



Emmanuel United Church of Christ

A Congregation of the United Church of Christ

We Welcome You on this First Sunday of Advent

Service of the Word – November 29, 2020

9:30 AM

The Gathering

Ring of the Bell
Our Life Together
The Solemn Declaration
Prelude

*Call to Worship

Leader: O, that we would know You are present with us!

All: O God, tear open the heavens and come down!

Leader: O, that we would turn back to Your ways!

All: O God, tear open the heavens and come down!

Leader: O, that we would remember how You are the God of our ancestors!

All: O God, tear open the heavens and come down!

Leader: O, that You would forgive us of our sins,

All: O God, come and be present with us.

Leader: O, that we would wake up, and watch for You,

All: O God, we know You are coming into our world, and into our lives in a new way.

Come, Lord Jesus, Come.

*Opening Prayer (Unison)

God of the four winds, blow your Spirit through this space. From north and south, east and west, we gather to worship your holy name. We belong to you. We are clay in your hands. Open our ears to the sound of your voice echoing through the spheres. Open our eyes to the brilliance of your presence shining in each new day. Open our hearts to the new reign of Jesus Christ come now to earth. Amen.

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Leader: The Gospel of John speaks of Christ as the true light coming into the world. In commemoration of that coming, we light candles for the four weeks leading to Christmas and reflect on the coming of Christ. It is significant that the church has always used that language – the coming of Christ – because it speaks to a deep truth. Christ is coming. Christ is always coming, always entering a troubled world, a wounded heart. And so we light our first candle, the candle of peace, and dare to express our longing for peace, for healing, and the well-being of all creation.

All: Loving God, as we enter this Advent season, we open all the dark places in our lives and memories to the healing light of Christ. Show us the creative power of peace. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you, that we may walk in the light of Christ to Bethlehem.

Leader: Take time, in the busyness of this season, for quiet reflection – for the light of God’s love is discernible everywhere.

All: We will let ourselves be surprised by wonder, and set aside time to offer quiet thanks.

Leader: The good news of Advent is this: Christ is coming, Christ is always coming.

All: We will welcome Christ into our hearts. We will let ourselves be guided by his ministry. We will go forth from this place in peace.

Advent Song

Prepare the way of the Lord, prepare the way of the Lord. Light the candle, watch and pray, the Child of peace will come to save. Prepare the way of the Lord, prepare the way of the Lord.

The Refreshment of Forgiveness

Call to Confession

Confession of Sin

Leader: God is peace: the ever-present, ever-loving, ever-compassionate power that governs the world. Like generations before us, we fail in our efforts to live in the peace and harmony God desires. As in Isaiah’s time, we become unclean and our righteous deeds become as filthy cloths. We alone cannot wipe clean the slate of our transgressions. We fade like leaves and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

All: Yet, You O God, are Father and Mother; like the potter you fashioned us from clay in your holy image. In these silent moments hear the sighing of our spirits as we lay open our hearts to you. Mold us anew, O God, recreate a right image within us.

(Silence is kept for personal reflection and prayer)

Assurance of Pardon

Leader: At God’s command the heavens open, the mountains quake and love descends as an ever-flowing stream. A light shines in the night and the night cannot endure. Trust that the Power that created you in love now forgives and renews you in the same divine spirit. Go forth to proclaim the awesome deeds of our loving God!

People: We acknowledge the forgiveness of God and give thanks! Amen!

The Gift of the Word

Prayer for Illumination

The Scripture Readings

Old Testament Lesson Isaiah 64:1-9

Gospel Lesson

Psalter Reading Psalm 80: 1-7, 17-19

Mark 13: 24-37

Offering Ourselves and Our Gifts

Call to Offering

Offertory

***Offertory Response** **“Doxology”** **#778 (NCH)**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done; Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.**

***Prayer of Dedication**

**God, whose faithfulness exceeds the limits of the earth, accept these
gifts of our hearts and hands. May they be multiplied and magnified as
the living presence of Christ's peace in the world. Amen**

The Ministry of Prayer

Lifting up our joys and concerns and those in need of prayer.

Pastoral Prayer followed by **The Lord's Prayer (using debts and debtors)**

The Gathered Go Forth to Serve

***Benediction**

Leader: In all our traveling

All: May your footsteps guide us

Leader: In our journeying to work and returning

All: May your footsteps guide us

Leader: Within our homes and families

All: May your footsteps guide us

Leader: In our leisure time together

All: May your footsteps guide us

Leader: In difficult situations and conflict

All: May your footsteps guide us

Leader: As we stumble on the way

All: May your footsteps guide us

Leader: In the travelling of our faith

All: May your footsteps guide us

Leader: As we place our trust in you

**All: May your footsteps guide us. In all our travelling, Lord,
may it be your footsteps in which we place our feet.**

***Three-fold Amen**

#812 (NCH)

*Postlude

*Indicates that all who are able, please stand. **Bold** print indicates unison reading.
Notice Someone Missing? *If so give them a call and let them know they are missed.*