

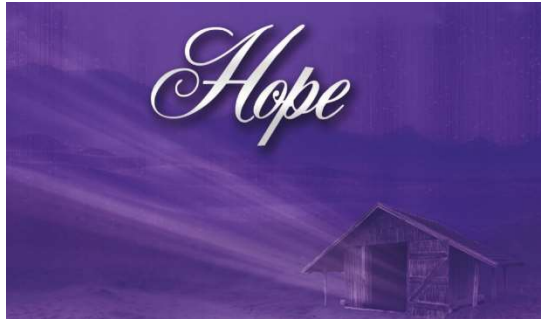
Emmanuel United Church of Christ

A Congregation of the United Church of Christ

We Welcome You on this First Sunday of Advent

December 3, 2023 - 9:30 AM

Dr. James Cope, Pastor Janice Garinger, Pastor in Care



Gathering around the Word

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 HOPE

Call to Worship

Leader: Tear open the heavens and bring forth your presence. We watch and we wait for the glory to come.

All: We gather with hope, remembering your mercy. Lead us in love shine from above.

Leader: Awaken the earth, enflame and en flesh. We watch and we wait for what's birthing ahead.

All: We gather with hope, remembering your justice. Revive us, restore us; shine from above.

Leader: Make us your wave of love to broaden your reach. We watch and we wait for your deeds to appear.

All: We gather with hope, remembering your handiwork. Make us, mold us; shine from above.

***Hymn**

“O God, Our Help in Ages Past”

#25 (NCH)

Call to Confession

Unison Prayer of Confession

We come singing songs of hope, this morning. Though we may not be inspired much right now, we still sing. Though it may take us time to sit with our hampered thoughts and sift through the growing pile of despair, we still sing. In spite of everything ridiculous and sad...though me may be beyond believing, depressed, confused, and mad...some of us got dressed, and some of us made it out of bed and out the door and we still sing of hope.

God, remind us that we have gotten through a lot of things we didn't think we could...that you have not left nor forsaken us...that our individual and collective ancestors still sang new songs in the valleys of death. And so, we still sing, too.

Embolden us as we try to show the world that we can find hope even when things seem impossible to bear. Hope must be there. Fear never wins. The work begins in us.

(Silence is kept for personal reflection and prayer)

Assurance of Pardon

Leader: In this season of waiting, the Good News is this: mercy, new life, hope, and joy are the gifts we receive from our God

All: Thanks be to the God of Advent, who came in the Child, who is with us in the Spirit, who will come again in glory! 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**

My church is composed of people like me. I help make it what it is. If I am friendly, it will be friendly. If I work and serve, it will do great work. If I invite and welcome them, people will be drawn into its worship and fellowship. If I am a generous giver. It will have more than enough for every need and can be generous in its support of God's work. If I am a fearless follower of Jesus and a person of gentleness and grace. My church will be one full of love and faith, a church ready and able to do great things for Christ. Therefore, with God's help, I pledge and dedicate myself to the task of being all the things that I want my church to be.

Welcoming New Members to Emmanuel UCC

Listening for the Word

A Time with the Children and Dismissal to Sunday School

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.

The Scripture Reading Luke 1: 5-25

Reflection “Why the Chimes Rang” Pastor Cope

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

Responding to the Word

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**

God-who-gifts-us, you do so, not so we might have more, but we might care for those who have so little; not so we might splurge, but we might share. In the waiting of Advent, may we see the wanting, and use our resources to fill their lives with hope, grace, and joy. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Bearing the Word into the World

***Closing Hymn** **“Come, O Long-Expected Jesus”** **#122(NCH)**

***Charge and Benediction**

***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.*