

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

We Welcome you on this First Sunday after Christmas

December 31, 2023 - 9:30 AM

Pastor Jim Cope and Pastor Jan Garinger



---

**Ringing of the Church Tower Bell**

**Our Life Together**

**Prelude**

**The Solemn Declaration**

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

**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!**

**\*Call to Worship**

Leader: We have welcomed the Christ child and declared the glory of God's salvation that comes to live among us. And yet, still, we wait.

**All: We watch and work for God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.**

Leader: We prepare to welcome a new year, thankful for how God has brought us through the past year and anxious to discover what the new year might bring.

**All: We watch and work for God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.**

Leader: We join generations of Simeons and Annas who learned and taught us how to listen, notice, and discern divine love at work in the world.

**All: We watch and work for God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.**

Leader: Come, let us worship God, whose love endures from generation to generation, guiding us from one year to the next.

**All: Come, let us worship as we live in anticipation of God's kingdom on earth as it is heaven. Amen.**

**\*Opening Hymn**

**"Joy to the World"**

**#132 (NCH)**

**Call to Confession**

**Our Prayer of Confession**

**God of stars and angels, God of sheep and lambs, God of abundance and grace: You know us well, better than we know ourselves. You hear us cry "Gloria!" and "Praise!" And you watch us tear things apart with our words and deeds. You hear us say "Thy will be done" and "Use me, O God." Then you watch us do nothing in response to cries for help. You know us, and you love us, and you forgive us. Hear us now say, "Help us to change; turn us around, Make us more loving and courageous and hopeful."**

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

**Assurance of Pardon**

Leader: Hear the good news. Through Jesus Christ we have redemption and the forgiveness of our sins. God hears. God cares. God forgives.

**All: In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. 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 - Nicene Creed**

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

**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**                    Luke 2:22-40

**Sermon**                                    **“Yes, There is Hope”**                    Pastor Jan

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

**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**

**Lord of Peace and Hope, we thankfully give our gifts as an expression of all that you have given us. As the prophets foretold, your Son was born for the redemption of our sins. We humbly acknowledge that of all the gifts we have received, your gift of a babe in a manger, is the one that truly matters. We prayerfully ask you to increase our ability to help others discover anew the best Christmas message ever, the promise of salvation through Jesus Christ. In His name, we pray. Amen**

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

**\*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.*