

Sunday, December 5, 2021



Second Sunday of Advent

First Presbyterian Church of Mount Vernon, Iowa

*“Striving to live as Jesus lived –
confronting injustice with love, compassion, service.”*

Welcome to Worship

PRELUDE

RINGING OF THE HOUR

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

L: The Lord be with you.

P: And also with you.

INTROIT *Hope is a Light* Daniel Charles Damon

*Hope is a light.
Hope is a light to show the way.
Light the candle of hope.*

*Peace is a prayer.
Peace is a prayer that starts with me.
Light the candle of peace*

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

Reader 1: Because of war, because of violence in our communities, because there is still so much unrest in our hearts, we light a candle of peace...

Reader 2: Because hatred is still so strong, because so many swords have not yet been beaten into ploughshares, we light a candle of peace...

Reader 1: May the light from this candle overwhelm the world.

All: May the light from this candle say to all that God's peace is coming, on earth as it already is in heaven.

Reader 2: Friends, be not afraid, God's peace is at hand!

~ © Salt Project, 2021.

*HYMN #87 Comfort, Comfort Now My People

*1: "Comfort, comfort now my people;
tell of peace!" So says our God.
"Comfort those who sit in darkness
mourning under sorrow's load.
To my people now proclaim
that my pardon waits for them!
Tell them that their sins I cover,
and their warfare now is over."*

*2: For the herald's voice is crying
in the desert far and near,
calling us to true repentance,
since the reign of God is here.
O, that warning cry obey!
Now prepare for God a way.
Let the valleys rise in meeting
and the hills bow down in greeting.*

*3: Straight shall be what long was crooked,
and the rougher places plain.
Let your hearts be true and humble,
as befits God's holy reign.
For the glory of the Lord
now on earth is shed abroad,
and all flesh shall see the token
that God's word is never broken.*

*CALL TO CONFESSION

L: God calls us to “prepare the way of the Lord”
and in order to do so we are to “make his paths straight.”

While we do strive to do just these things,
we often find curves and bumps in the road along the way.

Let us confess our sin together
so that God can help us continue to prepare the way going forward.

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*PRAYER OF CONFESSION *(from Luke 1:75 and Malachi 3:2)*

L: Let us pray:

**All: Holy and righteous God,
far too often we are a far cry from the holiness you invite us into. And often we fail to live up to
your righteous standards
for how we are called to live.**

**Refine us with your righteous refiner’s fire
to remove all our sinful impulses and impurities.**

**Cleanse us with the fullers’ soap
to make us pure and holy once again.**

Help us to live in a way that would be pleasing to you, our Lord. Amen.

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WORDS OF ASSURANCE *(from The Confession of 1967)*

L: “All who put their trust in Christ face divine judgment without fear,
for the judge is their redeemer.”

Therefore, be at peace; in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

All: Thanks be to God.

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*RESPONSE

#88 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel verse #7

*O Come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife and discord cease; fill the whole world with heaven’s peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

L: Within us, without us, among us, before us,
in this place, in every place, for this time, for all time:

P: Christ is coming. Christ is coming to make all things new.

L: The peace of Christ be with you.

P: And also with you.

DISCOVERY TIME

ANTHEM

SCRIPTURE

L: In the beginning was the Word.

P: And the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

L: And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

Luke 1:68-79 (NRSV) – Zechariah’s Song

Reader 1: “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.
He has raised up a mighty savior for us
in the house of his servant David,
as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,
that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.
Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,
and has remembered his holy covenant,
the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,
to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,
might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness
before him all our days.

Reader 2: And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
to give knowledge of salvation to his people
by the forgiveness of their sins.
By the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

Luke 3:1-6 (NRSV) – The Proclamation of John the Baptist

Reader 1: In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

Reader 2: “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.
Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth;
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”

L: For the Word of God in scripture, for the Word of God among us,
for the Word of God within us,

P: Thanks be to God.

