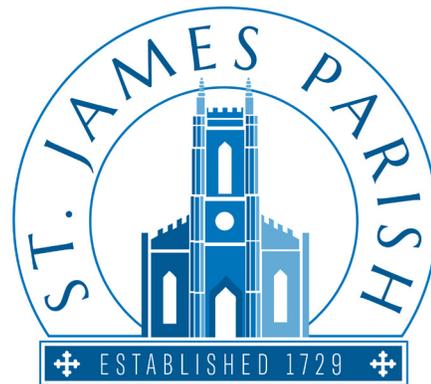


# FAITH AT FIVE

SUNDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2020

## THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT



*Our liturgy this evening draws from the Celtic Christian tradition of Iona and Northumbria in Scotland. There are many standard elements of Christian theology that are, of course, shared in the Celtic tradition - such as the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ. The distinctiveness of the Celtic theology is rooted in its focus on the presence of the divine in the physical world. God is experienced in all of creation and therefore is all of nature. If God is in all things, then the natural world is to be celebrated and honored as holy. This extends to every aspect of life, including human life as well. The everyday world is infused with a spiritual presence - even in the most mundane activities. If creation is holy, humankind is a part of creation and therefore also holy and sacred. This evening's celebration also highlights another Celtic concept - a strong sense of community, because all people together are valued and loved. In this and every age, people are called to offer support to one another and all people, likewise, depend on one another. We thank God for binding us together as a human family within all of creation. Wherever you are in your life and in your journey in faith, we welcome you to this Worship Experience and pray God's Blessing over this time of worship and over your life.*

**Gathering Music** *(Sung by the music team; the congregation is invited to listen)*

Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here.  
Come, bow before him now, with reverence and fear.  
In him no sin is found, we stand on holy ground.  
Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here.

Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around;  
he burns with holy fire, with splendor he is crowned.  
How awesome is the sight, our radiant King of Light!  
Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around.

Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place;  
he comes to cleanse and heal, to minister his grace.  
No work too hard for him, in faith receive from him.  
Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place.

### Opening Sentences

In the beginning, when it was dark, God said, "Let there be light."

And there was light.

*(The sign of light - a lighted candle - is placed on a central table)*

In the beginning, when it was quiet, The Word was with God.

And the Word was God.

*(The sign of the Word - an open Bible - is placed on the table.)*

When the time was right, God sent His Son.

He came among us and was one of us.

*(The Sign of the Son - a cross - is placed on the table.)*

*Leader* The God of Love is with us.  
*People* **The Spirit of love is in us.**  
*Leader* Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
*People* **And blessed be God's kingdom, now and forever. Amen**  
*Leader* Let us pray.

Almighty and eternal God, to you our hearts are open and our inmost desires are known. We cannot hide our most intimate secrets from you. We ask you to be present at all times in our thoughts and our hearts, and to purify them, so that we may love you with the love of the Holy Spirit and praise your name with humility and joy; Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **The Lighting of the Advent Candle**

Today we light the first candle of the Advent wreath. Each candle has a meaning. This first candle is Hope. Let us pray: Eternal God, as we await the coming of our savior, give us the courage to hope. Give us the grace to see your plans of redemption for our lives, for this community, and for the world. Through Jesus Christ, the source of our redemption and hope. **Amen.**

**Hymn of Praise:** (*Sung by the music team; the congregation is invited to listen*)

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.  
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!*

O come, thou Wisdom from on high, who orderest all things mightily;  
to us the path of knowledge show, and teach us in her ways to go.  
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!*

*Leader* The Lord be with you.  
*People* **And also with you.**  
*Leader* Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, you have given us your servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of your divine Majesty to worship the Unity: Keep us steadfast in this faith and worship, bring us at last to see you in your one and eternal glory, O Father; who with the Son and the Holy Spirit live and reign, one God, forever and ever. **Amen.**

