

**Sunday Worship - December 8, 2024**  
**Second Sunday of Advent**



***Narrative Lectionary Year 3 Week 14***

**The Prophet Joel: Rend Your Hearts**

**Joel 2:12-29**

**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

Leader: The Lord be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

\*LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

Leader: We are waiting and waiting,

**All: longing for God to appear.**

Leader: Even now, we seek with all our hearts

**All: trusting that God's promise is true.**

Leader: Our hope is sometimes fragile

**All: but a spark is enough for God to work with.**

**All Sing:** ("O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" verse 6)

*O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight,  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*Candles of Hope & Peace are lit*

Leader: Look! The light shines.

**All: We will trust the Holy One who draws us on to peace.**

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\*OPENING PRAYER

Leader: Let us pray:

Empty us, O God.

Give us the courage to pour out, to let go, to make space.

In this season of shiny new things,  
make room in us for the gift you are giving,  
room for your Spirit to pour out into us,  
into every single one,  
that we may see your truth  
and pursue your kingdom of peace.

Amen.

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\*HYMN #82 Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

*1. Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;  
from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.*

*Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;  
dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.*

*2. Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a king,  
born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.*

*By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;*

*by thine all sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.*

\*PRAYER OF RECONCILIATION

Leader: Trusting in God's grace, let us make our confession together:

**All: You are a God of possibility, promising a future we can't yet imagine,  
calling us forward when we are paralysed by our fear.**

**We hardly know how to hope**

**because all we see is loss, and hurt, and to-do lists,  
and expectations, and worries, and not-enough.**

**Sound your trumpet today,**

**and draw our eyes out and up, draw our hearts near to you,  
that we might be held safe while we come undone.**

**For we confess we have tried to hold it together, O God,  
instead of acknowledging our part in the problem.**

**We admit we have gone round in circles trying to figure out what to do,**

**but we have not yet simply torn open our hearts and cried out to you,  
without also advising you on how to solve it for us.**

**We would rather sink in despair than let go**

**of our desire for control and power and more.**

**Yet even now, you promise it is not too late — though we may think there's no hope.**

**Yet even now, you hold our torn hearts with compassion.**

**Yet even now, you promise restoration we don't even know how to long for.**

**Even now, your peace is on its way.**

**Not a simple easy peace, not a painless peace,**

**but peace beyond understanding will be born, even now.**

**So we beg for your forgiveness today, your healing, your Spirit poured out**

**that we might be ready when your day of peace arrives,**

**however dimly it may seem to shine now.**

**We ask in the name of the coming Prince of Peace, Jesus the Christ.**

**Amen.**

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## *Time of silent prayer*

### \*WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Leader: Friends hear and believe this good news:

God's Spirit is poured out on all flesh, no exceptions.

In your very breath is the love and vision and promise of God-with-us,  
and the peace that passes all understanding is for you, for us, for the world.

**ALL: Thanks be to God! Amen.**

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### \*RESPONSE HYMN #88 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel vs #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

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

**All: Christ is coming. Christ is coming to make all things new.**

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

## DISCOVERY TIME

### SCRIPTURE READING

Leader: In the beginning was the Word.

**All: And the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**

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

Joel 2:12-29 (Common English Bible) – God's Judgment and Call to Repentance

**Reader 1:** Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your hearts,  
with fasting, with weeping, and with sorrow;

<sup>13</sup>tear your hearts and not your clothing.

Return to the Lord your God, for he is merciful and compassionate,  
very patient, full of faithful love, and ready to forgive.

<sup>14</sup>Who knows whether he will have a change of heart and leave a blessing behind him,  
a grain offering and a drink offering for the Lord your God?

**Reader 2:** <sup>15</sup>Blow the horn in Zion; demand a fast;  
request a special assembly.

<sup>16</sup>Gather the people; prepare a holy meeting; assemble the elders;

gather the children, even nursing infants.

Let the groom leave his room and the bride her chamber.

<sup>17</sup> Between the porch and the altar let the priests, the Lord's ministers, weep.

Let them say, "Have mercy, Lord, on your people,

and don't make your inheritance a disgrace, an example of failure among the nations.

Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

**Reader 1:** <sup>18</sup> Then the Lord became passionate about this land, and had pity on his people.

<sup>19</sup> The Lord responded to the people:

See, I am sending you the corn, new wine, and fresh oil,

and you will be fully satisfied by it;

and I will no longer make you a disgrace among the nations.

