



# First Central Congregational

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## ADVENT THEME: A NEW WORLD

December 6, 2020

Second Sunday of Advent

### Prelude

Shepherds of the Mountains

### 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

Claire Bouma, liturgist

Prepare a way for the Holy One,  
Through deserts of despair build a highway for our God.  
**Let us hear what God will speak,  
Encouraging words for an anxious people.**  
Comfort, comfort, my people.  
The days of sorrow are ending.  
**Let us hear what God will speak,  
Tender words for a burdened people.**  
Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;  
Righteousness and peace will kiss.  
**Let us hear what God will speak,  
Words of vision for a weary people.**  
Come, let us worship!

# \*Processional Hymn

## Comfort, Comfort O My People

ADVENT

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### Comfort, Comfort O My People

Isa. 40:1-8

Johannes Olearius, 1671

Transl. Catherine Winkworth, 1863; alt.

1 "Com - fort, com - fort O my peo - ple, tell of peace," thus says our God;  
2 For the her - ald's voice is call - ing in the des - ert far and near,  
3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er pla - ces plain!

Com - fort those whose hearts are shroud - ed, mourn - ing un - der sor - row's load.  
Bid - ding us to make re - pen - tance since the realm of God is here.  
Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, for Mes - si - ah's ho - ly reign.

Speak un - to Je - ru - sa - lem of the peace that waits for them;  
Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way;  
For God's glo - ry ev - er - more shall be known o'er all the world;

Tell them that their sins I cov - er, and their war - fare now is o - ver.  
Let the val - leys rise in meet - ing and the hills bow down in greet - ing.  
And all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

Written for John the Baptist's Day, June 24, this hymn clearly reflects the Isaiah text. Johannes Olearius, a Lutheran pastor,

Tune: PSALM 42 8.7.&.7.7.8.8.  
(FREU DICH SEHR)

## **\*Invocation**

O Holy One, you are a tender shepherd, architect of the Way, beguiling hope of all who go looking for you. Surprise us here with comfort, challenge, vision—whatever we may need in this moment to recognize you and follow you into the future—a new world of peace. We pray in the name of Jesus, the Beloved. Amen.

## **\*Gloria**

Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.

## **Conversation with the Children**

### **Lighting of the Advent Candle**

After a year of pain and loss, we are weary. We seek comfort.  
And so we light this candle, a candle of peace.  
May it burn through these weeks as a beacon,  
guiding us to your presence in our midst.  
Let its glow warm our lives and remind us of your tender care.  
**God be with us, in this Light of Peace.**

## **Scripture Lessons**

Isaiah 40:1-11; Mark 1:1-8

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**

A New World of Peace

Rev. Dr. Jim Harmon

## **\*Hymn**

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

Isa. 6:1-3; 1 Tim. 6:13-15

From the Liturgy of St. James, 4th cent.  
Transl. Gerard Moultrie, 1864; c

1 Let all mor - tal flesh keep si - lence, and with fear and  
 2 Mon - arch great, yet born of Mar - y, as of old on  
 3 Rank on rank the host of heav - en spreads its van - guard  
 4 At Christ's feet the six - winged ser - aphs, cher - u - bim with

trem - bling stand; Pon - der noth - ing earth - ly - mind - ed,  
 earth Christ stood, Lord of all, in hu - man ves - ture—  
 on the way, As the Light of light de - scend - ing  
 sleep - less eye, Veil their fac - es to the Pres - ence,

for with bless - ing in the hand, Christ our God to  
 in the bod - y and the blood— Christ will give to  
 from the realms of end - less day, That the powers of  
 as with cease - less voice they cry, Al - le - lu - ia,

earth de - scend - ing, our full hom - age to de - mand.  
 all the faith - ful bread of life for heav - en - ly food.  
 hell may van - ish as the shad - ows clear a - way.  
 al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, God most high!

## **\*Prayer of Confession**

Rev. Katie Miller

The year has been riddled with crisis and loss. And it has exposed historic inequities and longstanding systemic injustices. In this moment you, Dear God, call to examine our hearts. We seek forgiveness for what we have done to contribute to the pain and injustice. We also ask your forgiveness for what have we left undone. Make us your instruments of peace, as we envision a new and better world. Amen.

