**Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy 2024**

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT: HOPE

From deep in the past, Jeremiah calls to us, “The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah” (Jeremiah 33:14). Beloved, the days are surely coming when the yearning of the land; the longing of the sun, moon, and stars; the desperate need of the people of earth for flourishing and peace will receive their fulfillment.

**Congregation: While fear, anxiety, misinformation, and suspicion surround us on every side, we choose to watch and wait in hope, preparing our hearts to notice and cooperate with God’s grace already at work in our midst.**

We light this candle of hope as a sign of our commitment to pay attention and prepare for the days that are surely coming and are already here—the days when God’s kingdom of love, justice, and mercy will reign.

*Light the first candle of the Advent wreath.*

OPENING PRAYER

Righteous one, to you alone; we lift our souls in you alone,
we place our trust for you alone; we wait all day long.
For you are the God of our salvation, abounding in mercy and steadfast love.
Help us remain alert and watchful for the coming of your promised one; the one who comes with power and glory, the one drawing near to bring our salvation. Amen.

Please announce “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” Hymn #211

Scripture Reading:

Luke 21: 25-36

“There will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars. On the earth, there will be dismay among nations in their confusion over the roaring of the sea and surging waves. The planets and other heavenly bodies will be shaken, causing people to faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world. Then they will see the Human One coming on a cloud with power and great splendor. Now when these things begin to happen, stand up straight and raise your heads, because your redemption is near.”

Jesus told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees. When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see these things happening, you know that God’s kingdom is near. I assure you that this generation won’t pass away until everything has happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will certainly not pass away.

“Take care that your hearts aren’t dulled by drinking parties, drunkenness, and the anxieties of day-to-day life. Don’t let that day fall upon you unexpectedly,like a trap. It will come upon everyone who lives on the face of the whole earth.  Stay alert at all times, praying that you are strong enough to escape everything that is about to happen and to stand before the Human One.”