



From Generation to Generation

December 24, 2023

Fourth Sunday of Advent

**First Congregational
United Church of Christ**

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December 24, 2023

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Scripture: Luke 1:39-45; 56-58 Luke 1:46-55

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

PH indicates the New Century 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.

Join Us Online!

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

Christmas Selections

John Fenner, French horn and Audrey Fenner, piano

Centering as God's People

Greetings

One: "When we see others as the enemy, we risk becoming what we hate. When we oppress others, we end up oppressing ourselves. All of humanity is dependent upon recognizing the humanity of others." ~Desmond Tutu

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

Prelude

There Was No Room

S. DeFord

John Fenner, French horn and Audrey Fenner, piano

Call to Worship

One: On this bright morning full of love, we remember God's gifts to us:

Many: The gift of a child,

One: The gift of comfort,

Many: The gift of presence,

One: And the gift of joy.

Many: On this fourth Sunday in Advent, we give thanks to God for the gift of the Christ Child.

One: Let us worship God.

✝ **Hymn**

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear (vs. 1-2)

PH 129

Candle Lighting Liturgy

The Miller Family

Prayer of Illumination

Many: God of all,
we are a mixed bag of distracted and forlorn,
eager and anxious.
We hope that you might move through the obstacle course
we build up around our hearts—
made out of questions and defenses—
and douse us in good news.
For at the end of the day,
all we want is to know that we are not alone,
that you are always near.
So knock on our door, sweet talk the guard dog we place in
front of our vulnerable hearts, and come right in.
Make yourself at home.
Pull us close and tell us your story of unbelievable good news.
We are listening. We are grateful. Amen.

✠ **Hymn** *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks* (vs. 1-4) **PH 146**

Hearing God's Word

First Lesson: Luke 1:39-45; 56-58 **Pew Bible, NT page 54**

Baptism of Aniston Lee Miller Pastor Becky Fleming

Anthem *Gesu Bambino* arr. Mark Hayes
Alicia Sutliff-Benusis, flute

Second Lesson: Luke 1:46-55 **Pew Bible, NT, page 54**

Sermon *We See God in Each Other* Pastor Erin Erickson

Affirmation of Faith (in unison)

**We believe that creation is inextricably linked.
We belong to one another in an undeniable way.
We are bone of bone and flesh of flesh, life breathed into
dust.
We believe that God invites us to live into that truth—
to love without abandon, to see the good in one another,
to trust that all belong to God.
We know that this life of connection is easier said than
done, which is why we gather in this space, week after
week, generation after generation, to be reminded:
We see God in each other. This we believe. Amen.**

Special Music

City of David

S. DeFord

John Fenner, French horn and Audrey Fenner, piano

Offerings

Invitation

Kim Nearhood—Christmas Fund Special Offering

Offertory *Venez, Divin Messie (O Come, Divine Messiah) -*

French Noel

arr. R. DeBruyn

✠Doxology

H. Smith

Give thanks with a grateful heart,

Give thanks to the Holy One,

Give thanks because God's given Jesus Christ, the Son.

And now let the weak say, "I am strong!"

Let the poor say, "I am rich!"

Because of what the Lord has done for us. Give thanks.

✠Prayer of Dedication

Community Announcements

Going Into God's World

✠Hymn

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

PH 120

✠Benediction

Postlude

Trio on "Vom himmel hoch"

(From Heaven Above)

J. Pachelbel

Christmas Eve Services

Two additional Christmas Eve services will be held today at First Congregational United Church of Christ.

The service at **4:00pm** will be a mixture of festive music, the wonder of children's involvement and hope.

The service at **11:30pm** will have candlelight, the piano magic of Justin Speck and a contemplative feel.

We hope you join us for these services as we celebrate the birth of Christ.



