



# First Central Congregational

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## Advent Theme: [Un]Expected

December 19, 2021

Fourth Sunday of Advent

### Prelude

Mary's Boy Child  
*arranged by Kelly Beaman*  
*Please respect those who wish to sit in silence.*

### 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.

### Call to Advent

Barb Burritt

Before the majesty of God, we gather in quiet anticipation.

**This is where we belong; here we are warmly welcomed.**

This day we feel God present with us.

**Surely God will show us new ways to live.**

We come with expectations,

**Awaiting the unexpected.**

### \*Processional Hymn

O How Shall I Receive You

*Black Hymnal*, No. 102

ST. THEODULPH

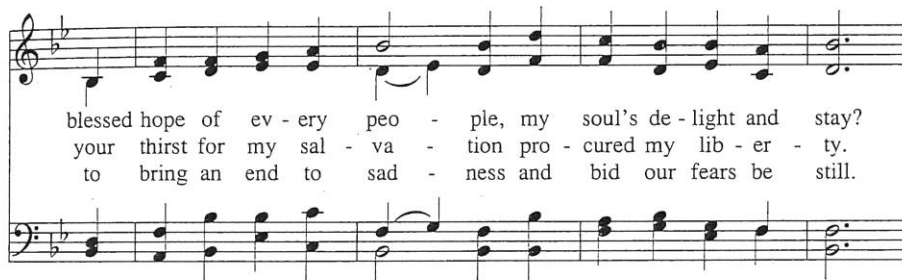
# O How Shall I Receive You

102

Paul Gerhardt, 1653  
Transl. Catherine Winkworth, 1863, and others; alt.



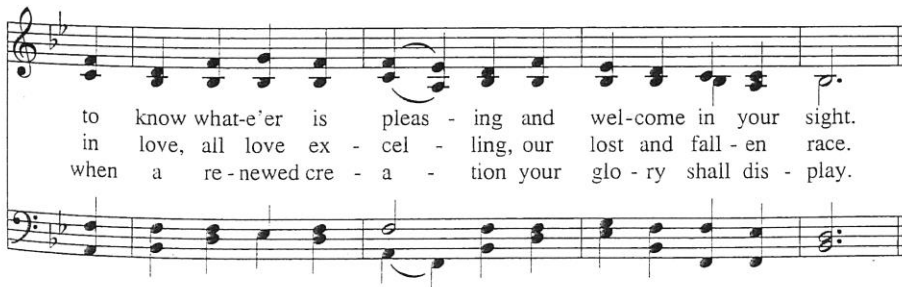
1 O how shall I re - ceive you, how meet you on your way,  
2 Love caused your in - car - na - tion; love brought you un - to me;  
3 You come, O Christ, with glad - ness, in mer - cy and good - will,



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)  
*Melchior Teschner, 1615*

## **\*Invocation**

Let your face shine upon us, wondrous God. Break through the obstacles that prevent us from seeing your way. Remove the barriers that hold us back from experiencing the rich embrace of your love. Lift us up from the despair that keeps us from delighting in your gifts. Speak to us here and transform us. Amen.

## **\*Gloria**

*Black Hymnal*, chorus of No. 125

Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.

## **Conversation with the Children**

### **Special Recognition**

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

Desiree, Mark, and Coco Phillips

The world is not as it should be.  
You dreamed something different—justice, peace, love.  
We come carrying fears and griefs.  
We come to Advent with expectations.  
But we've learned to be ready for the Unexpected.  
You inspire us to dream of everything transformed.  
**Come, Lord Jesus, come!**  
As we wait in eager anticipation, we light these candles today as signs of all we hope and dream for.  
**Come, Lord Jesus, come!**

### **Gospel Lesson**

Luke 1:39-55, pew Bible pages 53-54

### **Anthem**

The Virgin Mary Had A Baby Boy

Bouma

### **First Testament Lesson**

Micah 5:2-5a, pew Bible page 815

### **Sermon**

In Labor

Dr. Rev. Scott Jones

### **\*Hymn**

Once in Royal David's City

*Black Hymnal*, No. 145

IRBY

# Once in Royal David's City

145

F. Alexander, 1848; alt.

Luke 1:26-35; 2:1-7; 1 Thess. 4:13-18



1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's ci - ty stood a low - ly cat - tle shed,  
 2 Je - sus came to earth from heav - en, who is God and Head of all,  
 3 And through all this won - drous child - hood Je - sus hon - ored and o - beyed,  
 4 Je - sus is our child - hood's pat - tern, dai - ly like us lived and grew,  
 5 We at last shall meet our Sav - ior, fount of God's re - deem - ing grace,



