



First Sunday of Advent

November 29, 2020

St. John's United Church of Christ

As believers in Jesus Christ, we strive with unconditional love and selflessness – using our God given gifts – to provide a nurturing shelter for those seeking a Christian home. We offer opportunities for spiritual growth through worship, education, fellowship, prayer and Christian action throughout our community and the world.

**Called by God
Sharing with the World**

First Sunday of Advent
November 29, 2020

Gathering

Meditation (Isaiah 64: 1-4)

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence - as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil - to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him.

Chimes

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude

Toccata on Veni Emmanuel

Opening Hymn

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,
And order all things, far and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And cause us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

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.

Lifting up Our Joys

Birthday Blessings

Sharing of Peace

Call to Worship

Leader: Today is the first Sunday of Advent, let us gather to welcome this season of joy and expectation

All: O come, let us adore Him

Leader: In this season, let us turn our thought and hearts to God

All: O come, let us adore Him

Leader: Let us welcome the Christ Child with acts of generosity and love

All: O come, let us adore Him

Opening Prayer

Leader: As we enter into this sacred season, O Lord, grant us the grace to make time to remember the reason for the season. Let us make time for the coming of the Christ Child in our hearts and souls. Let us make a place for him through acts of generosity and love throughout the season. Let us keep the sacredness of the season in our minds as we go about our preparations for the holiday. Let us make room for the Christ Child at Christmas.

All: We will welcome the coming of Jesus in our hearts and minds.

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

All: Lord God, only you can see into our hearts and know that under all the busyness of our lives, there is a deep longing to make this Advent one that welcomes you more deeply into our own lives. Our hearts desire the warmth of your love and our minds search for your Light in the midst of the darkness. Help us to be a people of peace, to speak about it in an uneasy world, and to live it among the people you have put into our lives every

day. Light in us a desire to prepare for your coming to stand in the darkness, waiting, eager and filled with joy.

Leader: Let us take some silent time to call to mind the ways we have
Strayed from the path and pray for forgiveness.

(Silent pause for reflection)

Assurance of Forgiveness

Bill Holler

Friends in Christ:

If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. This is God's gift to us and the world, so that we can know abundant life.

Lighting of the Advent Candle

The Holler Family

Let us pray together the Advent Prayer.

God of all hope, at the beginning of creation you made the light that scatters all darkness. May Christ, the true light, shine on us and free us from the power of sin and death. Grant us peace as we welcome Jesus Christ; for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Bible Readings

1 Corinthians: 1:3-9, Mark 13:24-37

Alison Holler

Children's Message and Blessing

Tracey Holler

Today's Message

Ready or Not...

Bill Holler

✠ United Church of Christ Statement of Faith (All)

We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father, and to his deeds we testify:

He calls the worlds into being, creates man in his own image and sets before him the ways of life and death.

He seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

He judges men and nations by his righteous will declared through prophets and apostles. In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord, he has come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to himself.

He bestows upon us his Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues,

and races. He calls us into his church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be his servants in the service of others, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory. He promises to all who trust him forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, his presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in his kingdom which has no end. Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto him. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Prayer of Our Savior (*unison*)

**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**

Giving our Gifts to God

O God, in this season of giving, we wish to return to you a portion of that which you have given to us. Let us open our hearts now and give the morning offering.

Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow.
Praise God all creatures here below.
Praise God above ye heavenly hosts.
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

Sending Forth and Final Blessing

Closing Song

It Came Upon A Midnight Clear

It came upon the midnight clear
That glorious song of old
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold
Peace on the earth, good will to men
From heaven's all gracious king
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing

Still through the cloven skies they come
With peaceful wings unfurled
And still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing
And ever o'er its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing

All ye, beneath life's crushing load
Whose forms are bending low
Who toil along the climbing way
With painful steps and slow
Look, now for glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing
O rest beside the weary road
And hear the angels sing
And hear the angels sing

Worship Leader:

Bill Holler

Blessings to you from St. John's United Church of Christ in Orwigsburg.

Make Handwashing a Time of Prayer: Washing our hands for 20 seconds is one of the ways to reduce the spread of the COVID virus. How long is 20 seconds? That is sometimes hard to track. However, there is a way that combines adequate handwashing and praising God. The Doxology that we sing during worship, (it starts with "Praise God from whom all blessings flow...") takes approximately 20 seconds to sing. By choosing to sing the Doxology each time we wash our hands we mentally shift our focus from the challenge of living within a pandemic to thoughts of gratitude and the blessings God has bestowed. Focusing on these positives in the midst of our challenges improves our health and wellbeing. Thanks be to God.

Bible Study: It is Well. Walking Away from Anxiety and into God's Word
St. John's Orwigsburg will be hosting a bible study by zoom starting on Wednesday, October 7 at 9am. We will be using a wonderful book brought to us by Tracy Holler, "Tis Well. Walking Away from Anxiety and into God's Word". In this time of so much chaos it will be a quieting and centering study of God's love and care for us. We are going to do this by zoom so you will need a computer or smart phone able to connect to zoom. If you have not used zoom before we will walk you through the steps to connect. Please contact Kay Jones if you would like to take part. We will need to order the books for you so we will need your answer by September 23rd. Kay's phone number is 570-366-1333. If you would like to do the study but do not have a computer, please call and let her know and we can try to make other arrangements.