

First Congregational United Church of Christ
Algona, Iowa
Third Sunday of Advent
December 16, 2018

PRELUDE

RINGING OF THE BELL

GREETINGS, GOOD NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE

(bulletin insert)

***OPENING SONG:** “Gather Us In”

#649

SHARING JESUS’ PEACE

CALL TO WORSHIP

(read responsively)

One: The joy of the season is upon us. The time is almost here.

Many: We have come to praise God!

One: We are here to sing praises to God, the Holy One in whom we place our trust.

Many: God opens our eyes and lifts us up.

One: Let us praise God,

Many: who reigns forever!

OPENING PRAYER

(read together)

Gather us in Emmanuel, as we come to worship and rejoice together. Be with us now, as you have always been with us. Prepare our hearts to receive your presence, and prepare our lives to produce the fruit of your justice and righteousness. Gather us in, Emmanuel, that we might be strengthened to go forth as your beloved children. Amen.

TIME FOR CHILDREN AND THE YOUNG AT HEART

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(read together)

Here we are, Most Patient God, in the third week of our Advent journey. We confess that we, so easily, have given in to the expectations of people and situations around us. We have allowed the times of quiet we promised for you to slip away. Forgive us in our distractions. Help us renew our preparations for your coming. We look forward to your promise to change things - to bring life, and strength and courage to us: eyes to see, ears to hear, and tongues to speak your word. Continue to be with us, as we learn to wait with you. Amen.

A MOMENT FOR SILENT REFLECTION AND REPENTANCE

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

(read responsively)

One: As plain as the heart in our chests, the good news is this: God is our hope. God is our life. God is our future.

Many: We will sing aloud, our voices at full throttle. We are forgiven, we are saved! Thanks be to God. Amen.

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING

Zephaniah 3:14-20

***MIDDLE SONG:** “Blessed Be the God of Israel”

#158

*AN AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

(read together)

We are an Advent people, a people of hope. For us, Advent is a time of waiting, and so we wait. We wait for the coming of the One who is the fulfillment of God’s promise, the fulfillment of hope, the declaration that we have been redeemed.

Even so, we are not a naïve people. We know that the world in which we live will continue to be filled with pain and sorrow. We know that hatred and violence will continue to exist. We know that death and separation will continue to be a part of our lives.

But because we are an Advent people, we know that none of these things will win in the end. The Holy One is coming, to make holy once again all that was, is, and ever will be. And in our waiting and our hoping, we work and worship, pray and play, in all things hoping that peace, love and joy will reign in our lives and in our world, now and forever. Amen

GLORIA PATRI

#734

FOCUS SCRIPTURE

Luke 3:7-18

from the *Common English Bible*

MESSAGE: “It’s Appealing, Appalling, and Joyful ”

Pastor Burtnett

OFFERING

***DOXOLOGY**

***DEDICATION OF OFFERING**

***CLOSING SONG:** “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”

#198

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE

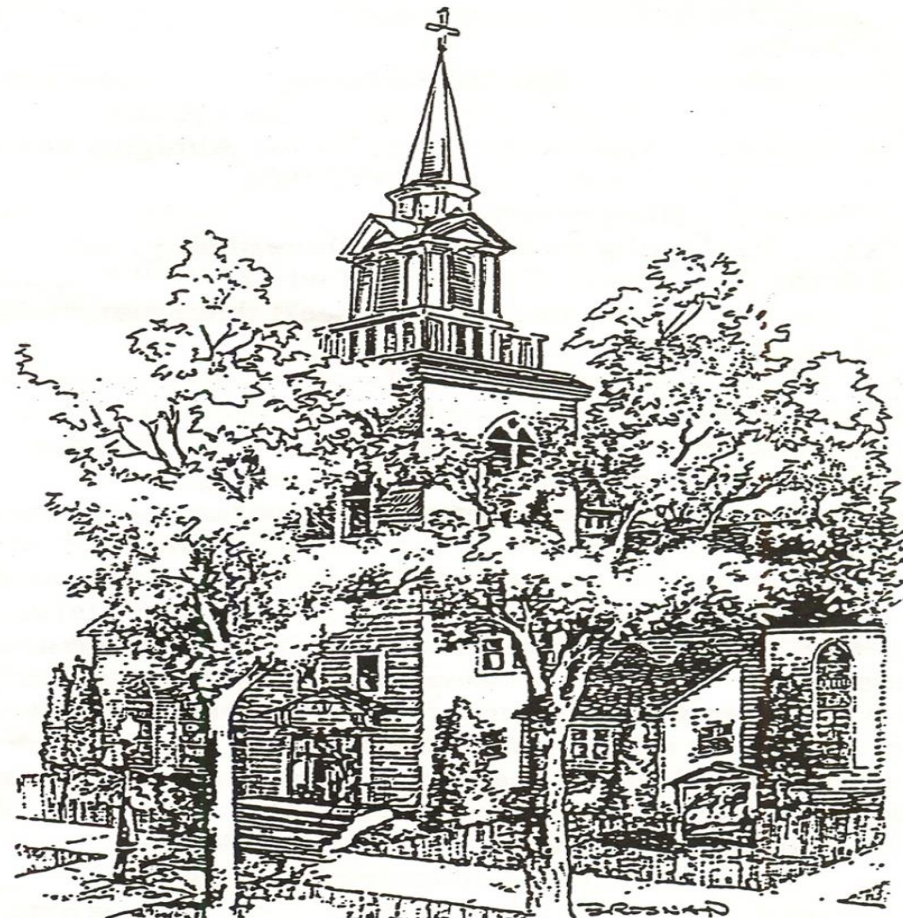
The Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy, Call to Worship, Prayer of Confession, and Offering Prayer of Dedication are all adapted from *Worship/ Ways-Worship Resources for the United Church of Christ*. The Opening Prayer is from *The Abingdon Worship Annual 2018* edited by Mary J. Scifres and B. J. Beu. The Call to Confession and Words of Assurance are from *Lectionary Liturgies* by Thom M. Schuman. The Affirmation of Faith is from *LiturgyLink*, submitted by Rev. Rebecca F. Harrison, Transitional Pastor, Spanish Springs Presbyterian Church, Sparks, NV.

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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

Today is the last day of Sunday school. Classes will resume on January 6th.
Women’s Fellowship meets Thursday at 1:30 pm.

**First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Algona, Iowa**



“Where No One Is A Stranger”

315 S. Moore Street – Algona, IA 50511

515-295-2845

Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy

One: We move from one task to another, from one responsibility to another. The holidays may wear us out with worries about preparations, about family relationships, about money, about presents!

Many: We are scattered and busy about too many things.

One: We call out in our fatigue:

People: Where is your joy, O God? Where is your gift of presence in our lives?

One: We remind ourselves of Paul's ancient advice: Celebrate God all day....*revel* in God! Help [everyone] see that God is about to arrive! Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It is wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life. *Philippians 4: 4-7 adapted from **The Message** © 2002 Eugene H. Peterson; reproduced with permission*

Many: Let us light this third candle of Advent, a candle of Joy. In its light, let us turn our worries into prayers for God to be present to us right now, as we prepare for the coming of Jesus.

(The pink Candle of Joy is lit)

Everyone: Let this candle of Advent Joy shine in our hearts all week to remind us to pray and praise and place Christ at the center this season.