<sup>20</sup> I will remove the northern army far from you

and drive it into a dried-up and desolate land,

its front into the eastern sea, and its rear into the western sea.

Its stench will rise up; its stink will come to the surface.

The Lord is about to do great things!

**Reader 2:** <sup>21</sup> Don't fear, fertile land;

rejoice and be glad, for the Lord is about to do great things!

<sup>22</sup> Don't be afraid, animals of the field,

for the meadows of the wilderness will turn green;

the tree will bear its fruit;

the fig tree and grapevine will give their full yield.

<sup>23</sup> Children of Zion, rejoice and be glad in the Lord your God,

because he will give you the early rain as a sign of righteousness;

he will pour down abundant rain for you,

the early and the late rain, as before.

<sup>24</sup> The threshing floors will be full of grain;

the vats will overflow with new wine and fresh oil.

**Reader 1:** <sup>25</sup> I will repay you for the years that the cutting locust,

the swarming locust, the hopping locust, and the devouring locust have eaten—

my great army, which I sent against you.

<sup>26</sup> You will eat abundantly and be satisfied,

and you will praise the name of the Lord your God, who has done wonders for you;

and my people will never again be put to shame.

<sup>27</sup> You will know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God—

no other exists; never again will my people be put to shame.

**Reader 2:** <sup>28</sup> After that I will pour out my spirit upon everyone;

your sons and your daughters will prophesy,

your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions.  
<sup>29</sup> In those days, I will also pour out my spirit on the male and female slaves.

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

**All: Thanks be to God.**

## REFLECTION

Rev. Lori Wunder

### HYMN #314 Christ, Be Our Light

1. *Longing for light, we wait in darkness. Longing for truth, we turn to you.  
Make us your own, your holy people, light for the world to see.*

**REFRAIN**

*Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.*

*Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.*

2. *Longing for peace, our world is troubled. Longing for hope, many despair.  
Your word alone has power to save us. Make us your living voice. REFRAIN*
3. *Longing for food, many are hungry. Longing for water, many still thirst.  
Make us your bread, broken for others, shared until all are fed. REFRAIN*
4. *Longing for shelter, many are homeless. Longing for warmth, many are cold.  
Make us your building, sheltering others, walls made of living stone. REFRAIN*
5. *Many the gifts, many the people, many the hearts that yearn to belong.  
Let us be servants to one another, making your kingdom come.*

### \*SHARING OF JOYS & CONCERNS AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

**ALL: 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.**

### WE OFFER OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

Leader: Our offering is a vital part of our response to God and God's Word.

It helps us connect our worship of God with our life of discipleship.

Whenever we give, whether with time, talents, or treasure, it is a token of our desire to devote our whole selves to God's service in response to God's loving faithfulness to us.

### \*HYMN OF THANKSGIVING #144 *In the Bleak Midwinter, verse 4*

*What can I give him, poor as I am?*

*If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;*

*if I were a wiseman, I would do my part;*

*Yet what I can I give him: give my heart.*

**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**ALL: O God, you share your gifts with us in abundance.  
Out of gratitude for this grace,  
we share our time, abilities and treasure  
with our church, our community, and our world.  
Bless what we offer in each moment of our lives  
and use it for the work of your kin-dom. Amen.**

**\*HYMN #92 While We Are Waiting, Come**

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| <p>1. <i>While we are waiting, come;<br/>while we are waiting, come;<br/>REFRAIN<br/>Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel,<br/>While we are waiting, come.</i></p> | <p>2. <i>With power and glory, come;<br/>with power and glory, come. REFRAIN</i></p> <p>3. <i>Come, Savior, quickly come;<br/>come, Savior, quickly come. REFRAIN</i></p> |
|---|---|

**\*BIRTHDAY BLESSING & BENEDICTION**

*Matt Recalde  
Joe Schmitz  
Harvey Lane  
Scott Larson  
Arlie Willems*

*Gretchen Lindembolt  
Barb Bjork  
Zay Austerman  
Nannette Gunn  
Megan Casey*

*Marilue Watkins  
Lori Wunder  
Brogan Meyer*

**\*POSTLUDE**

Thank you to the following people for helping with our service this morning:

*Pat Hogan, Piano  
Jennifer Lengwin, Liturgist  
Gerald Gerber, AV*

First Pres Mount Vernon Staff:

*Lori Wunder, Pastor  
Stephanie Turner, Office Manager  
Jonathan Walsh, Treasurer  
Jeff Bray, Custodian*