## **\*Words of Assurance**

Comfort, comfort, my people, says the God of Justice and Compassion. You are forgiven your sin and showered with grace to change your life. Let us join together to do the work of the One who is to come—a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

## **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**

Carol of the Bells

*Claire Bouma, Lyn Bouma, Stephen Bouma, Gage Sutherland*

## **\*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.

## **Celebration of the Sacrament of Communion**

God be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to God.**

Let us give thanks and praise to God.

**We give thanks for your creation, fragile, yet fruitful, enough for all. We give thanks that you call us into community where love and justice may flourish, enough for all. We give thanks that you invite us to rejoice, enough for all. Take us deeper into the mystery of your abundant life: a world healed and renewed; all nature and all people at peace. And now we join our voices with those of all created beings in Heaven, and on Earth singing:**

*Holy, Holy, God, you are holy. Ruler of the sea and sky. Angel hosts above adore you. Earth sings out its endless cry: "Hail, hosanna in the highest!"  
"Peace on earth," the heav'ns reply.*

**Words of Institution and Invitation to the Table**

**The Bread and Cup**

**Prayer of Thanksgiving**

**\*Recessional Hymn**

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

## It Came upon the Midnight Clear

Luke 2:8-14

Edmund H. Sears, 1849; alt.

1 It came up-on the mid - night clear, that glo - rious song of old,  
 2 Still through the clo - ven skies they come, with peace-ful wings un - furled,  
 3 And you, be-neath life's crush-ing load, whose forms are bend-ing low,  
 4 For lo, the days are hasten-ing on, by proph-et bards fore - told,

from an - gels bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of gold;  
 and still their heaven-ly mu - sic floats o'er all the wea - ry world;  
 who toil a - long the climb-ing way, with pain - ful steps and slow,  
 when with the ev - er - cir - cling years comes round the age of gold;

"Peace on the earth, good will to all, great news of joy we bring."  
 A - bove its sad and low - ly plains they bend on hover-ing wing,  
 Look now, for glad and gold-en hours come swift - ly on the wing;  
 When peace shall o - ver all the earth its an - cient splen-dors fling,

The world in sol - emn still-ness lay to hear the an - gels sing.  
 and ev - er o'er its Ba - bel sounds the bless-ed an - gels sing.  
 O rest be - side the wea - ry road, and hear the an - gels sing!  
 and all the world send back the song which now the an - gels sing.

*Edmund Sears, a Unitarian minister who served a number of congregations in the Boston area, wrote this Christmas hymn emphasizing the social implications of the Gospel for his congregation at Wayland, Massachusetts.*

Tune: CAROL C.M.D.  
 Richard S. Willis, 1850

## **\*Benediction**

You are sent into the world renewed with a vision for peace,  
Encouraged and empowered to do the work.  
God's new world is coming.

## **Benediction Response**

### **Postlude**

Consolation

#### **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 6, 2020**

**Prayers:** *Bud Cassidy*, recovering from surgery; the *Acker, Blazek*, and *Roche* families, on the death of *Cheryl Roche*.

**Joys:** *Jordan Acker Anderson & Josh Anderson*, celebrating the birth of *Isaac Beau Anderson*. – proud grandparents are *Janet & Andy Acker*.

**Happy Birthday this week:** to *Bev Fleckten, Kate Patterson, Cordell Young, Nate Bock*, and *Katie Lewis*.

**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.

**Activities for the Coming Week, December 7 - December 12**

*Lectionary Readings: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126 or Luke 1:46b-55;  
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28.*

**Monday:** Staff meeting, 1:30 p.m.  
**Tuesday:** Council, 7 p.m., Zoom  
**Wednesday:** Vespers, 6 p.m., FaceBook live.  
Choir, 7 p.m., Zoom  
**Thursday:** Book Club, 7 p.m., Zoom

**Sunday, December 13**

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

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

**FirstYouth:** 8 p.m., Zoom

*Want to donate electronically? Please scan the QR code.*

