

First Congregational United Church of Christ  
“Where No One Is A Stranger”  
First Sunday of Advent  
December 3, 2023

## PRELUDE

## RINGING OF THE BELL

## GREETINGS, GOOD NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, JESUS ENCOUNTERS

### Lighting the Advent Candle of Hope

One: As we journey through the season of Advent, we take time each Sunday leading up to the celebration of the birth of Jesus to reflect on the themes that center us as we wait with eager expectation for the glory of God to be revealed. This Sunday, we center ourselves center on Hope.”

When the world is frightening and we desire to escape from the ongoing suffering, The Womb of Creation invites us to remember a hope within. It is the hope within us that leads us to transform the conditions around us.

**Many: We cling to hope in a world full of despair. We search for it; we dare to discover hope in the small, yet magnificent moments of our days.**

**All: Let us light this candle of hope as we remember the God-with-us and the hope within us. (candle lit)**

### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

(read responsively)

One: Now, in this holy season of Advent, we wait.

**Many: For the faithful God is coming to us.**

One: Now, in this season of waiting, we listen.

**Many: For the faithful Word speaks of good news to us.**

One: Now, in the waiting and listening, we watch.

**Many: For the faithful Spirit is moving among us.**

### \*Opening Song:

“O God, Our Help in Ages Past”

#84

### \*OPENING PRAYER

(prayed together)

**El Shaddai – God of the mountains who quake at your presence, You meet us in our memory of you. We’d invite you to come down and dwell among us, yet we know that you are already and always with us—Emmanuel, in our collective memory from ages past— God beside us, God before us, God behind us, and God within us. Let your face shine so that we might remember you more clearly. Give us life and we will call on your name as we worship you in spirit and in truth.**

## TIME FOR CHILDREN AND THE YOUNG AT HEART

### CALL TO CONFESSION

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(prayed together)

**God who is drawing near to us: we live in a world of violence, which we do not condemn enough: Come to us, with your peace. We are filled with the best of intentions, but are unable to follow through with action: Come to us, with your will. We are sinners, who are afraid to gaze into your mirror of grace: Come to us, with your mercy. Word of Flesh: have mercy; Friend of the poor: have mercy; Bridegroom of the faithful: have mercy.**

### A TIME FOR SILENT REFLECTION

### WORDS OF ASSURANCE

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

**Many: Thanks be to the God of Advent, who came in the Child, who is with us in the Spirit.**

### SHARING THE FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Mark 13:24-37

### \*AN AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

(read together)

**We are an Advent people, a people of hope. For us, Advent is a time of waiting, and so we wait. We wait for the coming of the One who is the fulfillment of God’s promise, the fulfillment of hope, the declaration that we have been redeemed. Even so, we are not a naïve people. We know that the world in which we live will continue to be filled with pain and sorrow. We know that hatred and violence will continue to exist. We know that death and separation will continue to be a part of our lives. But because we are an Advent people, we know that none of these things will win in the end. The Holy One is coming, to make holy once again all that was, is, and ever will be. And in our waiting and our hoping, we work and worship, pray and play, in all things hoping that peace, love and joy will reign in our lives and in our world, now and forever.**

### \*GLORIA PATRI

#734

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world with-out end. A-men, A-men.**

### FOCUS SCRIPTURE

Psalms 80:1-7,17-19

read from the *Common English Bible*

### MESSAGE:

“Are We There Yet?”

Pastor Chris

### Communion Song:

“Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”

#232

## GATHERING AT CHRIST'S TABLE

Invitation, Communion Prayer, Sanctus, Words of Institution, Consecration Prayer, Lord's Prayer (debts/debtors), Sharing the Bread and Cup

## SANCTUS

Holy, holy, holy God of love and majesty, the whole universe speaks of your glory, O God Most High. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of our God! Hosanna in the highest!

## PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

For the nourishment of spirit, mind, and body, that we have received from this holy meal, for hope that we begin to see, and for comfort from the One whose birth we await, we share our gratitude, Gracious God. Encourage us in these shortened days. Through the long nights of this season, may your hope carry us until dawn arrives again.

## PRESENTING OUR GIFTS

### OFFERTORY

#### \*DOXOLOGY

#34

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God above, you heavenly host; praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

#### \*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

In gratitude for your many blessings, God, we offer you these gifts. Enrich and bless them, that they may go into the world and help build your kingdom.

#### \*Closing Song:

“Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus”

#153

#### \*Going Forth with the Peace of Christ

## POSTLUDE

#### \*Indicates all who are able please stand

Other Lectionary Scripture Readings: Isaiah 64:1-9, 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

The Call to Worship, Call to Confession, Prayer of Confession, and Words of Assurance (adapted) are from *Lectionary Liturgies* by Thom M. Shuman. The Advent Candle Liturgy (adapted) and Opening Prayer are by Rev. Mia M. McClain, Senior Pastor of Riverside Baptist Church in Washington D.C. from *Worship Ways-Worship Resources for the United Church of Christ*. The Offering Prayer of Dedication (adapted) is by B.J. Beu from *The Abingdon Worship Annual-2023* edited by Mary Scifres and B.J. Beu. The Affirmation of Faith is by Rev. Rebecca F. Harrison. The Communion Prayer of Thanksgiving (adapted) is by Michelle L. Torigian, 2019.



*First Congregational  
United Church of Christ*  
**165 Years**

315 Moore Street – Algona, IA 50511  
515-295-2845

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Worship Leader: Pastor Chris Burtnett
Lector: David Burrow
Organist: Antonia Rupert
December Radio Sponsor: Mick & Kris Schlievert
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Birthdays: December 7- Kim Thilges; 8-Connie Schwab

Sunday, December 3: 10:00am- Worship with communion
Sunday School
Coffee
Food Pantry

Tuesday, December 5: 9:30-11am.-Pastor at Feed Mill

Friday, December 8-9: Pastor Chris at Pilgrim Heights Overnight Board Meeting

Sunday, December 10: 10:00am- Worship
Sunday School
Coffee
Christmas family Offering
Cookie Plates for Shut-ins

Please bring cookies to share for shut-ins on December 10. Plates of cookies will be made and delivered.

December 13: 5:30pm.- Cookie Baking with Families from Care Team

The December, January, February issue of "Our Daily Bread" may be picked up in the Fellowship Hall entry.

We are celebrating the sacrament of communion this morning. Everyone is welcome at the table. The inner ring is wine and the outer ring is grape juice.

Poinsettias-If you would like to order a poinsettia this year, they are \$13. Please let the church office know how many you would like and who it is in honor of or in memory.

Once again, we will have The Mitten Tree in December. Donations of hats, waterproof mittens or gloves, scarves, socks, and underwear are welcome. We will be collecting through the end of December. Thank you.

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