



From Generation to Generation

December 3, 2023

First Sunday of Advent

**First Congregational
United Church of Christ**

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First Sunday of Advent

Scripture: Isaiah 2:1-5 Matthew 1:1-17

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

NCH - 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

Musical Selections

(French horn alone, and horn and organ)

O Come, O Come Emanuel

Raney

Bonnie Edwards and Alan Glover

Centering as God's People

Greetings

One: God works through the unexpected people and stories of the past and present. When you zoom in, you may not be able to see how each character propels the story forward, but when you zoom out, you can see how each story is woven together in a larger tapestry.

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

Prelude

Watchman, Tell Us of the Night

B. Logan

Bell Choir

"O Come, O Come Emmanuel," Veni Emmanuel,

incorporating *Promised One*

arr. M. Helman

Call to Worship

One: The story begins with hope for a child –

Many: A child, born of woman, like us;

One: A child who will lead us,

Many: A child who will inspire us.

One: A child who will be our living hope.

Many: On this first Sunday of Advent, we give thanks for the coming child, Jesus.

One: Let us worship God.

Candle Lighting Liturgy
The Grigg Family, Jay Davis

Invocation (in unison)

God of the ages, in scripture we hear stories of people like us—ordinary people, people who longed to know you, people who longed to follow you, people who made mistakes, people who tried to grow—old, young, native, immigrant, new to the faith, lifelong believer. In scripture we hear stories of people like us, so just as you walked with them, help us to hear and remember all the ways that you walk with us. We are listening. We are grateful. We are yours. Amen

✠**The Peace**

Receiving God's Word

First Lesson: Isaiah 2:1-5

Pew Bible, OT, page 600

A Message for the Young at Heart

Bell Choir *"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence,"* Picardy arr. L. Larson

Second Lesson: Matthew 1:1-17

Pew Bible, NT, page 1

Theme for Advent ***From Generation to Generation***

Sermon *There's Room for every Story* Pastor Erin Erickson

Offertory *As We Gather at Your Table* S. Messersmith

✠**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.**

Receiving God's Blessings

Communion is a gift to the church in all times and places. The Spirit blesses us wherever we are. So those at home are welcome to prepare bread and drink to commune with us and Christians everywhere.

Prayer of Dedication

Invitation to the Meal

One: The Lord be with you.

Many: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

Many: We lift them to the Lord.

One: Let us give thanks to our God.

Many: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

One: God of Abraham and Isaac, God of Tamar and Ruth, God of Mary and Joseph, We bow our heads today hoping to catch a glimpse or a shimmer of you. We know that you are here with us, just as you walked with every generation before, so we bring you our prayers.

Many: Thank you for creating space for us. Thank you for seeing our scattered thoughts, our imposter syndrome, our fragments of doubt, and still saying, "Come on in."

One: Thank you for seeing our ordinary selves with anxious concerns and unflattering habits and saying, "I have bigger plans for you."

Many: Thank you for seeing our fragile egos, and our uncertain relationships, and saying, "You still belong here."

One: Your expansive love makes room for us to breathe, and we want to love with our lungs and hearts full. So today we pray—teach us how to make that same room for others. When we come face to face with stories that are different from ours, show us how to add chairs to the table. When we find ourselves face to face with stories that frustrate and test our patience, show us how to build bridges instead of walls. When we find ourselves face to face with stories that feel foreign or unrelatable, remind us to open the door and to listen fully. From Abraham to Mary, you made room for every story—and that love continues to make room for us. Teach us to do the same for our neighbor so this world will know love. With hope we pray, using the words your son taught us to say:

Many: 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.

Sharing of the Elements

One: With Christians around the world and throughout the
centuries, we gather around these symbols of bread and
juice—simple elements that speak of nourishment and
transformation.

In this meal we remember Jesus,

The words he spoke and the life he lived.

We remember his invitation for us to be transformed from the
inside—out.