SERMON *Advent Peace*

HYMN #106 Prepare the Way, O Zion

*1: Prepare the way O Zion
Your Christ is drawing near
Let every hill and valley
A level way appear
Greet One who comes in glory
Foretold in sacred story*

*Chorus:
O blest is Christ who came
In God's most holy name*

*2: He brings God's rule O Zion
He comes from heaven above
His rule is peace and freedom
And justice truth and love
Lift high your praise resounding
For grace and joy abounding*

*3: Fling wide your gates O Zion
Your Savior's rule embrace
And tidings of salvation
Proclaim in every place
All lands will bow rejoicing
their adoration voicing*

CALL FOR THE OFFERING & PRAYER OF DEDICATION

L: Everything we have is a gift from God, and our offerings are a way of acknowledging God as the giver. They are no less an act of worship than our presence, prayers and praise. Let us make our offering to God as a sign of our thanks and our commitment to Jesus, the light of the world.

**All: God, fulfiller of promises,
we come to this season of Advent with expectant and thankful hearts.
We welcome the renewed promise
of your love, justice and righteousness breaking into our world.
We offer these gifts and the service of our lives
in gratitude for all you have done, are doing and will do.
This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.**

GATHERING OF THE GIFTS
OFFERTORY

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER
INVITATION TO THE TABLE

GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

May the God of Advent wonder be with you.

And also with you.

People of God, lift up your hopeful hearts.

We lift them to the One who fills us with all joy and peace.

Blessed be the One who comes to speak for the poor,
to set free those imprisoned by despair.

**May the glory of the One who welcomes all to this Table
fill hearts throughout creation.**

God of Wonder:

your Spirit did not rest, but transformed chaos into creation,
the mountains crying 'Glory!' with one voice,
the hills echoing the glad refrain.

You welcomed us into your garden of peace and hope,
but we flocked to sin and death,
those entertainers who seduce us with their temptations and tricks.

The prophets were sent to help us understand our brokenness,
but we turned our backs when they sang of your hopes for us.
And so, you prepared Jesus to come to us,
so we might know the very nearness of your kingdom.
Therefore, we would join our voices with those of every time and place,
who sing of your glory:

Holy, holy, holy, God of promises and providence.

All creation delights in your coming.

Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is the One who comes in joy and hope.

Hosanna in the highest!

Holy are you, God of all creation,
and blessed is Jesus Christ, your Child,
who became our servant to save us.

He came, so that those who could only speak in anger to one another,
might sing songs of peace at your Table.

He came, to shower the living waters of grace
upon our hope-parched souls.

He came, to sweep death from the bottoms of our hearts,
so we might dance in your life forever.

Even now, as we prepare to celebrate his birth, and ache for his return,
we sing of that mystery we call faith:

**In rejection's stable, Hope was born;
on death's cruel tree, Hope cried out;
in our hearts, we long for Hope to return.**

Come to us in these moments, God of Advent,
pouring your Spirit upon the bread and the cup
that we might be drenched by your grace and peace.

Then, when we are filled with your justice and righteousness,
send us forth into the wilderness of despair and loneliness,
to bring joy and hope; to be servants to the poor;
to be voices for those silenced by oppression;
to become a bumper crop of reconciliation
in a world strewn with the stumps from the violence of war and fear.

Then, when all time has ended, all pain and hurt is gone,
you will welcome everyone to your Table,
where we can sing 'Glory!' with one voice
to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
God in Community, Holy in One. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Among friends, gathered round a table,
Jesus took bread, and broke it, and said,
“This is my body, broken for you.”

Later he took a cup of wine and said,
“This is the new relationship with God
made possible because of my death.
Take it, all of you, to remember me.”

He whom the universe could not contain,
is present to us in this bread.
He who redeemed us and called us by name
now meets us in this cup.
So take this bread and this cup.
In them God comes to us so that we may come to God.

