



First Central Congregational

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

AUTUMN THEME: GOSPEL ENCOUNTERS

November 29, 2020

First Sunday of Advent

Prelude

Of the Father's Love Begotten

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Katie Miller

*Greeting and Passing of the Peace

"The Peace of God be with you."

In Unison: **Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;
the fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.**

** Let us rise in body or spirit.*

Introit

Oh Come to Us, Abide with us, Our Lord, Emmanuel

Call to Advent

Yvette Polinsky, liturgist

After such suffering, we go searching for a sign, any sign.

The sun seems to dim, the moon fails, the stars fall. We need a sign, any sign.

Be aware, stay awake, a new world is coming.

We hope that the fully Human One is on the way, gathering the faithful from the four winds, into a place of peace – We need a sign, any sign.

Be aware, stay awake, a new world is coming.

Nature once offered signs to depend on: the fig tree put out tender leaves,

and we knew summer was near—but climate today is hurting, and unpredictable. We need a sign, any sign.

Be aware, stay awake, a new world is coming.

So together we search for a sign of the One who is coming-- clarity in confusion. A green shoot in a barren landscape. A song arising in a weary soul.

Be aware, stay awake, a new world is coming

Come, let us worship!

*Processional Hymn

Watcher, Tell Us of the Night

ADVENT

103

Watcher, Tell Us of the Night

Isa. 21:11-12

John Bowring, 1825; alt.

1 Watch-er, tell us of the night, what its signs of prom-ise are.
2 Watch-er, tell us of the night, high-er yet that star as-cends.
3 Watch-er, tell us of the night, for the morn-ing seems to dawn.

Trav-eler, O a won-drous sight! See that glo-ry - beam-ing star!
Trav-eler, bless-ed - ness and light, peace and truth its course por - tends.
Trav-eler, shad-ows take their flight, doubt and ter-ror are with-drawn.

Watch-er, does its beau-teous ray news of joy or hope fore - tell?
Watch-er, will its beams a - lone gild the spot that gave them birth?
Watch-er, you may go your way; has-ten to your qui - et home.

Trav-eler, yes; it brings the day, prom - ised day of Is - ra - el!
Trav-eler, a - ges are its own; see, it bursts o'er all the earth!
Trav-eler, I re - joicé to-day, for Em - man - u - el has come!

This hymn, a dialogue between watcher and traveler, was suggested by the dialogue in Isaiah 21:11-12. John Bowring was

Tune: ABERYSTWYTH 7.7.7.D.
Joseph Parry 1870

***Invocation**

God of power and might, come among us. We seek an answer to our prayers and longings. Comfort our fears. Heal our hurts. Encourage and inspire us with hope. Work within and through us to shake things up. We implore you to make all things new, as you have promised. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

***Gloria**

Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Conversation with the Children

Lighting of the Advent Candle

We are separated from one another. We are missing hugs and handshakes, meals and parties with friends and family. The mundane routines of daily life. The big moments of celebration and loss. This year we grieve. And so we light this candle, a candle of hope. May it burn through these weeks as a beacon, guiding us to your presence in our midst.
God be with us, in this Light of Hope.

Scripture Lessons

Isaiah 64:1-9 and Mark 13:24-27

For the Word of God in scripture,
For the Word of God among us,
For the Word of God within us,
Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Hoping for a New World

Rev. Dr. Scott Jones

***Hymn**

O How Shall I Receive You

O How Shall I Receive You

102

Paul Gerhardt, 1653

Transl. Catherine Winkworth, 1863, and others; alt.

1 O how shall I re - ceive you, how meet you on your way,
2 Love caused your in - car - na - tion; love brought you un - to me;
3 You come, O Christ, with glad - ness, in mer - cy and good - will,

blessed hope of ev - ery peo - ple, my soul's de - light and stay?
your thirst for my sal - va - tion pro - cured my lib - er - ty.
to bring an end to sad - ness and bid our fears be still.

O Je - sus, Je - sus, give me now by your own pure light,
O love be - yond all tell - ing, that led you to em - brace
In pa - tient ex - pec - ta - tion we live for that great day

to know what-e'er is pleas - ing and wel - come in your sight.
in love, all love ex - cel - ling, our lost and fall - en race.
when a re - newed cre - a - tion your glo - ry shall dis - play.