### **The Word of God: A Reading from Isaiah (64:1–9)**

Oh, that you would burst forth from the skies and come down! How the mountains would quake in your presence! The consuming fire of your glory would burn down the forests and boil the oceans dry. The nations would tremble before you; then your enemies would learn the reason for your fame! So it was before when you came down, for you did awesome things beyond our highest expectations, and how the mountains quaked! For since the world began no one has seen or heard of such a God as ours, who works for those who wait for him! You welcome those who cheerfully do good, who follow godly ways. But we are not godly; we are constant sinners and have been all our lives. Therefore your wrath is heavy on us. How can such as we be saved? We are all infected and impure with sin. When we put on our prized robes of righteousness, we find they are but filthy rags. Like autumn leaves we fade, wither, and fall. And our sins, like the wind, sweep us away. Yet no one calls upon your name or pleads with you for mercy. Therefore, you have turned away from us and turned us over to our sins. And yet, O Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay and you are the Potter. We are all formed by your hand. Oh, be not so angry with us, Lord, nor forever remember our sins. Oh, look and see that we are all your people.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.  
*People* **Thanks be to God.**

## Psalm 80: 1–19

Shepherd of Israel, you lead the descendants of Joseph, and you sit on your throne above the winged creatures. Listen to our prayers and let your light shine for the tribes of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh. Save us by your power. Our God, make us strong again. Smile on us and save us. Lord God All-Powerful, how much longer will the prayers of your people make you angry? You gave us tears for food, and you made us drink them by the bowlful. Because of you, our enemies who live nearby laugh and joke about us. But if you smile on us, we will be saved. We were like a grapevine you brought out of Egypt. You chased other nations away and planted us here. Then you cleared the ground, and we put our roots deep, spreading over the land. Shade from this vine covered the mountains. Its branches climbed the mighty cedars and stretched to the sea; its new growth reached to the river. Our Lord, why have you torn down the wall from around the vineyard? You let everyone who walks by pick the grapes. Now the vine is gobbled down by pigs from the forest and other wild animals. God All-Powerful, please do something! Look down from heaven and see what's happening to this vine. With your own hands you planted its roots, and you raised it as your very own. Enemies chopped the vine down and set it on fire. Now show your anger and destroy them. But help the one who sits at your right side, the one you raised to be your own. Then we will never turn away. Put new life into us, and we will worship you. Lord God All-Powerful, make us strong again! Smile on us and save us.

## A Reading from 1 Corinthians (1:3–9)

May all the gifts and benefits that come from God our Father, and the Master, Jesus Christ, be yours. Every time I think of you—and I think of you often!—I thank God for your lives of free and open access to God, given by Jesus. There's no end to what has happened in you—it's beyond speech, beyond knowledge. The evidence of Christ has been clearly verified in your lives. Just think—you don't need a thing, you've got it all! All God's gifts are right in front of you as you wait expectantly for our Master Jesus to arrive on the scene for the Finale. And not only that, but God himself is right alongside to keep you steady and on track until things are all wrapped up by Jesus. God, who got you started in this spiritual adventure, shares with us the life of his Son and our Master Jesus. He will never give up on you. Never forget that.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

*People*           **Thanks be to God.**

**Sequence Hymn:** “Come, thou long expected Jesus” (*Sts. 1–2; Sung by the music team*)

*Hyfrydol*

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.

## The Holy Gospel:

*Priest*           The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark (13:24–37)

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

Following those hard times, Sun will fade out, moon cloud over, Stars fall out of the sky, cosmic powers tremble. “And then they'll see the Son of Man enter in grand style, his Arrival filling the sky—no one will miss it! He'll dispatch the angels; they will pull in the chosen from the four winds, from pole to pole. “Take a lesson from the fig tree. From the moment you notice its buds form, the merest hint of green, you know summer's just around the corner. And so it is with you. When you see all these things, you know he is at the door. Don't take this lightly. I'm not just saying this for some future generation, but for this one, too—these things will happen. Sky and earth will wear out; my words won't wear out. “But the exact day and hour? No one knows that, not even heaven's angels, not even the Son. Only the Father. So keep a sharp lookout, for you don't know

*(Continued overleaf.)*

the timetable. It's like a man who takes a trip, leaving home and putting his servants in charge, each assigned a task, and commanding the gatekeeper to stand watch. So, stay at your post, watching. You have no idea when the homeowner is returning, whether evening, midnight, cockcrow, or morning. You don't want him showing up unannounced, with you asleep on the job. I say it to you, and I'm saying it to all: Stay at your post. Keep watch."

*Priest*            The Gospel of the Lord.  
*People*            **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

**Sequence Hymn:** *"Come, thou long expected Jesus (Sts. 2–3; Sung by the music team)*

*Hyfrydol*

Born thy people to deliver, born a child, and yet a king,  
born to reign in us for ever, 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.

