

First Congregational United Church of Christ
“Where No One Is a Stranger”
Third Sunday in Advent
December 12, 2021
315 S. Moore Street
Algona, IA 50511

PRELUDE

RINGING OF THE BELL

GREETINGS, GOOD NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, JESUS ENCOUNTERS

One: This morning we light the third Advent candle, the shepherd’s candle. This candle is offered in honor of the shepherds whose love and care for their sheep become the example of God’s love for us. We remember that the shepherds were the first witnesses of our Savior’s birth. In honor of all the good shepherds, and especially Jesus the Christ, we light this candle.

(a purple candle is lit)

Prayer

Dear God, our Good Shepherd, empower our lives to be filled with love, that in loving others we might bear witness to your love for us. We give thanks for shepherds, especially Jesus. Amen.

*CALL TO WORSHIP

(read responsively)

One: Come, let us rejoice this day in the God who is near in everyone around us.

Many: We will sing glad songs of the One who is rebuilding neighborhoods in our midst.

One: Come, let us rejoice always in Jesus who baptizes us with hope and compassion.

Many: We will join in choruses of praise of the One who brings justice to the forgotten in our midst.

One: Come, let us rejoice again and again in the Spirit who offers us new life in every moment.

Many: We will sing full throttle of the One who fills us with gifts to share with everyone in our midst.

*OPENING SONG

“Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above”

#56

*OPENING PRAYER

(prayed together)

Holy God, energize our worship this morning by your presence. Transmit to us the thrill of singing from the heart the great songs of our faith. Move us to true gratitude and expectation by the words of Jesus, “Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them.” May we know the wonder of true worship

today. May your peace that passes all understanding, guard our hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus. Amen.

TIME FOR THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG AT HEART

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(prayed together)

We admit, God of Advent, that it is easier to trust a politician's glib words than yours which were spoken so long ago. We know how afraid we are of tomorrow, because of what we do today, ignoring what you brought about so long ago. We, who have been given so much from your heart, find it hard to share even a smidgen from our abundance.

Forgive us, God our hope, and have mercy on us. Lift us to our feet; draw us close into your loving embrace; drench us the buckets of grace drawn from the deep wells of life, so we will have the courage to declare you as our God, as we follow Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with the Holy Spirit. Amen.

SILENCE FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION AND CONFESSION

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.

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 3:7-18

*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

Zephaniah 3:14-20

read from the *Common English Bible*

MESSAGE

“Possessions Restored”

Pastor Chris

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE/THE LORD’S PRAYER

BRINGING OUR GIFTS

OFFERTORY

***DOXOLOGY**

Words #44

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

(prayed together)

Generous God, may the gifts we bring before you this day be a sign of our commitment to share our love with those in need and symbolize our trust in your power to heal the world through the work of our hands and the ministries of your church. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

***CLOSING SONG**

“On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry”

#156

GOING FORTH WITH THE PEACE OF CHRIST

POSTLUDE

The Advent Candle liturgy (adapted) is written by Cyril C. Colonius from *Touch Holiness-Resources for Worship* edited by Ruth C. Duck and Maren C. Tirabassi. The Call to Worship, Call to Confession, Prayer of Confession, and Words of Assurance are from *Lectionary Liturgies* by Thom M. Shuman. The Opening Prayer (adapted) is from *Invocations and Benedictions for the Revised Common Lectionary* by John M. Drescher. The Oggering Prayer of Dedication (adapted) is by B. J. Beu from *The Abingdon Worship Annual, 2021* edited by Mary Scifres and B.J. Beu. The Affirmation of Faith is by Rev. Rebecca Rebecca F. Harrison.

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Organist: Liz Reynolds
Lector: David Burrows
Worship Leader: Pastor Chris

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December Radio Sponsor: Mick and Kris Schlievert

Birthdays:

Today, December 12: 10:00 am. – Worship
Sunday School
Coffee

After worship service, cookie exchange, bring some goodies to share.

Tuesday, December: 14: 9:30 – 11:30 am.- Pastor Chris at Feed Mill

Sunday, December 19: 10:00 am. – Worship
Sunday School
Coffee



Third Sunday of Advent

Today is the last day of Sunday School for the rest of the year. Sunday School will resume on January 9, 2022.

Friday, December 24th, the Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship with Communion will be at 7pm.

Today, Sunday, December 12: 2-4 pm. - Retirement reception for Jean Menning 2-4 pm. at Algona First United Methodist Church. She will be retiring on December 31, 2021 from 42 years of service to Exceptional Opportunities.

December Sr. Center calendar and Meals on Wheels menu is posted on the Mission bulletin board.

The “Our Daily Bread” for December, January, February is here. It may be picked up in the Fellowship entry.

The “Our Daily Bread”, 10 Christmas Reflections, Celebrating Jesus may be picked up in the Fellowship entry.

The Mitten Tree is up. Donations of hats, waterproof mittens or gloves, scarves, socks and underwear are welcome. We will be collecting through the end of December.

The Christmas Fund Offering will be received on Sunday, December 19.