But do you remember that one year, Grandma? The tree Grandpa picked out wasn’t so great. Lopsided, that’s what it was. In fact, it was SOOO lopsided, he finally had to take some wire and attach it to the tree trunk and then nail the wire to the wall just to hold it up. (giggles)

But even though that tree was not so great he still looked at it and said...” now isn’t that a pretty piece of God’s creation right here in our living room.” Granma...I guess we are all a bit lopsided. (she looks at the tree and puts the top portion on)

Maybe there is a lesson somewhere in all of that? (stands back and looks at the tree and then exits.)

Sermon

Rev. A.N. Mary Adelsberger

Song tune “What Christ is this” verses no chorus

*What star is this, which beam so bright,
More lovely than the noonday light?
It shines to herald forth the King,
Glad tidings of our God to bring.*

*God spoke and said, “Let there be light.”
And broke the darkness of the night.
And all creation came to be
By his own power and majesty.*

*O Lord, with each returning day
Your guiding light shows us the way.
Through gloom and darkness, you are there,
Your radiance beaming everywhere!*

Response

Prayers of People

A. Thank you, dear Lord, for creating the earth, sun, moon and all the stars in the beginning, and continuing to bless the earth with plants, trees, animals, mountains, valleys and rivers for us to enjoy. O star of Creation, **C. Bring your design to light**

A. Thank you, dear Lord, for sending your Son to save creation when it was mired in the darkness of sin and death. O star of Creation, **C. Bring your design to light**

A, Holy God, rouse us to deep praise as we gather for worship. Enliven our worship with sincere and heartfelt song. Sustain the work of all church musicians and artists who lead us in praise and prayer. Inspire those in our Community of Faith: Bishop Beaudoin and staff, Bishop Eaton and staff, Memorial Church Staff, Student Katie Leslie, Intern Rebecca West-Estell, Monroe Corridor Parish, Hope Learning Academy teachers and families and all teachers and students in all schools. O star of Creation, **C. Bring your design to light**

A. Help us now, dear Lord, to work to preserve your creation by caring for plants, trees, mountains, rivers, animals and people with the same respect you gave them when you created them. O star of Creation, **C. Bring your design to light**

A: Spirit of comfort, Comfort our **Homebound:** Bob Rank, Kathy Schoembs, Sam Schlegel, Phyllis Ballas, Joanne Hummel, Doris Buchholz (hospice care), Pat Reiber. Soothe those who are in need of healing: **Ken Schwieder**, Phylis Klimas, John Vance in hospice, Afaf Barakat, Brenda Facey, Cindy Bunch, Bob & Karen Steinert, Claudia Sauer, Katie Maly, Sue Herr, Sheila MacKay Davidson, Marcene Jackson, Leslie Bean, Don Gurwell, Diane Swartz, Dave Gilbert, Char Bachmayer, Diane Denhof, Fred Schaefer, Michael Curtis, Laurie Collins, all suffering with Covid 19; O star of Creation, **C. Bring your design to light**

A. Guard the lives of military personnel especially Ryan Woods, Henry Kozak, Dustin Pawloski, and Reid Leslie; O star of Creation. **C. Bring your design to light**

A: Holy and Immortal One, we pray in thanksgiving for the lives of all who have died. Comfort the family of Walt Carlson, Marie Wenzlick (Teresa Loga's aunt), Mary Elwer (Teresa Loga's great aunt), Darlene Calcamuggio, Barbara Keller, David Smith, Braylen Noble, Eijah Northcutt. Remind us of the frailty and shortness of our own lives and inspire us to use them for the building up of your kingdom. O star of Creation, **C. Bring your design to light**

A. Remind us this Advent, as well, dear Lord, that you will come again on the Last Day to bring us to a new heaven and a new earth, which have created for us and has been made available to us only through your birth, life, death and resurrection. **C. Amen.**

Meal

The Great Thanksgiving & Words of Institution

P. The Lord be with you. **C. And also with you.**

P. Lift up your hearts. **C. We lift them to the Lord.**

P. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **C. It is right to give our thanks and praise**

Lord's Prayer

C: 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, forever and ever. Amen.

Post Communion Prayer

P: God for whom we wait, you come to us in the broken bread and the cup we share. Make us ready always to welcome Christ into our hearts, and send us forth to be your people in the world, announcing your coming among us in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Sent

Announcements

Benediction

P. Go now to shine like stars in the sky, bringing the light of Christ to the world. And the blessing of almighty God, the Father, the + Son and the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Song tune: "A Hallelujah Christmas" v. 2

A couple came to Bethlehem

Expecting child, they searched the inn

To find a place for You were coming soon

There was no room for them to stay

So in a manger filled with hay

God's only Son was born, oh Hallelujah

Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah

Dismissal

A. Go in the Hope of our Shining Jesus. **C. Thanks be to God.**