

First Congregational United Church of Christ
315 S Moore St., Algona, Iowa
515-295-2845
Third Sunday Of Advent
December 11, 2022

PRELUDE

RINGING OF THE BELL

GREETINGS, GOOD NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, JESUS ENCOUNTERS

Lighting the Third Advent Candle

One: So many of us feel grief in this advent season. Blue Christmas. Long nights. Missing lost loved ones. Even annual holiday parties can make joy elusive.

All: We are tempted to be overwhelmed by our grief.

One: And yet, today, God offers something else to us. God seeks to add joy after joy to our lives.

Many: We have come to be overwhelmed with joy.

(Three candles are lit)

One: This morning we light three candles: the candles of hope, peace, and today's candle, joy. This candle reminds us of God's will that there might be joy in our lives—from the cozy sound of rain on a window to baby giggles at peek-a-boo, to the wonder of a mountain sunset, we know what joy is even if it is too fleeting. Today, we allow ourselves to be overwhelmed with joy.

***OPENING SONG** "My Soul Proclaims With Wonder" #170 (sung to tune #670)

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

One: Be patient! The time is coming when we will celebrate the birth of Jesus,

All: when we will sing and rejoice, dancing with everlasting joy.

One: But for now, be patient, as we wait in this time called Advent,

All: when God speaks through dreams and visions, and we are invited to dance down the holy way into the kingdom.

One: For this is Advent, as we prepare to join the world in celebrating the Creator of goodness and hope.

All: We come this morning with fervent joy, we will worship with great expectation.

***OPENING PRAYER** (read together)

God of Mary, Ruth, Bathsheba, and Rahab—God of us all, your children here and your children afar—We enter this moment of worship with eager anticipation. We know that

even before a child would come to lead the way, You were leading our way. From the valleys of the shadows of death to the tables in the presence of enemies, you have never left us nor forsaken us. You rod and your staff have guided us. Guide us now, God. Make your presence known as we worship you in spirit and in truth. Amen.

TIME FOR CHILDREN AND THE YOUNG AT HEART

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (read together)

God, we confess that we have often placed our hope in people and things that can't fulfill our every need. We have searched for peace in shallow places. We have mistaken joy for temporal pleasure and artificial exhilaration. We have put limits on the ways we love, excluding those who need our loving kindness the most. God, when we have lost our way, show us yours. Guide us to the hope in you that will renew our strength. Lead us to your peace that transcends all understanding. Fill us with a joy we can only experience in your presence. Remind us that you have always loved us with an everlasting love, so that we may share that love with others. Amen.

SILENCE FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION AND CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE (read responsively)

One: Do not be afraid, but believe. Our God is here, opening our eyes to see that salvation which is ours approaching us in this season of Advent.

All: We join our voices in rejoicing in God who is our Savior. The One who calls us blessed, is the God who forgives us. Amen

SHARING THE FIRST SCRIPTURE READING James 5:7-10

***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
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 Isaiah 35:1-10 shared from *The Message*

MESSAGE: "Waiting Joyfully" 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)
God of promises and joy, receive these gifts we return to you now. Bless them that they may be signs of joy and hope for others in need. Amen.

***CLOSING SONG** "All Earth Is Hopeful" #163

***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, and Words of Assurance are from *Lectionary Liturgies* by Thom M. Shuman. The Opening Prayer and Prayer of Confession are from *Worship Ways-Worship Resources for the United Church of Christ*. The Offering Prayer of Dedication is by Mary Scifres from *The Abingdon Worship Annual-2022* edited by Mary Scifres and B.J. Beu. The Affirmation of Faith is by *Rev. Rebecca F. Harrison*.

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Worship Leader: Pastor Burnett
Lector: David Burrow
Organist: Vicki Merchlewitz
December Radio Sponsor: Mick & Kris Schlievert
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THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Joy

Today, December 11: 10:00 am.- Worship

Sunday School

Coffee

Christmas Family Offering

Cookie Exchange after worship

Christmas Family Offering will be dedicated during worship today.

Tuesday, December 13: 9:30am-2:30pm. - Pastor Chris Zoom online Boundary Training

Thursday, December 15: 7pm.- Special Board Zoom Meeting with Associate Conference

Minister Kendy Miller

Sunday, December 18: 10 am.- Worship

Last day of Sunday School. It will resume January 8, 2023

Coffee

Christmas Fund Offering (Veterans of the Cross)

Saturday, December 24: 6pm.- Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service

Sunday, December 25: 9-11am. - Church will be open for personal meditation & prayer

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. Thank you.

The December, January, February issue of “Our Daily Bread” and the Jesus Light of the World: 10 Reflections on the Life and Light of Christ are here. They may be picked up in the Fellowship entry.

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

Ed Wilcox, is turning 90 on December 15th. Please help celebrate Ed’s birthday by sending him a card. Cards may be sent to: Ed Wilcox, 99 Gardner Circle, Algona, IA 5051441

Please have your Annual Reports turned into the office by the first week in January.