



SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP *with UCC Westerly*

November 29, 2020 @ 9:45am*
Virtual worship
broadcast live from our sanctuary
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Please note that spiking Coronavirus infection rates and changing guidance from CT have caused our Pandemic Response Team to make the difficult decision to return to only virtual online worship. We will return to limited in person worship when guidance from CT again makes it feasible.

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Gathering Music -- "The Lord Is Here Today"

[WORDS & MUSIC: Doug Brummund, ©2020 B.R. Music. All rights reserved. Used with permission.]

PASTOR'S WELCOME

Prelude – Come, Now, Savior of the Nations (Nun Komm der Heiden Heiland)

[MUSIC: Dietrich Buxtehude. © Public Domain]

DEACON'S GREETING

INVITATION TO WORSHIP – The Lighting of the Advent Wreath Candle of Hope

[<https://www.saltproject.org/progressive-christian-blog/advent-candle-lighting-litanies>]

Reader One: When I look around, I see shadows of hunger. So many people in this city and around the world will go to bed hungry tonight...

Reader Two: When I look around, I see shadows of injustice, the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer, everyone saying, "Buy, buy, buy!" - and someone somewhere will fall asleep under a bridge tonight...

Reader One: In the face of hunger, we light a candle of hope...

Reader Two: In the face of injustice, in the face of despair, we light a candle of hope...
(Light the first candle in your Advent wreath.)

Reader One: Let the light from this candle say to all that God's hope is coming on earth as it already is in heaven.

Reader Two: Friends, be not afraid, God's hope is at hand!

OPENING SONG – "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" [©Public Domain]

- O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here, until the son of God appear.
Refrain: 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.
Refrain.*
- O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thy justice here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.
Refrain.*

UNISON PRAYER OF REFLECTION –

[adapted from *Touch Holiness*, Duck & Tirabassi, Eds., ©1990, The Pilgrim Press, p. 8]

God without beginning and without end, your promise comes to us, bringing hope. May we in turn come to your mountain, your sacred space wherever we find it, bending our swords and spears, seeking instruction, and walking in your light. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

Morning Message

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Matthew 1:18-25

Rev. Ruth

Musical Meditation –

“To a Maid Engaged to Joseph”

[MUSIC: Rusty Edwards, © 1964 Hope Publishing Company, All rights reserved. Reprinted under ONE LICENSE#A 734569]

A TIME OF PRAYER

Pastoral Prayer & Silent Prayers

The Lord’s Prayer in whatever words are most comfortable for you

OUR RESPONSE TO GOD

Acknowledgement of Gifts & Offerings*

Anthem by Tone Chimes – *“Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus”*

[WORDS: Charles Wesley & MUSIC: Rowland H. Prichard, ©Public Domain]

*Doxology *“Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Christ all creatures here below; Praise Holy Spirit, Comforter; One God, Triune, whom we adore. Amen.”*

[©Public Domain]

CLOSING SONG -- *“Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus”*

[WORDS: Charles Wesley & MUSIC: Rowland H. Prichard, ©Public Domain]

- 1. Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.
Israel’s strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
Dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.*
- 2. Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
By thine all sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A PRAYER OF BENEDICTION

[from *Touch Holiness*, Duck & Tirabassi, Eds., ©1990, The Pilgrim Press, p. 244]

And now, our service begins. Go forth into the world in the knowledge that we are God’s body, that hope for a new world is in the blood of our veins, that the struggle for justice is the beat to which our hearts respond, and that God’s promise is the very stuff of which our bones are wrought. Go forth to praise the God from who all blessings flow, this day and always. Amen.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

POSTLUDE – “Christ, the Cornerstone”

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Points for Reflection

Welcome to our Advent Sermon Series on the hymns of Advent and Christmas. Each week, you are invited to read through the week’s focus scripture and reflect on some questions intended to guide your thoughts on that text including how you think the biblical text connects with the hymn’s verses.

This week’s text: Mathew 1:18-25 (see below)

- This is Matthew’s version of the Christmas story and, as you can readily tell, it is very different from the version of the story in Luke. One significant difference is that Matthew’s version is about Joseph, not Mary. What does this text tell us about Joseph?
- An angel appears to Mary in Luke’s Gospel but someone else comes to Joseph to intervene on behalf of the child to be born in Matthew. Who is it? How does the intervention happen?
- What is the outcome of the intervention? What does Joseph do?
- Can you find the connection between this story in Matthew and this week’s hymn? What is it?

If you would like a copy of my sermon for this week, kindly contact me or Carol in the office and we will send you a copy on Monday. Please indicate if you would prefer a paper copy by regular mail or if a digital copy sent by email is satisfactory.

Matthew 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’ All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ‘Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel’, which means, ‘God is with us.’ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.