### Message

#### Affirmation of Faith

**You, O God, are supreme and holy.  
You create our world and give us life.  
Your purpose overarches everything we do.  
You have always been with us.  
You are God.**

**You, O God, are infinitely generous,  
good beyond all measure.  
You came to us before we came to you.  
You have revealed and proved  
your love for us in Jesus Christ,  
who lived and died and rose again.  
You are with us now.  
You are God.**

**You, O God, are Holy Spirit.  
You empower us to be your gospel in the world.  
You reconcile and heal; you overcome death.  
You are our God. We worship you.**

#### Prayers of the People

God of many names, God beyond all names; the beginning and the end of every story, the meaning of every life; infinite Mystery both hidden and revealed:

**Hear us when we pray to you.**

Blessed are You who join us together in the communion of Christ's Body. Renew and energize your holy Church, at St. James and throughout the world, that we may be a resurrection people, manifesting your steadfast love in our common life of praise and service.

**Hear us when we pray to you.**

O perfect Wisdom, direct and rule the hearts of the leaders and shapers of society, raise up prophets of justice and peace, and empower your people for the holy vocation of repairing the world. May we entrust all our labors to the work of Providence.

**Hear us when we pray to you.**

O Deliverer, you unlock every door and make a way where there is no way. Set free all who are afflicted or distressed in body, mind or spirit. Resurrect their hope, grant them peace and refreshment, and restore their joy.

**Hear us when we pray to you.**

O compassionate One, hold us in your mercy: heal the sick, mend the broken, protect the vulnerable, shelter the refugee, strengthen the weary, rescue the lost, and give courage to all who struggle.

**Hear us when we pray to you.**

O Morning Star, bright splendor of the light eternal, illumining all things with your radiance: Come, enlighten all who sit in darkness and those who dwell in the shadow of violence and death. Grant us your peace, and teach us to live in the dawn of your unfailing promise.

**Hear us when we pray to you.**

O Lover of souls, when we wander far away, lead us back to You; when we refuse your embrace, do not give up on us; when we forget You, do not forget us.

**Hear us when we pray to you.**

O Desire of every heart, the answer to every longing: You are the strong force that draws us into the mystery of love divine. Forgive us those things which distract and delay us, and lead us ever deeper into the Way, the Truth and the Life.

**Hear us when we pray to you.**

God who has come, God who does come, God who is yet to come: Make us an Advent people, ready and alert to welcome and receive You in the stranger's face, the loving act, the moment of grace, the presence of healing, the birth of possibility, the gift of wonder. Let every heart prepare You room.

**Hear us when we pray to you.**

Loving people of God who are gathered here tonight, please add to these prayers. What else are you holding in your heart and for whom would you like to pray?

*(There will be time and space for you to share these prayers out loud or in the silence of your heart.)*

### Confession of Sin

Happy are those whose sins are forgiven, whose wrongs are pardoned.  
I will confess my sins to the Lord, I will not conceal my wrongdoings.

*Silence*

God forgives and heals us.

**We need your healing, merciful God:**

**give us true repentance.**

**Some sins are plain to us;**

**some escape us,**

**some we cannot face.**

**Forgive us;**

**set us free to hear your word to us;**

**set us free to serve you.**

God forgives you.

Forgive others;  
forgive yourself.

*Silence*

Through Christ, God has put away your sin:  
approach your God in peace.

**The Peace**

The peace of the Lord be always with you.  
**And also with you.**

### THE HOLY EUCHARIST

Music at the Offertory: "All in All" (*Sung by the music team; the congregation is invited to listen*)

You are my strength when I am weak  
You are the treasure that I seek  
You are my all in all  
Seeking You as a precious jewel  
Lord, to give up I'd be a fool  
You are my all in all

*Jesus, Lamb of God  
Worthy is Your name  
Jesus, Lamb of God  
Worthy is Your name*

Taking my sin, my cross, my shame  
Rising up again I bless Your name  
You are my all in all  
When I fall down You pick me up  
When I am dry You fill my cup  
You are my all in all. *Refrain.*

