

First Congregational United Church of Christ
315 S Moore St., Algona, Iowa
515-295-2845
First Sunday Of Advent
November 27, 2022

PRELUDE

RINGING OF THE BELL

GREETINGS, GOOD NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, JESUS ENCOUNTERS

Lighting the First Advent Candle

One: Advent is a journey of preparation. Whether God feels near or far to you; whether faith feels like a gift of a struggle; welcome to this journey.

Many: Let's watch, let's rest, let's make space for love to be born again.

One: Many things have tried to overwhelm us – division, oppression, sickness, poverty and war.

Many: We need to be surprised by the Spirit this season.

One: Today is a first step of turning toward God with expectation.

All: We have come to be overwhelmed with hope.

(the first Advent candle of Hope is lit)

One: This morning we light the candle of Hope. The start of a new, yet familiar, journey. A bold proclamation. Though all predictions seem dire, we light a candle in the shadows, trusting it will magnify God's hope in the world.

***OPENING SONG** "Blessed Be the God of Israel" #158

***CALL TO WORSHIP** (read responsively)

One: We may not know when,

Many: but God is coming to us, grace overflowing from God's heart.

One: We may not know who,

Many: but God's hope will be shared by the least likely people.

One: We may not know how,

Many: but God's peace will transform our angry words into warm welcomes, our bitterness into cups of love.

***OPENING PRAYER** (read together)

God of the faith that the bleak past taught us, God of the hope that the present has brought us, we call on you in this hour of worship. We know that you need no invocation for you are already and always with us—Emmanuel, even before the child was born. We open our hearts to receive your gifts, for you are the Giver of hope, the

Giver of peace, The Giver of joy, the Giver love. Make your presence known as we make ourselves available to you. Amen.

TIME FOR CHILDREN AND THE YOUNG AT HEART

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (read together)

Sometimes it is hard for us to take you seriously, God of our lives. With variants still stalking us, how can we think of traveling and being in crowds? With bullies being given unlimited access on social media, why shouldn't we respond with anger and vindictive slights? With our hopes turned to ashes, how can we become beacons of light for those in the shadows?

Forgive us, God of holy seasons, and have mercy. In the days to come, may we discover the grace which has always been ours, so we can share it with others. May we taste the sweet goodness of your love, and feed those around us. May we be filled with the peace of your Spirit, so we may expect you to come in those we least expect, in places which surprise us, in moments we overlook, just as you did in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen.

SILENCE FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION AND CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE (read responsively)

One: Reach out and touch the kingdom, for it is right next to you. Breathe in, and feel the Spirit of peace and hope. Trust and believe this good news: God is nearer than you might ever imagine.

Many: Thanks be to God, we are forgiven! We can set aside our differences and embrace everyone, we can seek peace for all in our lives, our neighborhoods, our world. Amen.

SHARING THE FIRST SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 24:36-44

***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

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world with-out end. A-men, A-men.

FOCUS SCRIPTURE Romans 13:11-14 shared from the *Common English Bible*

MESSAGE: "We Know What Time It Is!" Pastor Chris

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE and LORD'S PRAYER (using debts/debtors)

PRESENTING OUR GIFTS

OFFERTORY

***DOXOLOGY** #34

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below; Praise God above, you heavenly host; praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (prayed together)

For the wondrous ways this offering will bless this community, God, we dedicate these gifts. For the ways it'll help us live out your mission, we dedicate these gifts. Bless and use these gifts and us to strengthen our call to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly. Amen.

***CLOSING SONG** "Come Thou Long Expected Jesus" #153

***GOING FORTH WITH THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

POSTLUDE

*Indicates all who are able please stand

The Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy is from the 2022 *Christmas Fund Worship Resources*. The Call to Worship (adapted), Call to Confession, Prayer of Confession, and Words of Assurance are from *Lectionary Liturgies* by Thom M. Shuman. The Opening Prayer (adapted) and Offering Prayer of Dedication (adapted) are from *Worship Ways-Worship Resources for the United Church of Christ*. The Affirmation of Faith is by Nathan Nettleton.

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Worship Leader: Pastor Burtnett
Lector: David Burrow
Organist: Vicki Merchlewitz
November Radio Sponsor: Meredith Hines & Geoff Buchanan in memory of Gregg Buchanan
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FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Hope

Birthdays: Nov. 30-Ann Stillman her address is 120 Dorsey Dr #42, Grass Valley, CA 95945

Today, November 27: 10:00 am.- Worship
Sunday School
Coffee
Decorate after worship

Tuesday, November 29: 9:30-11am. - Pastor Chris at Feed Mill
Newsletter articles due

Sunday, December 4: 10 am.- Worship -Sacrament of Communion
Sunday School
Coffee
Food Pantry
Mission & Memorial Meeting after worship

Sunday, December 11: Worship
Sunday School
Coffee
Christmas Family Offering
Cookie Exchange after worship

Poinsettias this year will be \$10.70. If you would like to order one, please let the church office know in whose honor or memory it will be.

The December, January, February issue of “Our Daily Bread” and the Character-Driven Leadership: 10 Reflections are here. They may be picked up in the Fellowship entry.

Algonia Community Blood Drive: Monday, December 5: 12:30-5:30pm and Tuesday, December 6: 9 am -2pm at 1st United Methodist Church.

The Senior Center Meal on Wheels menu and calendar is on the bulletin board.