

## Sunday, 30 November 2025 – First Sunday of Advent

The beginning of Advent also marks the beginning of a new liturgical year in the church calendar. Our liturgical calendar is organized into three yearly cycles, labelled A, B, and C. Today is the beginning of year A. <https://pcusa.org/theology-and-worship/advent>

*Advent* means *coming* or *arrival*. During the season of Advent, we celebrate Christ's coming into the world and watch with expectant hope for his coming again. In its historical origins, the season of Advent was patterned after the season of Lent, a six-week period of penitence and preparation for Easter. Similarly, the four weeks of Advent present an opportunity for communal discernment and personal examination, as the church prepares to celebrate the Nativity of the Lord and looks with hope for Christ's return.

### Prelude

Johann Sebastian Bach's (1685-1750) well-known arrangement of *Sleepers, Wake!* is from the *Schübler Chorales*, a set of six chorale preludes written a few years before his death. It is an arrangement of the tenor aria in his Cantata 140.

### Offertory Anthem

Hymnwriter Susan Palo Cherwien (b. 1953) wrote this text in 1996 and Carl Schalk (1929-2021) set it to music with the hymn tune LUCENT, referencing the end of verse 2: "O lucent Morning Star."

*As the Dark Awaits the Dawn*

Music: Carl Schalk

Text: Susan Palo Cherwien

As the dark awaits the dawn so we await your light.  
O Star of promise, scatter night, loving bright, loving bright,  
till shades of fear are gone.

As the blue expectant hour before the silvering skies,  
we long to see your day arise, whole and wise, whole and wise,  
O lucent Morning Star.

As the moon reflects the sun until the night's decrease,  
may we your healing light release, living peace, living peace,  
unto your holy dawn.

Shine your future on this place, enlighten every guest,  
that through us stream our holiness, bright and blest, bright and blest;  
come dawn, O Sun of grace.

### Postlude

Wayne L. Wold's (b. 1954) festive setting of *Sleeper's Wake* provides a more contemporary contrast to the setting by Bach heard during the prelude this morning. This is the third, and final, movement in a suite based on the tune *Wachet auf*. Wold was college organist at Hood College in Frederick, MD until 2020.