We remember on the night when Jesus and the disciples
had their last meal together, Jesus took the bread,
gave thanks, broke it and said,

“Take and eat; whenever you do this, remember me.”

*(The bread is distributed. The cup in the center is gluten free.
Please hold the bread so that all may eat together).*

Hymn *Let Us Break Bread Together* **NCH 330**

*(Participation is optional. Please remain seated. We will repeat
verse 1 three times or until the organ stops playing.)*

One: Let us share the bread of life.

(You may eat the bread.)

One: After their meal,

Jesus took the cup, and poured, saying,

“This is the new covenant, remember me.”

Let us drink the cup of blessing.

(The cup is distributed. Please drink the cup as you are served.)

Hymn *Let Us Break Bread Together* **NCH 330**

*(Participation is optional. Please remain seated. We will repeat
verse 2 three times or until the organ stops playing.)*

Prayer of Affirmation

Many: We believe in a God who promised to Abraham, who wrestled with Jacob, who walked with Ruth, who spoke with Moses, who grieved with Bathsheba, who danced with David, who dreamed with Joseph, and who hoped like Mary. We believe in a God who has been loving, inviting, transforming, and challenging us from generation to generation. And we believe that same God is here with us now, saying, “Come on in; there’s room for you here.”
Amen.

Going Into God’s World

Community Announcements

✠Hymn	<i>Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates</i>	NCH 117
✠Benediction		
Postlude	<i>Wake, Awake! For Night is Flying!</i>	D. Eliot

Events

Sunday, December 3

First Sunday of Advent

9:30am: Worship Service/
Nursery available

9:45am: Sunday School

10:45am: Dept. of Education
Dept. of Hospitality

Tuesday, December 5

11:30am: Church Chat

12:30pm: Spiritual Practices

1:00pm: Craft Day

Wednesday, December 6

9:30am: Westhills Communion

6:00pm: Bell Choir Practice

7:00pm: Choir Practice

Friday, December 8

10:00am: WF Cookie Project

1:00pm: Stained Glass Group

Sunday, December 10

Second Sunday of Advent

Pledge Dedication Sunday

9:30am: Worship Service/
Nursery available

9:45am: Sunday School

10:30am: Fellowship Hour/
Appetizers and
Artwork for Advent

2:00pm: Bells of the Hills
Concert

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Birthdays

December 3: Noah Deyo

December 4: Johnathan Nickel

December 5: Travis Eddy

Grocery Card Sales

The Department of Ministries will be selling grocery cards **today** in the Fellowship Hall following worship. Proceeds from the sales go to Church Response and help fund our Cornerstone Mission meals.

Poinsettias

Orders will be taken in Fellowship Hall **today** for poinsettias to be used to decorate the church during the Christmas season.

They may be given in honor or memory of a loved one.

The cost is \$15.



Interest Survey

It's fun to be a team player!

Interest Surveys are available in the Narthex and the church office for the departments of the church and various church groups and activities. We ask that the surveys be filled out **today** and placed in the basket located in the Narthex.

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Church Chat

Church Chat continues on **Tuesday, December 5** from **11:30am to 12:30pm**. The group meets the first and third Tuesdays each month starting in October. Please join us!

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.

Spiritual disciplines require practice and having a group with whom to practice can strengthen the discipline and the faith it gives. 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 **December 5**. Questions? Contact Pastor Erin.

Pledge Drive

It is that time of year again, when we remember to support our church through our tithes! A large majority of the church's income comes through the pledges of our members and friends. Pledge cards are available. We ask that you will faithfully make your pledge to the church for 2024.

Please turn your pledge card in to the office by **Friday, December 8**. Pledge Dedication Sunday is **December 10**.



Stained Glass Group

Come learn how to create beautiful stained glass works of art. The group will meet on **Fridays from 1:00pm to 4:00pm** in the kitchen. Their next meeting will be on **Friday, December 8 at 1:00pm**.

For more information, contact **Dave Ledford**.

