

First Congregational United Church of Christ
Algona, Iowa
First Sunday of Advent
November 4, 2018

PRELUDE

RINGING OF THE BELL

GREETINGS, GOOD NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE

(bulletin insert)

***OPENING SONG:** "Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates"

#176

SHARING JESUS' PEACE

CALL TO WORSHIP

(read responsively)

One: In Advent we watch and wait,

Many: and prepare to welcome the Christ Child into the world.

One: In Advent we prepare for a life of discipleship,

Many: and watch faithfully for signs of God's light breaking into the world.

One: As we wait, we watch for signs of Jesus' action in the world,

Many: actions of compassion and grace breaking in.

One: As we wait, we recognize that we do not know the day or the hour,

Many: but we know that the day is near.

All: Come, Lord Jesus, come! Be born anew in our world and in our lives.

OPENING PRAYER

(read together)

In this season as the days grow shorter and the shadows lengthen, we gather in eager expectation for the Light of the World to dawn. Help us, God, to lay aside all the works of night and even our cynicism as we enter this sacred season. During this time of worship, send your Spirit to empower us to live in the light with hope. Amen.

TIME FOR CHILDREN AND THE YOUNG AT HEART

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(read together)

The chances we have to be more compassionate; the moments to offer hope to a lonely friend; the good fortune we could give to those who have so little. The signs are all around us, Good and Upright God, of how we fail to live as your people.

Do not meditate on our bungling ways, God of steadfast love, but remember the mercy of Your heart. That mercy which forgives us; that mercy which makes us whole; and especially, that living mercy who came down one night so long ago, Jesus the Advent of our redemption. Amen.

A MOMENT FOR SILENT REFLECTION AND REPENTANCE

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

(read responsively)

One: Raise your heads, children of God! In the bleak mid-winter of our lives, our redemption draws near. In the springtime of our doubts, the realm of God approaches.

Many: Even when we feel most alone, the One who comes to us is the salvation promised so long ago. Thanks be to God! We are forgiven! Amen.

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING

Jeremiah 33:14-16

***MIDDLE SONG:** "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

#154

***AN AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** (read together)

inside back cover of hymnal

GLORIA PATRI

#734

FOCUS SCRIPTURE

Luke 21:25-36

from the *Common English Bible*

MESSAGE: "Signs of the Time"

Pastor Burtnett

GATHERING AT JESUS' TABLE

Invitation, Communion Prayer, *Sanctus*, Words of Institution, Consecration Prayer, Lord's Prayer, Sharing the Bread and Cup

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

God of pregnant expectations, God of Christmas promise, God of child-like hope, we thank you for gathering us to eat and drink from your table. May our eating and drinking fill us with hope in a world of despair. May we be beacons of hope as we wait for the day when the world will be changed. Grant that this taste of your banquet, which is to come, would give us the hunger for peace and justice in our community and around the world. Amen.

OFFERING

***DOXOLOGY**

***DEDICATION OF OFFERING**

***CLOSING SONG:** "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus"

#153

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE

The Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy , Call to Worship, Opening Prayer, and Offering Prayer of Dedication are all adapted from *Worship [Ways-Worship Resources for the United Church of Christ*. The Call to Confession, Prayer of Confession, and Words of Assurance (adapted), are from *Lectionary Liturgies* by Thom M. Schuman. The Affirmation of Faith is our United Church of Christ Statement of Faith. The Prayer of Thanksgiving (adapted) is from *worshipoffirings.blogspot.com*

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Organist: Liz Reynolds

Lector: David Burrow

Worship Leader: Pastor Chris Burtnett

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December Radio Sponsor: Mick and Kris Schlievert



**THEIR EYES WERE OPENED, AND THEY
RECOGNIZED THE RISEN CHRIST IN THE
BREAKING OF THE BREAD.**

Announcements

Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy

One: These are fearful days: Words of hate, Acts of terror, Welcomes withheld, Truths denied.

Many: Anxiety is a constant companion; Hope feels like a stranger. We call out in our anxiety.

Scripture Reading Psalm 25:1-10 from *The Message*

One: We remind ourselves of God's ancient promises: Justice is coming! Love is on the way! Lift up your heads and watch for the signs! (*Luke 21: 28, paraphrase*)

Many: This morning we light this first candle of Advent, a candle of Hope. In its light, let us think about what signs we are seeing of God at work in our lives, in our world right now, and where we might contribute to that work.

The first Advent Candle of Hope is lit.

All: Let this candle of Advent Hope shine in our hearts all week and remind us to lift up our heads and open our eyes to watch all around us for signs of the Holy One.

Pastor Burtnett will be in Calumet on Tuesday.

Adult discussion will be Tuesday, Dec. 4th, 7 pm, at Chuck West's.

Thursday the Pastor Parish Relations committee will meet at 4 pm.

Next Sunday is the last time to make donations for our Christmas family. And the cookie sale is after church. It is also Pastor Chris and Pam's 40th wedding anniversary.

Mittens, scarves, hats, etc. will be collected during December.