

**FAITH UNITED CHURCH
OF
CHRIST**



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**Rev. Dr. Bruce C. Stevenson, Pastor
Mr. Dennis J. Duda, Organist-Director of Music**

**SERVICE OF WORSHIP
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION
NOVEMBER 28, 2021**

ASSEMBLE IN GOD'S NAME

PRELUDE

A PRAYER UPON ENTERING GOD'S HOUSE

God of hope, who brought love into this world, be the love that dwells between us. God of hope, who brought peace into this world, be the peace that dwells between us. God of hope, who brought joy into this world, be the joy that dwells between us. God of hope, the rock we stand upon, be the center, the focus of our lives always, and particularly this Advent time. Amen.

WORDS OF WELCOME

CENTERING OURSELVES FOR WORSHIP

* **OPENING HYMN: WATCHER, TELL US OF THE NIGHT 103**

**LIGHTING OF THE FIRST ADVENT WREATH CANDLE
THE HOPE CANDLE**

Scripture: Isaiah 60:2

Prayer: O God, we thank you that Jesus brought hope into our world. By the good news of the Bible you are still bringing hope to people. Help us to be ready to welcome Jesus Christ so that we may think good thoughts and do good deeds so that we may be a people of hope in our world. Amen.

REJOICING IN GOD'S GRACE

* **CALL TO AND CONFESSION OF SIN:**

Pastor: Sometimes, we look around at all that you have entrusted to us, and we feel uneasy, O God. On land and water,

high and low, where your creatures once teemed and filled the air with cries of joy, we now hear eerie silence.

People: Forgive us for not being signs of new hope, O God.

Pastor: Non-native species invade and mar our native landscapes, a sea of hungry faces, hour upon hour of television full of activity yet somehow empty of content.

People: Forgive us for not being signs of new hope, O God.

Pastor: Likewise, when we look within, we are often uneasy, aware of our failure to love each other, and your creation, and ourselves.

**People: Forgive us for not being signs of new hope, O God.
Transform our hearts and set us on pathways of
justice and righteousness, that we might turn and be
servants of healing for our world.**

*** THE KYRIE**

750

Leader: Lord, have mercy upon us.

Congregation: Lord, have mercy upon us.

Leader: Christ, have mercy upon us.

Congregation: Christ, have mercy upon us.

Leader: Lord, have mercy upon us.

Congregation: Lord, have mercy upon us.

*** ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Pastor: O Lord, open our lips.

People: And our mouths shall show forth your praise.

*** THE GLORIA PATRI**

759

*Glory to the Creator, the Christ, the Holy Spirit, Three-in-One;
as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without
end. Amen. Amen.*

*** RESPONDING TO GOD'S GRACE – A GESTURE OF PEACE**

LEARNING ABOUT GOD

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

THE SCRIPTURE LESSONS:

Barbara Maursky

Old Testament: Jeremiah 33:14 – 16

New Testament: Luke 21:25 – 36

THE CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON: *Cheer Up Pastor!*

DEDICATING OURSELVES TO GOD'S WILL

* **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: *THE NICENE CREED*** **883**
THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Pastor: Compassionate One, we look to the stormy sky of political unrest – help us to pay attention to the cries for mercy, peace, and justice among us.

People: **In the name of Christ, who was, who is, and who shall be.**

Pastor: Earth-keeper, we look to the polluted sky of an ailing planet – help us to pay attention to the ways we can mend and tend your creation.

People: **In the name of Christ, who was, who is, and who shall be.**

Pastor: Gentle Healer, we look to the twilight sky of suffering and illness – help us to pay attention to the ways we can ease the pain of those who suffer.

People: **In the name of Christ, who was, who is, and who shall be.**

Pastor: Guiding Light, we look to the dawning sky of a new day and a new way – help us to live your way of abundant promise and blessing.

People: **In the name of Christ, who was, who is, and who shall be.**

(The names of specific people, places, and circumstances may be lifted up at this time)

Pastor: Gracious God, as you have promised, may it come to pass. We pray in Christ's name and offer the prayer He offered;

Unison: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

GIVE THANKS TO GOD

THE FELLOWSHIP OF SHARING OFFERTORY

FAITH SINGERS ANTHEM: *COME THOU ALMIGHTY GOD*

*** OFFERTORY RESPONSE – THE DOXOLOGY 780**

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.

*** PRAYER OF DEDICATION:**

God of mercy, of hope, of promise: accept these gifts we offer to you, in thanksgiving for all that you have done for us. You journey with us wherever we go, and you promise to bring us into new days and new ways. We dedicate our gifts and our lives to service in Christ's name. Amen.

THE BANQUET OF HOPEFUL EXPECTATION

THE INVITATION

Pastor: God's Banquet is coming. The time we await when all will gather from North, East, West and South.

People: A banquet where the rich and powerful will sit with the weak and poverty-stricken. A table where young and old will learn from each other. A time when all

will sit together in peace, “and the wolf will lie down with the lamb”.

