

First Congregational United Church of Christ
“Where No One Is a Stranger”
Fourth Sunday in Advent
December 19, 2021
315 S. Moore Street
Algona, IA 50511

PRELUDE

RINGING OF THE BELL

GREETINGS, GOOD NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, JESUS ENCOUNTERS

One: Today we light the fourth Advent candle, the angel’s candle. This candle is offered in honor of the angels who told the good news to the shepherds. “Glory be to God in the highest and on earth, peace and goodwill toward all.” The angels sang with joy so that all who could hear were filled with joy. In honor of all the angels who continue to proclaim the good news of joy, we light this candle.

(the pink candle is lit)

Prayer

Dear God, you surround us with your angels of love so that we are able to live a life filled with joy. Thank you for these angels! Help us to become angels for others. Amen.

*CALL TO WORSHIP (read responsively)

One: We come to glorify God, to rejoice in the One who saves us.

Many: God comes, so we might believe, so we might be blessed.

One: Our hearts leap for joy! For God is coming to us in a child.

Many: God comes for those who hunger for hope, for those who thirst for grace.

One: Holy is the One who comes in God's name, who fulfills every promise of God.

Many: God comes to walk with those who follow in faith, to bring peace to a shattered world.

*OPENING SONG “Savior of the Nations, Come” #168

*OPENING PRAYER (prayed together)

God of joyous expectation, come to us this day. May the miracles in our lives fill us with wonder. May an encounter with your goodness and grace cause our hearts to leap within us. Receive us into the arms of your mercy, that we may feel you near us and rest secure in your many blessings. Amen.

TIME FOR THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG AT HEART

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (prayed 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 into 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.

SILENCE FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION AND CONFESSION

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.

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING Luke 1:39-45

*AN AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (read together)

We believe in God, creator and lover of the earth, origin and destiny of us all.

We believe in Jesus the Christ—God coming to us in the fragile promise of a baby yet unborn—who emerges as the herald of hope, God's laughter in the face of despair.

Plunged into death and hell, he broke free the captives, and is leading the way to the land of promise where justice and peace will flourish.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who implants the seed of truth, brings us to birth as the body of Christ, and empowers us to confront and transform all that is corrupt, degrading and deceitful.

We believe in the coming reign of God. Announced by the Baptist, it has drawn near to us in Jesus, and will be consummated in the glorious marriage of earth and heaven, when all who have passed through the world's deep sorrow will be raised from the waters, robed in righteousness, and gathered into the joyous fulfilment of God's desire. For the coming of that day on this day, we work and pray: Come, Lord Jesus, Come! Amen.

*GLORIA PATRI #734

FOCUS SCRIPTURE Micah 5:2-5a read from the *Good News Bible*

MESSAGE

“From a Small Town in Judah”

Pastor Chris

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE/THE LORD’S PRAYER

BRINGING OUR GIFTS

OFFERTORY

***DOXOLOGY**

Words #44

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

(prayed together)

Glorious God, source of every good gift, bless the gifts that we bring today. May they lift up the lowly, fill the hungry with good things, and bring strength and compassion to those in need. In your holy name, we pray. Amen.

***CLOSING SONG**

“All Earth Is Hopeful”

#163

GOING FORTH WITH THE PEACE OF CHRIST

POSTLUDE

The Advent Candle liturgy (adapted) is written by Cyril C. Colonus 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 and Offering Prayer of Dedication are by B. J. Beu from *The Abingdon Worship Annual, 2021* edited by Mary Scifres and B.J. Beu. The Affirmation of Faith is by Nathan Nettleton, and posted on his [Laughingbird](#) website.

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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: December 24 – John Norman

Today, December 19: 10:00 am. – Worship
Christmas Fund Offering for Veterans of the Cross
No Sunday School
Coffee

Tuesday, December 21: 9:30 – 11:30 am.- Pastor Chris at Feed Mill

Friday, December 24: 7 pm. - Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship with Communion 7pm.

Saturday, December 25: Christmas Day

Sunday, December 26: 10:00 am. – Worship
No Sunday School
Coffee



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.

Sunday School will resume on January 9, 2022.