

First Congregational United Church of Christ  
“Where No One Is A Stranger”  
Fourth Sunday of Advent  
December 22, 2024

## PRELUDE

## RINGING OF THE BELL

## GREETINGS, GOOD NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, JESUS ENCOUNTERS

### \* LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE (read responsively)

One: My soul magnifies the Lord! My Spirit rejoices in God, our Savior. Holy is God’s name!

**Many: Let your face shine upon us, God, and we shall be saved.**

One: For the Mighty One has done great things for us.

**Many: Holy is God’s name!**

One: God’s mercy lasts for generations and generations on those who are in awe of God.

**Many: Let your face shine upon us, Lord, and we shall be saved.**

One: God has shown strength with God’s arm.

**Many: God has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.**

One: God has pulled down tyrants from their thrones.

**Many: God has filled the hungry and sent the rich away empty.**

One: Holy is God’s name!

**Many: Holy is God’s name!**

One: Stir up your might and come save us! You who are enthroned above the heavens, shine with eternal light.

**Many: Let your face shine upon us, God, and we shall be saved.**

One: Hear the cries and prayers of your people! Wipe away our tears and give us your peace.

**Many: Turn to us again, Lord! Let your face shine upon us and we shall be saved.**

One: God is coming in mercy as promised to our ancestors.

**Many: Come quickly, Lord Jesus.** *(the Advent Candle of Joy is lit)*

\*Opening Song: “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence” #232

\*OPENING PRAYER (prayed together)

God of ancient days and future visions, we come into your presence to celebrate the joy of your Spirit and the blessings of your Son, Jesus. Fill us with your Spirit as you filled Elizabeth long ago. Sing through our songs of joy, as you sang through Mary. Speak

through our words and our thoughts, that we may grow closer to the justice and peace of Jesus, who calls us here today. In his holy and blessed name, we pray. Amen.

**SPECIAL MUSIC: Bells by Greta, Jack and Sam Grindberg**

## CALL TO CONFESSION

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

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 our Savior, into our hearts and into our lives.

## A TIME FOR SILENT REFLECTION

## WORDS OF ASSURANCE

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.**

**SHARING THE FIRST SCRIPTURE READING:** Micah 5:2-5a

\*AN AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: (read together)

When the cold white ice of winter grips us, when the white shimmering heat of summer melts us, and we doubt that anything can survive the extremes of this world’s harshness, we still believe. Somewhere in the depths of our souls, despite the evidence, we believe. We believe that the ruins of life can be rebuilt. We believe that the tears we shed will water seeds of joy deeply buried. We believe that the green shoots of God’s justice will bear fruit. We believe that the light that enlightens the world will pierce the winter’s longest night and eclipse the sun’s brightest moments. We believe that in all circumstances the Light radiates hope and joy, peace and love, so that even at our lowest

points we can see. Even in the palest light of faith, we can find our way through shadows. And for that we rejoice and give thanks.

**\* GLORIA PATRI:** "Glory Be to the Father" #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:** Luke 1:39-45 read from the *Common English Bible*

**MESSAGE:** "Jump for Joy" Pastor Chris

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE/THE LORD'S PRAYER** (with debts/debtors)

**PRESENTING OUR GIFTS**

**\* DOXOLOGY:** "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow" #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**

May these gifts glorify your name, Holy One. May the ministries we support bring justice and peace to your world. May they offer faith and hope to your people. In grateful joy, we pray. Amen.

**\* CLOSING SONG:** "Joy To the World" #179

**\*Going Forth with the Peace of Christ**

**POSTLUDE**

**\*Indicates all who are able please stand**

The Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy (adapted) is prepared by the Office of Spiritual Life of United Theological Seminary The Opening Prayer and Offering Prayer of Dedication are by Mary Scifres from *The Abingdon Worship Annual-2024* edited by Mary Scifres and B.J. Beu. The **Call to Confession**, Prayer of Confession, and Words of Assurance are from *Lectionary Liturgies* by Thom M. Shuman. The Affirmation of Faith (adapter) is from a post on the Holes United Methodist Church Facebook page.

=====  
Organist: Antonia Rupert  
Worship Leader: David Burrow  
Pastor: Rev. Chris Burnett  
December Radio Sponsor: Mick and Kris Schlievert  
=====



*First Congregational  
United Church of Christ  
166 Years  
315 Moore Street – Algona, IA 50511  
515-295-2845*

Sunday, December 22: 10:30am. – Worship  
Sunday School  
Coffee  
Christmas Fund Offering (formerly known as Veterans of the Cross)

Tuesday, December 24: 9:30am-noon- Pastor at Feed Mill  
7pm.- Christmas Eve Service

Wednesday, December 25 Christmas Day

Sunday, December 29:10:30am – Worship  
No Sunday School  
Coffee

Sunday, January 12: Annual Reports are due

Sunday, January 26: Annual Meeting after Worship and potluck

If anyone would like to be on a committee, change committees or office, please let Helen Scuffham know.

The hat, mittens, socks. etc tree is up through the end of December.

Our Daily Bread “God is with Us 10 Christmas: Reflections and The December/  
January/February 2024-2025 issue of “Our Daily Bread” may be picked up in the Fellowship  
Hall entry.

From Christine Saunsoci-

**"OMG brother your gift arrived today. Thank you and the church so much. The children are going to have an awesome Christmas because of all of you with your prayers and kindness. Sending prayers and healing for you all. This helps us a lot especially the children. There are some that don't have much for Christmas dinner and I will invite them over to eat. Hopefully we will have a ceremony. You are all in our prayers."**