Where a moth - er laid her ba - by in a man - ger for a bed:  
 Shel - tered in a rus - tic sta - ble, cra - dled in a com - mon stall;  
 Loved and watched the ten - der moth - er whose strong arms a cra - dle made.  
 Je - sus, lit - tle, weak, and help - less, tears and smiles and com - fort knew.  
 For that Child so dear and gen - tle reigns with - in a glo - rious place;



Mar - y was that moth - er mild, Je - sus Christ her lit - tle child.  
 With the poor and meek and low - ly lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.  
 So, like Je - sus, we should be serv - ing God o - be - dient - ly.  
 Je - sus felt the pain of sad - ness, and the joy - ous lift of glad - ness.  
 Lead - ing all God's chil - dren on to the heav - en where saints have gone.

*Francis Alexander, wife of the bishop of Ireland, wrote a series of children's hymns commenting on the Apostles' Creed. This hymn, elaborating on the words "... born of the Virgin Mary," tells the whole life of Christ.*

Tune: IRBY 8.7.8.7.7.7.  
 Henry J. Gaunlett, 1849  
 Harm. A. H. Mann, 1919

## **\*Confession**

Dr. Rev. Jim Harmon

**Gracious God, you have witnessed our poor choices and our destructive habits. We've been self-serving and ignored our responsibilities. Hear our cries for repentance and transform us. Let us experience the joy and wonder of your forgiveness. Teach us to hope and dream again. Amen.**

## **\*Assurance**

Good news! God is working even now to care for us. We are loved; we are forgiven; we are claimed by God's grace. We look forward with excitement to what will be born anew in us this year.

## **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**

Christian Friends Rejoice

Beaman

## **\*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**

**Thank you God for your mercy and protection. We feel secure and loved. And so, in gratitude, we offer these gifts and reach out in generosity towards others. We dedicate ourselves to your work, that all the world might be transformed. Amen.**

## **\*Recessional Hymn** It Came Upon The Midnight Clear *Black Hymnal*, No. 131

CAROL

## 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**

### **Benediction Response**

*Bouma*

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

### **Postlude**

Joy to the World

Beaman

*You are invited to remain for the playing of the postlude.*

*Please respect those who wish to sit in silence.*

### **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 19, 2021

**Happy Birthday this week:** *Mark Jensen, Bud Cassiday, Mary Gryva, Hadley Rudd, Erin Bock, Leigh Gustafson,* and *Katie Sharp.*

**Thank You:** To our fabulous Jazz Ensemble, *Allison Beaman, Justin Lowndes, Bethany Lowndes, Kerrie Kleppin-Winn,* and *Stephen Bouma.*

**Chancel flowers and decorations:** Donors this month are *Friends & Family of FCC.*

**Fair Trade Coffee:** Sponsored this month by *Janet Kuehl.*

**FirstKids:** Fireside Room following the Conversation with the Children. Masks required.

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





## **Activities for the Coming Week** **December 19-25**

*Lectionary Readings: 1 Sam 2:18-20, 26; Psalm 148; Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52*

- Monday:** Staff meeting, 1:30 p.m., Pastor's Study.
- Tuesday:** Blue Christmas Vespers, 8 p.m., Facebook Live
- Wednesday:** Evergreen Thrift Shop 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.  
Sanctuary Choir, 7 p.m.
- Thursday:** Evergreen Thrift Shop 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- Friday:** Church Offices Closed  
Candlelight Christmas Eve Services, 6 p.m. & 11 p.m.
- Saturday:** Joy to the world! Merry Christmas!

## **Sunday, December 26**

**Worship:** 10:30 a.m. on Facebook Live, YouTube, or in person. Masks required.

*The church calendar is also available at [www.firstcentral.org](http://www.firstcentral.org)  
Like us on **Facebook**. Follow us on **Twitter**. Watch us on **YouTube**.*