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

All thanks and praise  
are yours at all times and in all places,  
our true and loving God;  
through Jesus Christ, your eternal Word,  
the Wisdom from on high by whom you  
created all things.  
You laid the foundations of the world  
and enclosed the sea when it burst out from the womb;  
You brought forth all creatures of the earth  
and gave breath to humankind.  
Wondrous are you, Holy One of Blessing,  
all you create is a sign of hope for our journey;  
And so as the morning stars sing your praises  
we join the heavenly beings and all creation  
as we shout with joy:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth  
are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is the one  
who comes in the  
name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

Glory and honor are yours, Creator of all,  
your Word has never been silent;  
you called a people to yourself,  
as a light to the nations,  
you delivered them from bondage  
and led them to a land of promise.  
Of your grace, you gave Jesus  
to be human, to share our life,  
to proclaim the coming of your holy reign  
and give himself for us, a fragrant offering.  
Through Jesus Christ our Redeemer,  
you have freed us from sin,  
brought us into your life,  
reconciled us to you,  
and restored us to the glory you intend for us.

We thank you that on the night before he  
died for us Jesus took bread,  
and when he had given thanks to you,  
he broke it, gave it to his friends and said:  
“Take, eat, this is my Body, broken for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.”  
After supper Jesus took the cup of wine,  
said the blessing, gave it to his friends and said:  
“Drink this, all of you:  
this cup is the new Covenant in my Blood,  
poured out for you and for all  
for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.”  
And so, remembering all that was done for us:  
the cross, the tomb, the resurrection and ascension,  
longing for Christ’s coming in glory,  
and presenting to you these gifts  
your earth has formed and human  
]hands have made,  
we acclaim you, O Christ:

**Dying, you destroyed our death.  
Rising, you restored our life.  
Christ Jesus, come in glory!**

Send your Holy Spirit upon us  
and upon these gifts of bread and wine  
that they may be to us  
the Body and Blood of your Christ.  
Grant that we, burning with your Spirit’s power,  
may be a people of hope, justice and love.

Giver of Life, draw us together in the Body of Christ,  
and in the fullness of time gather us  
with all your people  
into the joy of our true eternal home.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ,  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
we worship you our God and Creator  
in voices of unending praise.

Blessed are you now and for ever. **AMEN.**

**Lord's Prayer** *(Celebrant and People)*

**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 power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen.**

We break this bread  
to share in the Body of Christ.  
**We who are many are one body,  
for we all share in the one bread.**

**Music during Eucharist:** *(Sung by the music team; the congregation is invited to listen)*

All who hunger gather gladly; holy manna is our bread.  
Come from wilderness and wand'ring. Here in truth we will be fed.  
You that yearn for days of fullness, all around us is our food.  
Taste and see the grace eternal. Taste and see that God is good.

All who hunger, never strangers, seeker, be a welcome guest.  
Come from restlessness and roaming. Here, in joy we keep the feast.  
We that once were lost and scattered in communion's love have stood.  
Taste and see the grace eternal. Taste and see that God is good.

All who hunger, sing together, Jesus Christ is living bread.  
Come from loneliness and longing. Here, in peace, we have been fed.  
Blest are those who from this table live their days in gratitude.  
Taste and see the grace eternal. Taste and see that God is good.

**Post-Communion Prayer** *(Celebrant and People)*

**Loving God,  
we give you thanks  
for restoring us in your image  
and nourishing us with spiritual food  
in the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood.  
Now send us forth  
a people, forgiven, healed, renewed;  
that we may proclaim your love to the world  
and continue in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.**

## Night Prayer

Lord,  
It is night.

The night is for stillness.  
Let us be still in the presence of God.

It is night after a long day.  
What has been done has been done;  
What has not been done has not been done;  
Let it be.

The night is dark.  
Let our fears of the darkness of the world  
And in our lives rest in you.

The night is quiet.  
Let the quietness of your peace enfold us,  
All dear to us,  
And all who have no peace.

The night heralds the dawn.  
Let us look expectantly to a new day,  
New joys,  
New possibilities.

In your name we pray. **AMEN**

## Blessing

Life is short, and we do not have too much time to gladden the hearts of those who travel with us. So be swift to love. Make haste to be kind, and the blessing of God be with you always. **AMEN.**

## Closing Song

Give thanks with a grateful heart;  
Give thanks to the Holy One;  
Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ, His Son.

And now let the weak say, "I am strong,"  
Let the poor say, "I am rich,  
Because of what the Lord has done for us"

## Dismissal



# MT. LEBANON CHAPEL

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