



First Central Congregational

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

AUTUMN THEME: GOSPEL ENCOUNTERS

December 13, 2020

Third Sunday of Advent

Prelude

Pastorale

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

Call to Advent

Jim & Nancy Barbour, liturgists

The spirit of God is sending us:

To rebuild ancient relationships ruined by injustice,

To repair the cities as places of hope,

To restore land devastated across generations,

To proclaim the year of favor among God's people.

The spirit of God is calling us:

To put on the mantle of praise,

To take root as the plantings of the Holy One,

To display God's glory.

Come, let us worship in Joy!

***Processional Hymn**

Awake! Awake and See the New Morn

Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn

Isa. 12:6; 26:9; 35:6; Matt. 11:5

Marty Haugen, 1983; rev. 1993

1 A - wake! a - wake, and greet the new morn, for
 2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em -
 3 In deep - est night Christ's com - ing shall be, when
 4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night, though

an - gels her - ald its dawn - ing, sing out your joy, for
 man - u - el comes a - sing - ing, whose hum - ble song is
 all the world is de - spair - ing; as morn - ing light so
 cold the win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall

Je - sus is born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing.
 qui - et and near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing.
 qui - et and free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing.
 crown you with light, be strong and lov - ing and fear - less;

Liturgical composer Marty Haugen wrote both words and

Tune: REJOICE, REJOICE 9.8.9.8.8.7.8.9
Marty Haugen, 1983

107 cont.

D D/F# G D Em Am D

Come as a ba - by weak and poor, to bring all hearts to -
Mu - sic to heal the bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing
One with - out voice breaks forth in song, a lame one leaps in
Love be our song and love our prayer, and love, our end - less

Em D7 G C B7 Em

geth - er, to o - pen wide the heaven - ly door, and
kind - ness, the thun - der of the an - thems roll to
won - der, the weak are raised a - bove the strong, and
sto - ry, may God fill ev - ery day we share, and

Am7 D7 G 1-3 G/B C 4 G/B C G

lives now in - side us for ev - er. . . .
shat - ter all hate and in - jus - tice. . . .
weap - ons are bro - ken a - sun - der. . . .
bring us at last in - to glo - ry. . . .

***Invocation**

Delightful Builder of safe and beautiful spaces fill us today with the gifts we need to join you in your life-sustaining, hope-giving work in the world. Let us share your vision of beauty and justice. May a community of builders be formed in the Light of Joy. In the name of the One who is coming, Amen

***Gloria**

Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Conversation with the Children

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Despite this difficult year we have spent, let us give witness to the signs of Joy in our midst—signs that our God is doing something new. We light this third candle and delight in the sparkle of its outrageous reminder to rejoice! Let its flame cast light into the shadowy places and reveal where our work is to be done. So, let Joy find a home in our hearts, making space for God's presence there. **God be with us, in this Joyful Light.**

Scripture Lessons

Isaiah 61:1-4, Psalm 126

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

Rejoicing in a New World

Rev. Dr. Scott Jones

***Hymn**

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

129

German and Latin, 14th century
 Transl. John Mason Neale, 1855; alt.

Adagio 129

3 Good Chris - tian friends, re-joice with heart and soul and voice;

1 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
 2 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
 3 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;

now you need not fear the grave: Je - sus Christ was born to save!

now give heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to-day;
 now you know of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!
 now you need not fear the grave: Je - sus Christ was born to save!

Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er -

Ox and ass be - fore him bow, a - sleep with - in the
 God has o - pened heav - en's door, and you are blessed for -
 Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er -

last - ing hall. Christ was born, Christ was born to save!

man-ger now. Christ is born to - day, Christ is born to - day!
 ev - er-more. Christ was born for this, Christ was born for this!
 last-ing hall. Christ was born to save, Christ was born to save!

***Prayer of Confession**

Rev. Dr. Jim Harmon

Fear turns us inward, and anger causes us to lash out. You are a Loving God, a Healing Spirit. You look kindly on us, no matter what our state or condition. Your care for this world is greater than we could ever ask or imagine:
You bring order from chaos. You turn weeping into laughter. You turn sorrow into joy, and death into new life. You redeem all that appears lost, making all things new. Forgive us for neglecting the joy at the heart of the Advent season. Turn our hearts back to you, and inspire us with your love made flesh in Jesus Christ.

***Words of Assurance**

Our Generous and Gracious God meets us in our struggles and calls us into a future of hope and joy. God is faithful, opening our hearts to trust again and giving us peace amidst our anxieties.

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

In Dulci Jubilo

arr. Bouma

Bethany & Justin Lowndes, trumpets

***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**

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and
 2 O come, O Wis - dom from on high, and
 3 O come, O come, O A - do - nai, who
 4 O come, O shoot of Jes - se, free your
 5 O come, O Key of Da - vid, come, and

ran - som cap - tive Is - ra - el That mourns in lone - ly
 or - der all things far and nigh; To us the path of
 came to all on Si - nai high, And from its peak a
 own from Sa - tan's tyr - an - ny, From depths of hell your
 o - pen wide your heav - en - ly home; Make safe the path to

ex - ile here, un - til the Child of God ap - pear.
 knowl - edge show, and help us in that way to go.
 sin - gle law pro - claimed in maj - es - ty and awe.
 peo - ple save, and give them vic - tory o'er the grave.
 end - less day, to hell's de - struc - tion close the way.

Refrain

Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el shall come to you. O Is - ra - el!

6 O come, O Day-spring, come and cheer
 our spir-its by your ad-vent here;
 Love stir with-in the womb of night,
 and death's own shad-ows put to flight.
Refrain

7 O come, De-sire of Na-tions, bind
 all peo-ples in one heart and mind;
 Make en-vy, strife, and quar-rels cease;
 fill the whole world with heav-en's peace.
Refrain

***Benediction**

Rejoice!

God's new world is coming.

Be a sign of hope, of encouragement, of change, of comfort.

Let your witness point to the Holy One at work.

Benediction Response

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

Postlude

Adeste Fidelis

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

December 13, 2020

Prayers: the *Syster, Acker, Blazek*, and *Roche* families, on the death of *Cheryl Roche*.

Happy Birthday this week: to *Maralee Jensen, Carolyn Baldwin, Allan Bucknam, Tiffany Weibel, Michael Cich-Jones, Rita Grossenstein, Amber McIntire, Evan Dimon,* and *Kathy McConnell*.

First Forum: 5 p.m., Zoom. Director of Music, *Stephen Bouma* discussing Beethoven.

FirstYouth: 8 p.m., Zoom.

Siena/Francis House: Congregational Outreach Ministry is collecting **NEW hats, NEW mittens/gloves** and **GENTLY USED coats** through December. Men's items are especially needed. Drop off boxes are in the glass entry – please call before you come.

Activities for the Coming Week, December 14 - December 19

*Lectionary Readings: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:46b-55;
Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38*

Monday: Staff meeting, 1:30 p.m., Zoom
Eves, 7 p.m., Zoom

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

Sunday, December 20

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

Christmas Fund: special offering. Please mail checks to the church; indicate "Christmas Fund" in the memo line. Thank you for your generosity.

FirstYouth: 8 p.m., Zoom

Want to donate electronically? Please scan the QR code.