SHARING THE MEAL

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God Incarnate, we give thanks every time we experience your presence, in worship, in song, in silence, in the breaking of bread and the sharing of the cup. As we have taken you into ourselves this day through the sharing of this meal, so take us into yourself; renew us in faith and remake us more and more in your own likeness. Send us out to be your people and be signs of your kingdom in this world. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN #100 My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout

*1: My soul cries out with a joyful shout
that the God of my heart is great,
And my spirit sings of the wondrous things
that you bring to the one who waits.
You fixed your sight on the servant's plight,
and my weakness you did not spurn,
So from east to west shall my name be blest.
Could the world be about to turn?*

*Chorus:
My heart shall sing of the day you bring.
Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears,
For the dawn draws near,
And the world is about to turn.*

*2: Though I am small, my God, my all,
you work great things in me.
And your mercy will last from the depths of the past
to the end of the age to be.
Your very name puts the proud to shame,
and those who would for you yearn,
You will show your might, put the strong to flight,
for the world is about to turn.*

*3: From the halls of power to the fortress tower,
not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice tears
every tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more,
for the food they can never earn;
These are tables spread, ev'ry mouth be fed,
for the world is about to turn.*

*4: Though the nations rage from age to age,
we remember who holds us fast:
God's mercy must deliver us
from the conqueror's crushing grasp.
This saving word that our forbears heard
is the promise that holds us bound,
'Til the spear and rod be crushed by God,
who is turning the world around.*

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Liturgist: Sue Deibner

Prayer Requests:

- *Amy Weber, recovery from back surgery October 22; extreme pain in leg.
- *Mark Andresen, hospitalized with ongoing GI issues; internal bleeding source identified
- *Tex Clay, recovering at home from pancreatitis, oral surgery
- *Dixie Mackie, in much pain from kidney stone and UTI
- *Paul Jerabek moved to Grand Living memory care unit on November 1. Adjusting well.
- *Fran Bray, recovering from knee replacement surgery November 4th. PT has begun!
- *Ann Cannon, preparing to move her mother back to the U.S.
- *Alyson West, began outpatient rehab at Vanderbilt in Nashville (where she lives) on November 30.
- *Nick Lengwin, continued healing of his lung.
- *Brian, Rozanne Petrick's brother, has an infection in his back

*Ongoing prayers: Dick Hogan; Kenn, Penny Gerber's brother; Rozie, Angie and Bernie Paulson's daughter; John & Ruth Fenchel, Jennifer Lengwin's parents.

DECEMBER CALENDAR

Sunday, December 5

- 8:30 am Choir Rehearsal in Community Room
- 9:30 am Worship in the Sanctuary (and online)
- 4:00 pm MVHS Discussion Group in Community Room

Tuesday, December 7

- 7:00 pm Painting Group in Community Room

Wednesday, December 8

- 1:15 pm WEO Movie & Popcorn in Lower Level
- 6:30 pm Session Meeting in Community Room (and via Zoom)

Saturday, December 11

- 6:00 pm WEO Extra! at the Eastern Iowa Observatory

Sunday, December 12

- 8:30 am Choir Rehearsal in Community Room
- 9:30 am Worship in the Sanctuary (and online)
- 4:00 pm MVHS Discussion Group in Community Room

Tuesday, December 14

- 7:00 pm Painting Group in Community Room

Wednesday, December 15

- 9:00 am - 4:00 pm Quilting Group in social hall

Thursday, December 16

- 4:00-5:10 pm Yoga, Yogic Sleep & Sound Bath class in Community Room

Sunday, December 19

- 8:30 am Choir Rehearsal in Community Room
- 9:30 am Worship in the Sanctuary (and online)
- 4:00 pm MVHS Discussion Group in Community Room

Friday, December 24

- 5:00pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship in the sanctuary (and online)

Sunday, December 26

- **Worship Service will be Online ONLY**