

The Presbyterian Church of Okemos
November 30, 2025
First Sunday of Advent



Gathering As a People of God

Preparation: “Hope is not based on the possibilities of the situation and on correct extrapolation about the future. Hope is grounded in the faithfulness of God and therefore on the effectiveness of God’s promise.” Theologian Miroslav Volf, 2004.

Invitation to Our Shared Ministry

Pastor Lisa Schrott

Prelude

Voluntary and Fughetta
Dr. Marlene Brewbaker, organ

Charles Callahan
based on *Stuttgart*

Choral Introit

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (verse 1)
PCO Chancel Choir
Shelby Laird, soloist

*** Call to Worship**

Julie Boyer, Liturgist

One: We gather together in this place:

All: prophets and dreamers, singers and poets,

One: we who dare to imagine a world renewed;

All: we who dare to dream God’s dream.

One: We proclaim expectation with Isaiah!

All: God’s redemption is near!

One: Through tears and through trials,

All: we hold fast to our hope.

One: Do not fear, for God is faithful.

All: Our redemption rises with the dawn.

One: Come and worship, all you who dream and wait.

All: We have come to wonder and praise

*** Hymn # 107**

Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn, vs. 1-4
[Rejoice, Rejoice]

Advent Candle Lighting

Eunice Creswell & Kathy Richardson

Opening Prayer

God who is, who was, and who is to come, we enter this season of Advent keenly aware of the brokenness in and around us. Comfort our longing spirits, and teach us again how to be people of profound hope. You never leave our side, but walk with us in our pilgrimage toward the renewed world you promise. We pray as expectant people, seeking again the assurance of your salvation, brought to birth in Jesus Christ, our hope and our Savior. Amen.

One: The birth of Jesus has been told and retold a thousand times and in a thousand ways.

All: Its impact cannot be contained in any one perspective. The element of the story we focus on changes how we hear it, how we imagine it, and how we experience it.

One: Close your eyes for a moment and imagine the journey of Mary and Joseph. ...
.... Mary and Joseph held on to hope when their options seemed to be in short supply. It was a hope that things would get better.

All: We light the candle of hope because hope creates a path for a new, unknown story to unfold. (*The candle of Hope is lit.*)

Advent Response

We Are a People of Hope

Barbara Hamm

[Table of Grace]

The response will be played through once, the congregation will join in the second time.

We are a people of hope;

we are a people of hope.

Lighting a candle, we wait for the dawn;

we are a people of hope.

Prayer of Confession

Pastor Lisa Schrott

One: Heeding Jesus' call to keep awake, let us be humble and bold in confessing the truth of the brokenness in our hearts, our actions, and our systems.

All: God of hope, we confess that we too often seek salvation from that which will not save us. We cling to our own comfort, rather than being generous with our gifts and privilege. We are complicit in systems that benefit us, rather than challenging the exploitation of neighbors and creation. We act from fear rather than faith. Transform our hearts with your mercy. Forgive us and renew us. Make us restless for justice. Teach us again to be people of courage and hope. We pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Promise of the Gospel and Passing of the Peace

Pastor Lisa Schrott

One: Heaven and earth may pass away, but God's faithfulness is sure. We are forgiven and forever claimed as beloved of God, through the saving love of Jesus Christ. Amen.

All: We give thanks to God for everything: forgiveness, hope, new life. Amen.

One: Where two or three of us are gathered, the Spirit is among us, inspiring our imagination and creating peace in our midst. Greet your fellow travelers now with the peace of Christ, and let these small doses of repair and reconciliation ripple out into a world in need of transformation. May the peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you. Please greet your fellow worshippers in ways you feel comfortable.

* Act of Praise #583

Glory to God

[Gloria, Gloria]

The response will be played through once, the congregation will join in the second time.

Glory to God, glory to God,

glory in the highest!

Glory to God, glory to God,

alleluia, alleluia!

The Word

Prayer of Illumination

Julie Boyer, Liturgist

God of whispers and shouts, you proclaim the good news of hope from all corners of creation. As we turn to our scriptures, may the words inspire us to dream of a world where hope thrives among us.
Amen.

Children's Sermon & Time of Wonder

Pastor Lisa Schrott

First Scripture Reading

Mark 13:24-27, 35-37

Julie Boyer, Liturgist

One: The Word of God for the people of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

Second Scripture Reading

Isaiah 2: 1-5

Pastor Lisa Schrott

One: The Word of God for the people of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Vigilant Hope

Pastor Lisa Schrott

* Affirmation of Hope

Pastor Lisa Schrott

One: Let us affirm God's gift of strong and sturdy hope together.

All: We believe in a strong and sturdy hope—a hope which fully sees the world's pain, while refusing to accept life must be this way.

One: We name false stories and lament shallow optimism, idealism, or wishful thinking.

All: With the Spirit's compassion and imagination, we believe things can and will get better, committing all we have and all we are into making a new reality, God's dream, come true.

One: We give our creativity and courage, our prayers and perseverance, remembering that "hope is what we do." What we practice, we will become.

All: Like Isaiah, we remember what God has done before, and the truth that nothing new comes without someone, somewhere, first imagining what others could not yet see.

One: As God's family, we believe hope lives and moves in a communal way.

All: We will hold in our hearts and minds' eye the presence of those who've embodied hope before us as we carry forward the dream.

Special Music

A Spotless Rose

Herbert Howells

Shelby Laird, vocal

Dr. Marlene Brewbaker, organ

Responding to the Word

Offering

Pastor Lisa Schrott

Invitation

Offertory

Bicinium on *Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending*

Charles Callahan

Dr. Marlene Brewbaker, organist

***Doxology #606**

***Prayer of Dedication**

Prayers of the People

Julie Boyer, Liturgist

One: God of our hope,

All: hear our prayers, and shape us evermore into people of hope.

The Lord's Prayer

in unison

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, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Sent Out As a People of God

* Hymn #83

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus, vs. 1-4
[Stuttgart]

* Charge and Benediction

Go forth from this place and notice where hopeful change has taken place and where it is still needed. Raise your voice in praise of hopeful change and pray for where hope has yet to take root. Consider how your actions and words can contribute toward transformative justice, and peace in your home, school, community, and beyond.

Postlude

Prepare the Royal Highway
Dr. Marlene Brewbaker, organ

Setting By Michael Burkhardt

* Please rise in body or spirit

Ushers: Sue Cobbett, David Horner

This Morning's Fellowship Team: Thank you to Edward Ennen for taking care of the coffee.

Our Advent Worship Liturgy *The Will to Dream* is from Illustrated Ministry, 2025.

<https://store.illustratedministry.com/collections/the-will-to-dream>

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Shelby Laird, Chancel Choir Director
Irene Shutt, Handbell Choir Director
Edward Ennen, Sexton
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