

First Congregational United Church of Christ
Algona, Iowa
Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 23, 2018

PRELUDE

RINGING OF THE BELL

GREETINGS, GOOD NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE

(bulletin insert)

***OPENING SONG:** “All Earth Is Hopeful”

#163

SHARING JESUS’ PEACE

CALL TO WORSHIP

(read responsively)

One: Leap for joy! Christ is coming!

Many: Christ comes into our lives!

One: Rejoice and praise! God’s promises reign!

Many: Christ comes into our lives!

One: Sing songs of old! Proclaim ancient truths!

Many: Christ comes into our lives!

OPENING PRAYER

(read together)

Surprising God, you make your presence known in unexpected ways, and challenge our comfortable assumptions about how you work. Meet us here today and open our hearts to recognize you in our midst calling us to live into your new thing: a world where your love takes shape in justice and peace. In the name of the One who is coming, we pray. Amen!

TIME FOR CHILDREN AND THE YOUNG AT HEART

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(read together)

We confess we are not the people you hope us to be, Advent God. The very ones you favor? All too often, we ignore them, or worse fill them with ridicule. The ones you knock off their pedestals? We continue to admire them, seeking to emulate their ways. The drumbeat for more and more? We give in to the rhythm so easily, we risk being sent away empty.

Forgive us, Mighty God who comes in the weakness of a baby. Look with grace upon us, so we might see your love shining down. We could live secure in your hope, we could be the ones of peace for our world, we could learn to do your will, if we but welcome Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, into our hearts and into our lives. Amen.

A MOMENT FOR SILENT REFLECTION AND REPENTANCE

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

(read responsively)

One: God passes the heirloom of mercy down from generation to generation, always loving, always forgiving, always calling us to new life.

Many: As we open our hearts to God, we are filled with the joy that was sung at the Birth, with the Hope that walked among us, with the Grace which is always with us. Thanks be to God, we are forgiven! Amen.

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 1:39-45

***MIDDLE SONG:** “Away In a Manger”

#205

*AN AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

(read together)

We believe that God has come to us; that God brought us into being, that this God gave us breath and purpose; that we have been blessed to be a blessing to others, that we have fallen short of this commandment but that God has nevertheless loved us despite our brokenness. We believe that God is coming to us; that God is not happy to leave us alone; that this God will come to us as a particular human being; that God will be made known to us in flesh and bone like ours; that Mary will soon give birth and Joseph will soon clap his hands in joy; that Jesus Christ will be born and our salvation made complete. We believe that God will come to us; that God will have the final word and that Word will be good; that this God will give us the presence of the Spirit to continue our work; that we are called to be disciples to all the corners of the earth; that the day is coming when tears and pain will be no more, and all will gather at the Table to sing an endless and perfect “Alleluia!” Amen.

GLORIA PATRI

#734

FOCUS SCRIPTURE Luke 1:46b-55

from the *Common English Bible*

MESSAGE: "Spontaneous Song"

Pastor Burtnett

OFFERING

*DOXOLOGY

*DEDICATION OF OFFERING

*CLOSING SONG: "My Soul Proclaims with Wonder"

#170

(we'll sing this to the tune of #298)

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

The Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy, is adapted from *Worship Ways-Worship Resources for the United Church of Christ*. The Call to Worship is from *The Abingdon Worship Annual 2012* edited by Mary J. Scifres and B. J. Beu. The Opening Prayer is from *Worship Ways-Worship Resources for the United Church of Christ*. The Call to Confession, Prayer of Confession, and Words of Assurance are from *Lectionary Liturgies* by Thom M. Schuman. The Offering Prayer of Dedication is adapted from *The Abingdon Worship Annual 2018* edited by Mary J. Scifres and B. J. Beu. The Affirmation of Faith is written by Rev. Stephen M. Fearing - www.stephenmfearing.com.

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Organist: Liz Reynolds

Lector: Marilyn Deal

Worship Leader: Pastor Chris Burtnett

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December Radio Sponsor: Mick and Kris Schlievert

Birthdays: 12-24 John Norman

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: Who listens to the voices of the poor? Who shares strength with the powerless?
Who surprises with forgiveness, and makes all things new?

Many: Our Hope is fragile as an infant.

One: We call out in our longing:

Many: Where is your Power, God? Where is the Love that transforms our world?

One: We remind ourselves of Mary's ancient song:

Sing out my soul,
Sing of the holiness of God
Who has delighted in a woman,
Lifted up the poor, satisfied the hungry,
Given voice to the silent
Grounded the oppressor
Blessed the full-bellied with emptiness
And with the gift of tears
those who have never wept
Who has desired the darkness of the womb and inhabited our flesh
Sing of the longing of God,
Sing out, my soul!

From **Luke 1: 39-55**, paraphrased by Janet Morley in **All Desires**

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Many: Let us light this fourth candle of Advent, a candle of Love. In its light, let us think about our world, about wherever our God is longing to be born in peace, in joy, in freedom and in wholeness.

(the fourth Advent Candle of Love is lit)

Everyone: Let this candle of Advent Love shine in our hearts all week and remind us to be midwives to Christ's birth in our work for justice, our practice of peace, our offering of forgiveness.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Christmas Eve service will begin tomorrow evening at 5 pm.

Pastor Chris and Pam will be on vacation from December 26 through January 1st. Karen Dearchs will be on call during that time. She will also be here for services on the 30th of this month.