



From Generation to Generation

December 17, 2023

Third Sunday of Advent

**First Congregational
United Church of Christ**

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Third Sunday of Advent

Scripture: Isaiah 35:1-10 Matthew 1:18-25

✠ Invites worshipers to rise in spirit or body as they are able.

PH indicates the Pilgrim Hymnal.

You may notice there are several elements included in our time of worship. We want you to know this is intentional, as each of us may come for differing reasons; each of us may connect to Spirit in different ways. At First Congregational UCC, we are exploring how LOVE inspires us to create space for one another.

You can view our worship streamed on our Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/RCFirstUCC>. Copies of the video are available on our church web site's video tab **www.rcfirstucc.com**.

Gathering Music	<i>Lo, How a Rose E're Blooming</i>	arr. Raney
	<i>Greensleeves with Coventry Carol</i>	arr. Raney
	Bonnie Edwards and Alan Glover	

Centering as God's People

Greetings

One: A series of experiments by Princeton psychologists, Janine Willis and Alexander Todorov, taught the world that it only takes a tenth of a second for us to form an impression of a stranger. In other words, it only takes a tenth of a second for us to look at someone's face and determine a stereotype about who they are. What if we chose a better way?

Many: No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!

Prelude	<i>Infant Holy, Infant Lowly</i>	D. Wood
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Call to Worship

One: Throughout all of human history, God's promise has stayed the same:

Many: "I will be your God, and you will be my people."

One: This day we worship our God, whose name "Emmanuel" reminds us of the promise:

Many: God-with-us.

One: On this third Sunday of Advent, we give thanks for God's abiding presence among us and for our subsequent joy. Let us worship God.

✠Hymn	<i>Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming</i>
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PH 131

Candle Lighting Liturgy

The Grauman Family

Prayer for Illumination

One: Holy God,
scripture tells us that you came to Joseph through an angel—
loud and clear, impossible to miss.
Scripture also tells us that Joseph listened.
He rearranged his life to follow your invitation.
God, we long for that—
all of that.
We long to hear your voice—loud and clear, impossible to miss.
We long for invitations to something more, something deeper.
And we long to be like Joseph and find the courage to follow.
So clean out our ears. Brush the dust off our hearts.
Trace us back to our roots—back to Joseph—who heard and
followed.
With gratitude we listen.
Amen.

✠The Peace

Hearing God's Word

First Lesson: Isaiah 35:1-10

Pew Bible, OT page 629

A Message for the Young at Heart

Mary Haan

Anthem

Every Valley

P. Drennan

Second Lesson: Matthew 1:18-25

Pew Bible, NT, page 1

Sermon

We Can Choose a Better Way Pastor Erin Erickson

Prayers of Community

Invitation to Prayer

Pastoral Prayer

Affirmation of Faith (in unison)

**We believe in a God who offers second chances
and does not hold grudges.**

**We believe in a God who opens the door to new life
and leaves the porch light on for us when we get lost.**

**We believe in a God who believes in us—
believes that we can make a difference,
that we can choose grace over comparison,
love over hate, peace over war.**

And so we strive to live our lives in love.

We strive to listen as Joseph listened,
and to be the people that God calls us to be.
It's all that easy, and it's all that hard.
This we believe. Amen.

Offerings

Invitation

Offertory *What Child Is This - Trad. English tune* S. Withrow

✠ **Doxology** **NCH 778**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ and Spirit, One.

✠ **Prayer of Dedication**

Community Announcements

Going Into God's World

✠ **Hymn** *Angels We Have Heard on High* **PH 116**

✠ **Benediction**

Postlude *Postlude on "Unto Us Is Born a Son"* J.S. Dixon



Christmas Eve Services

Celebrate the season with three services at First Congregational Church on **Christmas Eve, Sunday, Dec. 24th.**

The services at **9:30am and 4:00pm** will be a mixture of festive music and intentionality, though each will be unique.

The service at **11:30pm** will have candlelight and a contemplative feel.

Please join us for any or all of the services on December 24th.



Events

Sunday, December 17

9:30am: Worship Service/
Nursery available

9:45am: Sunday School

10:30am: Fellowship Hour/
Tanzania Presentation

10:45am: Pastoral Relations/
Personnel Committee Meeting

Tuesday, December 19

11:30am: Church Chat

12:45pm: Spiritual Practices

1:00pm: Craft Day

7:00pm: Church Board Meeting

Wednesday, December 20

12:00pm: Interfaith Round Table

6:00pm: Bell Choir Practice

7:00pm: Choir Practice

Friday, December 22

1:00pm: Stained Glass Group

Sunday, December 24

Christmas Eve

9:30am: Worship Service/
Nursery available

9:45am: Sunday School

10:30am: Fellowship Hour

4:00pm: Christmas Eve
Family Service

11:30pm: Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service

Church News

Birthdays

December 18: **Jim Dannenbring**

December 20: **Eliza Ferguson**

December 23: **Jason
Dannenbring
Pat Wheaton**

Tanzania Presentation

Willis and Pat Sutliff will give a presentation about the St. Jude's School in Tanzania **today, December 17** in the Fellowship Hall following worship.

Prayer Pals for All Ages!

Please fill out a Prayer Pal form in the Fellowship Hall and leave your form in the box there. Beginning this month, you'll be able to

choose a Prayer Pal (or three) on a list in the Fellowship Hall!

Church Chat Updates

Church Chat will be held on **Tuesday, December 19** from **11:30am to 12:30pm**.