Pastor: Here at this table we get a foretaste of God’s banquet. This is indeed God’s table, not the church’s, and so all who seek to follow The Way are welcome to eat and drink from it.

People: Come and taste the grace eternal, come and see that God is good.

Pastor: This table is for all Christians who wish to know the presence of Christ and to share in the community of God’s people.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Pastor: We are not alone, Christ is present here.

People: The Spirit moves within us.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to God,

People: in memory and in hope.

Pastor: Blessings be to you, Creator God, who in the beginning brought light and life to the world and who continues to bring it love and light everlasting.

People: Your song of wisdom echoes through the ages, your ancient promise still brings us hope.

Pastor: Over the ages you have called people to embrace your hope and share your love. But even when they have closed their ears to the song you did not stop singing. You sent prophets and messengers to your people, reminding them of the promised time of peace and justice that would surround the world.

People: They came in the midst of our despair and filled us with hope.

Pastor: And then you came to a young woman named Mary and laid out the promise in a new way.

People: Promising her a son, who would be called Jesus, promising her that in her son the world would be

changed.

Pastor: And now as we prepare for that child to be born, we echo the ancient cry:

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

*Psalterium Cantionum Catholicarum, 1710
Based on ancient antiphons from Advent Vespers
Transl. John Mason Neale, 1851, and others; alt.
St. 2, 7, transl. Henry Sloane Coffin, 1916; alt.*

Unison



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and



ran - som cap - tive Is - ra - el That mourns in lone - ly



ex - ile here, un - til the Child of God ap - pear.

Refrain



Re-joyce! Re-joyce! Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el!

THE STORY REMEMBERED

Pastor: Yet even now, as we prepare to celebrate his birth, we remember the life that this baby will live.

People: We remember how he broke the bonds of human tradition to show all what the Banquet of Hope could be as he ate openly with the despised and the outcast of his world.

Pastor: And we remember one special meal, foretaste of the banquet that is to come, that he ate with his closest friends.

People: Gathering them together in an upper room to share the story of liberation, he prepared them for liberation.

Pastor: And at the end of the meal he took bread, blessed and broke it, then passed it to them saying:

People: Take and eat. This bread is the body of Life, broken by the world. Eat it in remembrance and in hope.

Pastor: After that he took the cup, blessed it, and passed it to them saying:

People: This cup is the sign of the New Covenant. Whenever you drink it remember me, for I shall not eat or drink again until the time of the heavenly banquet.

Pastor: Remembering the birth of the child in the stable, we remember also his life, his death and his resurrection.

People: We remember how he poured his love out to all he met and look forward to his return and the coming reign of peace, love, and justice.

THE MYSTERY OF OUR FAITH

Pastor: Therefore we proclaim the mystery of our faith.

Unison: Christ's death, O God, we proclaim. Christ's resurrection we declare. Christ's coming we await. Glory be to you, O God.

THE SPIRIT TRANSFORMS

Pastor: God, you poured your Spirit on Mary and she sang words of defiance and hope. Pour out your Spirit upon us gathered here. As we eat and drink may we know and feel your presence with us. As we eat and drink may we be opened to the possibilities of your hope and power and may we be strengthened in our time of waiting for peace and justice so that we will have the courage to make the Christmas promise a reality.

Unison: Be present with us as we share this meal, and throughout all our lives, that we may know you as the Holy One, who with Christ and the Holy Spirit, lives for ever. Amen.

THE BREAKING, THE POURING, AND THE SERVING

Pastor: The bread that we break is the Bread of Life.

The Cup we Share is the Cup of the Promise.

These are the gifts of God for the people of God.

People: Thanks be to God.

Pastor: Come and eat, the banquet awaits.

SHARING THE ELEMENTS

This morning Bradley Shafer, who, along with his parents, have been studying the Sacrament of Holy Communion will receive his First Communion.

COMMUNION HYMN: THIS IS THE DAY OF NEW BEGINNINGS

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Pastor: Take and eat, this is the body of Christ broken for you.

People: Amen!

Pastor: Drink this, for it is the blood of Christ, shed for you.

People: Amen!

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Let us pray.

Unison: God of expectations, God of Christmas promise, God of child-like hope, we have eaten and drunk from your table. May the eating and the drinking fill us with hope in a world of despair. May we be beacons of hope as we wait for the day when the world will be changed. Grant that this taste of your banquet which is to come would give us the hunger for peace and justice in our community and around the world. Amen.

COMMISSIONING

Pastor: You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. May your light so shine before all people, that they may see your good works and give glory to God who is in heaven.

GO IN GOD'S NAME

- * CLOSING HYMN: *LET ALL MORTAL FLESH KEEP SILENCE* 345**
- * BENEDICTION AND THREEFOLD AMEN**
- * MEDITATION**
- * POSTLUDE**

*Would those who are able please stand.