Events

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

Monday, December 25

Christmas Day

Tuesday, December 26

- 1:00pm: Craft Day

Wednesday, December 27

- 2:00pm: Communion at
Westhills
- 6:00pm: Bell Choir Practice
- 7:00pm: Choir Practice

Friday, December 29

- 1:00pm: Stained Glass Group
- 3:30pm: Mission Meal
Preparation

Sunday, December 31

- 9:30am: Worship Service/
Nursery available
- 9:45am: Sunday School
- 10:30am: Fellowship Hour

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Baptism

Baptized today is **Aniston Lee Miller**, daughter of **Justin** and **Kristin Miller**, sister of **Hudson Miller** and granddaughter of **Harold** and **Cam Miller**. Our church family shares the joy with the Miller family.

Birthdays

- Dec. 28: **Mary Daughenbaugh**
- Dec. 29: **Julie Burton**

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 today, December 24.



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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**.

Book Study

A new (yet previously existing) Book Study will kick off on **Wednesday, January 3 at 9:30am**. We intend to meet each Wednesday **EXCEPT** the 3rd (Good Morning Circle) Wednesdays. For more information, contact Pastor Erin.

January Call Newsletter

Due to the holidays, the January Call newsletter will be sent out by email and mail on **January 4**. Paper copies will be available at the church on **Sunday, January 8**.

Church Chat Updates

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.

Poinsettia Donations

The Harry Hanson family, Estella Evans and Nancy Maynard donated poinsettias in memory of Clair Maynard. The poinsettias have been lovingly used all over the church this month.

Fellowship Hour Help

Coffee hosts and dishwashers are needed for the coffee hour following worship. Easy instructions are posted for each volunteer opportunity. Please sign up in the Fellowship Hall on the sheets located next to the cookies if you can help. If you need assistance, indicate it on the sheet and someone will help you. **Thank you!**

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 (i.e. Melissa Doug) - Planes/cars (matchbox car size) - Coloring books - Stacking or shape sorting toys.

Note: Please, no large, bulky toys or stuffed animals. Toys that can

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fit in a shoe box are the ideal size! Please drop your donations off in the nursery. Thank you!

Art House Exhibit

Jordan Barnes has seven pieces of her artwork on display for the winter months at The Art House-621 Main Street.

Prayer Concerns

Sarvia Dalia Huamani Yucra, the beloved eldest daughter of **Pastor Dorotea** of our sister church in los Guido, Costa Rica, passed away on Friday, December 15. Dorotea was in communication with Chuck and Sybil Rounds that evening, and offered this: "As a mother, I embrace myself in the arms of the Lord Jesus Christ, God Almighty." A service was held at the Catholic Church San Miguel in Desamparados on December 16. Pastor Dorotea sent her thanks to all who lifted her family in prayer.

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.

Wes Humke had two cataract surgeries in November. Cards are welcome and may be mailed to his address in the church directory.

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.

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

Sid Michaels is cancer free.

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.

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

Audrey and John Fenner and Alicia Sutliff-Benusis, special music

Patti Arneson and Laura Switzer, administrative colleagues

Chuck Rounds, moderator

Denise Webster, treasurer

Carol Boyles, Becky Fisher and Jenny Kozel, congregational representatives

Jack and Bonnie Edwards and Ruth Schemmel, greeters

Anne Haan and Helena Haan, acolytes

Harlan Stephens, reader

Carol Boyles and Joran Stetson, coffee hosts

Randy and Becky Fisher, dishwashers

Rev. Kathleen Batchelder, pastor emerita

Lynnell Parrott, organist emerita

Credits:

There Was No Room - S. DeFord

Sally DeFord, 2020

Venez, Divin Messie (O Come, Divine Messiah) - French Noel - arr. R. DeBruyn OCP, 1990

City of David - S. DeFord

Sally DeFord, 2019

Gesu Bambino - arr. Mark Hayes J.W. Pepper

Trio on "Vom himmel hoch" (From Heaven Above) - J. Pachelbel

Elkin & Co., 1959

Give Thanks - H. Smith

Integrity Hosanna Music, 1978

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

Pilgrim Press, 1958

While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks

Pilgrim Press, 1958

The Herald Angels Sing

Pilgrim Press, 1958

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