Holiday for Fiddles

Join **Kenny Putnam** and friends as they return for the second annual **Holiday for Fiddles** concert on **December 9** in the **Historic Theatre at the Performing Arts Center** with performances at **2:00pm** and **7:00pm**.

Tickets are **\$30** and are available for purchase in-person, over the phone, or online through the

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Performing Arts Center. A portion of the proceeds will benefit Youth & Family Services.

Appetizers and Artwork for Advent

The Departments of Hospitality and Education will be hosting **Appetizers and Artwork for Advent** on **December 10** after church and asks our congregation to **bring a favorite appetizer, finger food or munchie.**

Artwork tables will be set up for all who would like to join in!

Bells of the Hills Concert

Bells of the Hills, a community handbell choir, will perform its winter concert at **First Congregational Church** on **December 10 at 2:00pm.**

The music will feature familiar Christmas carols and holiday songs, including *Away in a Manger*, *The Boar's Head Carol*, and *Greensleeves (What Child Is This?)*. A freewill offering will be taken.

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.**



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. This year's Christmas Fund theme is "Grace upon grace," from John 1:16:

"From Christ's fullness we have all received, grace upon grace."

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 and to our churches by encouraging your congregation to

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give generously to the Christmas Fund this year.

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

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 and Doug brand), 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!



The requested Church Response food item for the fall is canned soup and vegetables. Please place your Church Response food donations in the grocery cart located in the Narthex.

ALSO, Church Response needs empty cardboard or styrofoam 1 or 1.5 dozen egg cartons (NOT plastic ones). Church Response will be using them to hand out eggs. Please bring cartons to church and put them in the grocery cart. Thank you!

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!

Construction on Clark Street

Due to construction on Clark Street, traffic to the church has been re-routed to a very narrow section of Fulton Street. We all need to reduce our speed, watch for children and be considerate of our church neighbors as we drive on this section of Fulton Street. Thank you.

Hope Center

The Hope Center has closed so we will no longer have a Hope Center donation box in the Narthex. Thank you for your past

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donations. Church Response would still like to have toiletry items, which may be dropped off in the grocery cart in the Narthex.

Prayer Concerns

Please hold the following members and friends in your prayers:



Lee Boyles has ongoing health concerns.

Kay Daugherty's health is improving. She appreciates the love and prayers. Also, keep Kay's brother-in-law, **Doug Reeves**, in our continued prayers, as his heart is problematic.

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

Sheila Long's mother-in-law, Anne Long, is fighting uterine 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 will have 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
Patti Arneson and Laura Switzer, administrative colleagues
Chuck Rounds, moderator
Denise Webster, treasurer
Carol Boyles, Becky Fisher and Jenny Kozel, congregational representatives
Randy and Mary Daughenbaugh, greeters
Gianna Grigg and Lucia Grigg, acolytes
Jay Davis, reader
Rick and Carol Bell, coffee hosts
Rick and Carol Bell, dishwashers
Rev. Kathleen Batchelder, pastor emerita
Lynnell Parrott, organist emerita

Credits:

<i>O Come, O Come Emanuel</i> - Raney	Hope Pub.
<i>Watchman, Tell Us of the Night</i> - B. Logan	Lorenz, 2004
<i>As We Gather at Your Table</i> - S. Messersmith	(tune: <i>The Sacred Harp</i> , 1844/descant: S. Messersmith, 2011
<i>Wake, Awake! For Night is Flying!</i> - D. Eliot	Lorenz, 1971
<i>Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates</i>	Pilgrim Press, 1995
<i>O Come, O Come Emmanuel, Veni Emmanuel, Promised One</i> - arr. M. Helman	Alfred Pub. Co., Inc. 2004
<i>"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence," Picardy</i> - arr. L. Larson	Beckenhorst Press, Inc. 2017
<i>Doxology</i>	Pilgrim Press, 1995
<i>Let Us Break Bread Together</i>	Pilgrim Press, 1995

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