The next meetings will be in **January** on the **second** and **fourth Tuesdays, January 9 and 23** at **11:30am**. Watch for information on when the group will meet after January.

Contact **Becky Fisher** or **Kathleen Batchelder** to find out information about the book the group will be reading and discussing.

Church News

Spiritual Practices

Spiritual Practices is a small group of church members and friends who meet to read scriptures together and to engage in practices of prayer and meditation.

Please consider joining the group on the first and third Tuesdays each month at **12:45-1:45pm** in the church library. The next meeting is on **Tuesday, Dec. 19**. For more information, contact Pastor Erin.

The Christmas Fund 2023

The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross is an annual UCC offering that expresses our thanks to retired and active UCC pastors and lay church workers and their families facing financial need, providing direct assistance to supplement pensions, help with the cost of medical insurance, a thank you gift at Christmas, and funds to meet emergency needs. Join with others in the United Church of Christ to help return "Grace upon grace" to those who have given so much to each of us by giving generously to the Christmas Fund this year.

First Congregational Church will collect this special offering on Sunday, December 24.

Mission Meal

The next Cornerstone Rescue Mission meal is **Friday, Dec. 29th**. We would love cookie donations and help to prepare the meal. Please have cookie donations to the church by **4:00pm on December 29th**. If you can help cook, the chefs will be at the church at **3:30pm on Dec. 29th**.

Molasses Cookie Recipe

Cam Miller received several requests for the molasses cookie recipe from her mother, Dona Cheney. Here it is:

Mix:

1 cup Crisco 1 1/2 cups sugar
1 cup Brer Rabbit dark molasses
2 eggs

Combine then mix in:

1/2 cup cold water
3 tsp soda dissolved in 2 tbsp vinegar

Mix 2 tsp ginger, 1 tsp cloves and 1/2 tsp salt into 5 cups flour and add to previous ingredients.

Chill dough one hour. Roll out about 1/2 inch thick. Cut out and place 6 on cookie sheet. Will spread. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes. Makes 30 soft cookies. Do not overbake. Enjoy!

January Call Newsletter

Due to the holidays, the January Call newsletter will be sent out by email and mail on **January 4**.

Church News

Paper copies will be available at the church on **Sunday, January 8.**

Toys for the Nursery

The church nursery is hoping to upgrade/replace some of its toys. They are asking for gently used or new toy donations appropriate for ages 0-5. Toy ideas include: Magna-Tiles (the more squares the better), baby rattles/smaller baby toys, board books, board games for preschoolers, wood toys, planes/cars (Matchbox car size), coloring books, stacking or shape sorting toys.

Note: Please, no large, bulky toys or stuffed animals. Toys that can fit in a shoe box are the ideal size. Please drop off donations in the nursery. Thank you!

Prayer Concerns

Please hold the following members and friends in your prayers:

Lee Boyles has ongoing health concerns.

Kay Daugherty's health is improving. Kay's brother-in-law, **Doug Reeves**, has heart issues.

Andy and Barb Knight's son, **John Knight**, faces serious health concerns as the result of a fall, but is doing better.

Ron Laughlin, husband of **Becky Fisher's** cousin, Linda, is receiving treatment for cancer.

Wes Humke is doing well, and appreciates all the cards and cookies!

Sheila Long's mother-in-law, **Ann Long**, is fighting cancer.

Jodie Thuringer's father is facing a recurrence of health issues.

Deb Tompkins fell and has a broken knee and a stress fracture on the knee.

Deb Tompkins has a young friend, 12-year-old **Max Green**, who lives in northern Kansas. Max was born with cerebral palsy and many other challenges. He was hospitalized with bacterial pneumonia but now is back home. This has been a difficult time for the whole family.

Pastor Dorotea Yucra's daughter, **Sarvia**, is receiving no treatment for terminal cancer at this time. She is being cared for at home by her mother and sister.

Nadine Zeller had surgery on November 27 for kidney stones.

We also pray for those members of our church family who are in care centers or isolated in their homes, including:

Evelyn Bradshaw, Vivian Dittmer, Wes Humke, Eunice Johnson, Merrie Miller, Marrelyce Seaman, Dorothy Slingsby, Helen Snyder and Elena Van Pelt

Leaders

Erin Erickson, pastor

Becky Fleming, licensed minister

Mary Haan, Christian education coordinator

Alan Glover, choir director, organist

Michael Bossen, bell choir director

Audrey Fenner, organist

John Fenner, French horn

The Adult Choir

The Bell Choir

Patti Arneson and Laura Switzer, administrative colleagues

Chuck Rounds, moderator

Denise Webster, treasurer

Carol Boyles, Becky Fisher and Jenny Kozel, congregational representatives

Rick and Carol Bell, greeters

Coen Grauman and Elsa Grauman, acolytes

Andy Knight, reader

The Grauman Family, Advent Candle Lighting

Lois Moore, coffee host

Steve Barels, dishwasher

Rev. Kathleen Batchelder, pastor emerita

Lynnell Parrott, organist emerita

Credits:

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming - arr. Raney

Hope Pub.

Greensleeves with Coventry Carol - arr. Raney

Hope Pub.

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly - D. Wood

Sacred Music Press, 1995

What Child Is This?, Trad. English tune - S. Withrow

Western Publishing 1969; G.I.A., 1980

Every Valley - P. Drennan

Alfred Pub. 1999

Postlude on "Unto Us Is Born a Son" - J.S. Dixon

Lorenz, 2016

Doxology

Pilgrim Press, 1995

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

Pilgrim Press, 1958

Angels We Have Heard on High

Pilgrim Press, 1958

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