

First Congregational United Church of Christ
Algona, Iowa
Fourth Sunday in Advent
December 22, 2019

PRELUDE

RINGING OF THE BELL

GREETINGS, GOOD NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE

***OPENING SONG:** “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

154

SHARING JESUS’ PEACE

CALL TO WORSHIP

(read responsively)

One: Our hearts are filled with joyful anticipation, awaiting Jesus:

Many: God is with Us.

One: As a family we worship and praise and look for the One who is coming:

Many: God is with Us.

One: We hear the word of our Still Speaking God proclaiming:

Many: God is with Us.

One: We gather here today knowing that no matter who we are or where we are on life’s journey:

Many: God is with us

OPENING PRAYER

(Prayed together)

Present One, today we gather with hearts full of joy. Yet this season can also bring stress and anxiety. Many of us are busy making plans with family and friends while others struggle with loneliness. We ask that you help all of us free our hearts and minds of the planning, worry, stress, and anxiety that takes our focus away from the coming of Christ. During this time of worship let your Spirit flow through this place. May She empower us to open our hearts and minds so that we will hear your Word and know what you call us to do. Amen.

TIME FOR CHILDREN AND THE YOUNG AT HEART

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(prayed together)

Come now, Reconciler of the nations, for our world, our lives, need your peace more than ever before. Come, Caller to discipleship, for we long to let go of our self-interest and narcissism. Come, Word Gifter, for we hunger to hear your voice once again, ever always. Come, Servant of the poor, so we notice you in all those we push past in this hectic season. Come, Silence of our nights and Holiness of our hearts, and forgive us for turning your compassion into commercials, your joy into jingles, your hope into hollow words, your love into lust for the short-lasting offerings of the world. May we find our way to the One born simply, born gracefully, for us – Jesus, the Child of wonder and life. Amen.

A MOMENT FOR SILENT REFLECTION AND REPENTANCE

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

(read responsively)

One: We may not notice them there, at the back of the pile of presents, but it is God’s hope, God’s life, God’s mercy, God’s love, which are the true gifts we receive each and every moment. **Many: We give thanks to our gracious God, who has forgiven us and blessed us. Amen!**

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 1:18-25

***MIDDLE SONG:** “Hark! the Herald Angels Sing”

#185

*AN AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

(read together)

We believe in God, who is love, whose love is manifest in all Creation, in our lives, and in all people.

We follow Christ, who embodied God’s love. In his life and ministry, his death and resurrection, and his granting to us of his Spirit, he filled us with that love as well.

We live by the Spirit, the presence of God’s love in us. In that love we participate in the Church, Body of Christ, in loving God by loving our neighbors through our prayers, our presence, our gifts and our service.

Love is our faith, and it is a gift from God. We thank God, and ask God’s blessings, that we may love in the name of Christ and the power of the Spirit, to God’s glory. Amen.

GLORIA PATRI

#734

FOCUS SCRIPTURE Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

read from the *Common English Bible*

MESSAGE: "What the World Needs Now"

Pastor Burtnett

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

OFFERING

*DOXOLOGY

Words #44

*DEDICATION OF OFFERING

*CLOSING SONG "All Earth Is Hopeful"

#163

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

The Call to Worship, Opening Prayer, and Offering Prayer of Dedication (adapted) are 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. Shuman. The Affirmation of Faith is by Steve Garnaas-Holmes.

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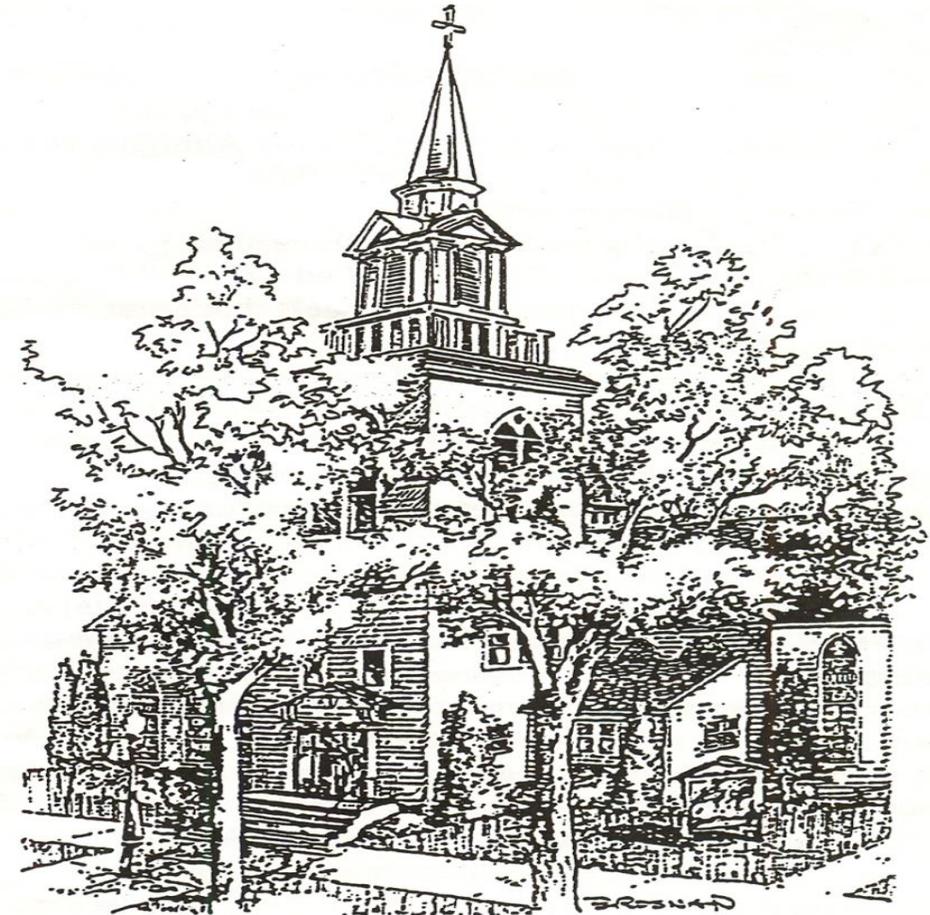
Organist:	Liz Reynolds
Lector:	David Burrow
Worship Leader:	Pastor Burtnett

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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

LOVE

Leader: Watch and wait for Christ's coming! Light candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, remembering the promises of God with prayer.

People: We light this candle in hope. (*Light the first candle.*)
We light this candle for peace. (*Light the second candle.*)
We light this candle in joy! (*Light the pink candle.*)
We light this candle with love. (*Light the fourth candle.*)

Leader: Out of love for the people of God, the Lord speaks through the prophet Isaiah, as found in the seventh chapter, verses 10-14: The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test. Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. Let us pray.

All: God of hope, Prince of peace, Jubilee Judge, and Lord of love, your goodness is beyond our wildest imaginings. You give us more than we can think to ask, coming to us with impossible possibility in the union of flesh and spirit. Teach us to love this world and all people as you love us in Jesus Christ, our Lord. God of promise, God of hope, into our darkness come. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We will receive the Christmas Fund offering today.
The signup sheet for next year's radio sponsors is in the parlor.
The Christmas Eve service will begin at 5 pm.
Karen Dearchs will be on call from December 26 until January 3. Please call Mick Schlievert if you need her and he will contact her. Pastor Burnnett and Pam will be on vacation.

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