As a German Lutheran pastor serving during the Thirty Years' War, Paul Gerhardt's trials were legion. In the midst of it all, he composed more than a hundred hymns, among them some of the

Tune: ST. THEODULPH 7.6.7.6.D.
(VALET WILL ICH DIR GEBEN)

Matthias Teschner 1615

***Prayer of Confession**

Rev. Dr. Jim Harmon

This has been a year to lament—when social structures have failed the common good; when complicity with age-old prejudices found new and cruel expression. This has been a year to wake up—to painful truths and give them voice; to ponder the changes needed for a just world for all. This has been a year to call God into our midst—to show your face! And to empower us to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with you. For these are the ways in which you make all things new. Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

***Words of Assurance**

God is faithful and gives us grace in Jesus. Let us give thanks, for we are forgiven and sent forth to work for God's reign among us.

Prayers

Pastoral Prayer

Lord's Prayer

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.

Offertory

Forest Green

***Hymn of Dedication**

VENI EMMANUEL

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Christ, all creatures here below. Praise Holy Spirit evermore. Praise Triune God whom we adore. Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

***Offertory Prayer**

Faithful One, accept us. We give ourselves to you. Magnify us as the living presence of Christ in the world. Amen.

***Recessional Hymn**

Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates

Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates

117

Georg Weissel, 1641

Transl. Catherine Winkworth, 1865; alt.

Ps. 24:7-10

1 Lift up your heads, O might-y gates; be-hold the- glo - rious Rul - er waits!
2 Fling wide the por - tals of your heart; make it a tem - ple, set a - part
3 Re - deem - er, come! I o - pen wide my heart to you; here, Christ, a - bide!
4 So come, my Sov-ereign; en - ter in! Let new and no - bler life be - gin;

The Sov-ereign One is draw - ing near; the Sav - ior of the world is here.
From earth - ly use for heaven's em - ploy, a - dorned with prayer and love and joy.
Let me your in - ner pres - ence feel; your grace and love in me re - veal.
Your Ho - ly Spir - it guide us on, un - til the glo - rious crown be won.

Georg Weissel, a Lutheran pastor, served a church in Königsberg, East Prussia. He wrote some twenty hymns, most of them for the great festivals of the church year.

Tune: TRURO L.M.
Thomas Williams' Psalmodia Evangelica, 1789

*Benediction

Send us into the world refreshed in hope,
Awake, alert,
attuned to your presence
ready to join your work of blessing for all.

Benediction Response

Bouma

May you hear laughter in the wind. May you see hope in the light.
May you find courage in your faith. May you know joy in your God.

Postlude

Vom Himmel Hoch

Open & Affirming Statement

In our ongoing quest for hearts that open, minds that understand,
and lives that serve, we welcome into our fellowship, membership, leadership, and employment,
all people, regardless of abilities, race, gender, sexual orientation, or any God-given characteristic.

Announcements
November 29, 2020

Chancel flowers and decorations: sponsored this month by *Steve & Susan Dolezal*, the *Wiseman-Gustafson family*, and *Elizabeth Wearin*.

Happy Birthday this week: to *Dena Higginbotham*, *Emma Ferber*, *Julie Elliott*, and *Phil Smith*.

Neighbors in Need: donations welcomed this month. Please make your check out to First Central, with NIN in the memo line. Thank you for your generosity.

FirstYouth: 8 p.m., Zoom.

Activities for the Coming Week, November 30-December 5

Lectionary Readings: Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8.

Wednesday: Vespers, 6 p.m., FaceBook live.
Choir, 7 p.m., Zoom

Thursday: Adult Education, 7 p.m., Zoom. Author *Steve Jackson*.

Saturday: Evergreen Thrift Shop, *temporarily closed*.

Sunday, December 6

Worship: 10:30 a.m. on YouTube.

Food Pantry: Donations will be accepted at church. Checks may be mailed to First Central with "pantry" in the memo line. Frozen meats are now being accepted (and are needed).

FirstYouth: 8 p.m., Zoom

Want to donate electronically? Please scan the QR code.

