

*Emmanuel United Church of Christ*  
*A Congregation of the United Church of Christ*

We Welcome you on this 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent

December 10, 2023 - 9:30 AM

**Pastor Jim Cope and Pastor Jan Garinger**



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*The Gathering*

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**Ringling of the Church Tower Bell**

**Our Life Together**

**Prelude**

**The Solemn Declaration**

**Preparing our Hearts and Minds for Worship through Song**

**“O Little Town of Bethlehem”**

**O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;**

**Cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.**

**We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;**

**O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!**

**Lighting of the Candle of PEACE**

**\*Call to Worship**

Leader: Listen to what the Lord our God says to us:

**All: Peace is God's hope for us; salvation is God's gift to us.**

Leader: See what the Lord our God reveals to us:

**All: righteousness is the path to the kingdom; faithfulness is the highway we build.**

Leader: Tell what the Lord our God asks us to speak:

**All: prepare God's way; the Christ is coming to redeem us.**

\*Opening Hymn

“Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates”

#117 (NCH)

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*The Refreshment of Forgiveness*

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**Call to Confession**

**Our Prayer of Confession**

We confess that whatever our fine might have been that it has been paid, God of Comfort, yet we still insist on earning our way into your heart. We confess that you are beyond patient with us, but wish you would act quickly against those who hurt us. We confess that while your word will stand forever, it is our words of pain and anger that cause long term harm to others. Your Messenger has come, Approaching God, crying out of your forgiveness and hope. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, you speak to us: not of punishment, but of peace; not of judgment, but of justice; not of a sentence, but salvation. Merciful God, we offer our hearts in thanksgiving and hope.

*(Silence is kept for personal reflection and prayer)*

**Assurance of Pardon**

Leader: Hear the Good News God speaks to you: I love you; I forgive you; I restore you to new life.

**All: We will not ignore the fact that God comes: not to condemn, but to comfort us; not to scold, but to speak tenderly to us of hope, of peace, of love, of joy. Thanks be to God. Amen.**

**\*Choral Response**

**“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”**

**O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;**

**Bid envy, strife and quarrels cease;**

**Fill the whole world with heaven's peace.**

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!**

**\*Affirmation of Faith**

We believe in God the creator, who is always creative and invites us to affirm and explore who we are, with all our differences; and who is the source of our faith. We believe in God the Savior revealed in the world as Jesus the Christ who died and is risen. We believe in God the Reconciler, the Holy Spirit, who is always with us bearing witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. We believe that our smallness can never diminish God's vastness; that our frailties can never overcome God's will for wholeness; that our sin can never crush God's power for new life even in the face of death. We believe, and in this belief, we need one another, as a choir needs every voice and every part for the harmony to be complete. We believe - that in the Holy Spirit, in Jesus Christ and in the love of God - we are one! We believe - And may our lives reflect our belief.

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*The Gift of the Word*

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A Time with the Children of all ages

Choral Preparation      “Spirit of the Living God”      #283 (NCH)

**Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me; Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me. Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me. Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.**

Scripture Reading      Matthew 2:1-16

Sermon      “Nobody Loves The Villian”      Pastor Jan

Hymn      “Let There Be Peace on Earth”      Insert

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*Offering Ourselves and Our Gifts*

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Call to Offering

Offertory

\*Offertory Response      “Take My Gifts”      #562 (NCH)

**Take whatever I can offer, gifts that I have yet to find, Skills that I am slow to sharpen, talents of the hand and mind, things made beautiful for others in the place where I must be: take my gifts and let me love you, God who first of all loved me.**

\*Prayer of Dedication

**We pray, Holy God, that the gifts that we bring today would smooth the path of those who walk in pain and suffering, surround the grieving with comfort, feed the hungry, and bring others into places of peace and safety. Amen.**

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*The Ministry of Remembrance and Prayer*

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Prayers of the People - The Lord’s Prayer (using debts and debtors)

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*The Gathered Go Forth to Serve*

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\*Hymn      “I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day”      #Insert

\*Words of Benediction      Pastor Jan

\*Chimes with Silent Meditation

\*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.*