

Welcome to First Congregational Church United Church of Christ
First Sunday of Advent: Hope
November 27, 2022

*** Some rise to their feet, some rise in their hearts—please rise as you are able.***

GATHERING BELL

At the sound of the bell, please silence yourselves and prepare for worship.

PRELUDE

Improvisation on Veni Emmanuel

Max Reilly

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Paul Ashby

INVITATION TO WORSHIP

**Whoever you are...and wherever you are on life's journey...
you are welcome here!**

OPENING REFLECTION

CALL TO WORSHIP

Nancy Palubicki

After a long, dusty ride through the desert, what do you do when every inn has a "No Vacancy" sign?

We make space for friends. But what about strangers or immigrants? This is a different situation.

Would you welcome in and care for a young Middle-Eastern girl in labor who knocks on your door at midnight?

Yes, I would welcome her and quickly call for help.

What is this Christmas story teaching us?

We cannot hang a "No Vacancy" sign on our door or on our nation.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

On the first Advent Sunday, we light one candle.

Each one of us comes to Advent and Christmas alone,
weary or with worry, lonely, excited, confused,
eager for old traditions or new experiences.

We light the one candle of hope ...

reminding ourselves we embrace a season that is different for each one of us.

In John's gospel Jesus tells Nicodemus

that we each must be born again.

Emmanuel, God be with us, in the week to come.

**Ignite hope, the most personal emotion there is,
on the wick of each of our lives, so we find others.**

**HYMN Song Folder 26

Christ, Be Our Light, vs 1, 2, 5

All

Longing for light, we wait in darkness. Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people, light for the world to see.

Refrain

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.

Longing for peace, our world is troubled. Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has pow'r to save us. Make us your living voice. *refrain*

Many the gifts, many the people, many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another, making your kingdom come. *refrain*

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Paul

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Respond to each shared prayer request with "Peace, Shalom, Salaam."

PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

Beth Rakestraw

Our God, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your 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 yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO OFFERING

Nancy

OFFERTORY

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

Choir

**DOXOLOGY (tune: *Veni, Emmanuel*) All

**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.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel.
Shall come to you, O Israel.**

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Nancy

God of Unexpected events, inspire us to be open to the surprises in life. In the shock of tragic events teach us the ways of open-hearted compassion. In the delight of joyful happenings give us a heart quick to jump into the parade. In the dance of generosity let us be swift to put on our shoes to join the dance. Amen.

**HYMN NCH 575

O for a World

All

O for a world where everyone respects each other's ways,
Where love is lived and all is done with justice and with praise.

O for a world where goods are shared and misery relieved,
Where truth is spoken, children spared, equality achieved.

We welcome one world family and struggle with each choice
That opens us to unity and gives our vision voice.

The poor are rich, the weak are strong, the foolish ones are wise.
Tell all who mourn: outcasts belong, who perishes will rise.

O for a world preparing for God's glorious reign of peace,
Where time and tears will be no more, and all but love will cease.

SCRIPTURE

Luke 2:1-7

Nancy

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David.

He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

MESSAGE

The Villain of the Christmas Pageant

Paul

**HYMN

There is Room in God's Great Welcome (tune: *Holy Manna*)

All

There is room in God's great welcome; See! The doors are open wide!
Here on earth as in God's heaven, hear the call to come inside!
There is so much room for difference — men and women, gay and straight.
In God's love, the rooms are countless, but there is no room for hate.

There is room in our good nation if we stand on justice-ground.
God has made a good creation; colors, cultures all abound.
Welcome, sister! Welcome, brother! All those yearning to breathe free!
There is room for one another but no room for bigotry.

There is room for understanding, for the outcast and the poor;
For the Christian, Jew and Muslim — there is room for these and more.
For the people on the fringes, for the ones with long career,
There is room for building bridges, but there is no room for fear.

There is room in faithful churches for the wounded and oppressed:
Women who've been told they're worthless, refugees who feel distressed,
Immigrants who fear the future, people scorned and pushed and shoved.
God, may we seek what you treasure: may we all make room for love.

**BENEDICTION

**UNISON SUNG BENEDICTION, NCH 116, v1

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

All

O come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lowly exile here, until the Child of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!

Acknowledgements

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FCUCC Staff

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Announcements

Contact: Beth Rakestraw, Office Administrator, office@uccgj.org

Guest WiFi Access | The name of our guest WiFi is FCUCCguest; the password is “welcomeall.”

Join us for Coffee after worship | You must be current on Covid vaccinations to join us for social events. Persons with underlying health conditions are encouraged to mask for indoor events.

Fall Book Study | 11:15 | The book study, *Christians Against Christianity* by Obery Hendricks Jr, finishes up in the library after worship.

Bring Down the Christmas Decorations | TODAY | After Worship | Reasonably strong backs and muscles needed to bring down boxes of Christmas decorations from upstairs storage in the CE Building. Please consider helping us with this task so that we can ...

Deck the Halls | Saturday, December 3 | 10:00 am -Noonish | There will be Christmas trees to assemble and decorate (including an easier tree for the sanctuary), wreaths to hang, tables to adorn, plenty of jobs for everyone of any age, size or ability. A soup lunch will be provided for workers. Join the fun!

Mission & Outreach December Collection | Mission and Outreach will be collecting warm hats, gloves, and socks in December, to be donated to Mutual Aid Partners, the agency we've been supporting this last quarter of 2022. They will be given out to families in need in our community. There will be a Warm and Fuzzy Tree in the Gathering Space during Advent where you can place your contributions. However, we wanted to let you early Christmas shoppers know now, so you can place these items on your Santa lists! It is also not too late to bring in feminine hygiene products as well as adult diapers to finish out November.

November Collection for Catholic Outreach | Finish up bringing in those kitchen basics, such as salt, pepper, canned cream of mushroom soup. Watch Tower Chimes and Church Chat for information about the December collection.

Mission & Outreach Ongoing Collections for Solidarity, Not Charity | We currently collect hotel and personal size toiletries, and water/milk jugs with their lids for Solidarity, Not Charity.

Please stop bringing in grocery bags for right now! Thanks.

Pastoral Care

To call Pastor Paul:

- **His cell phone, 970-793-8638. [Paul prefers calls over texts]**
- *His extension at church, 970-242-0298, x104.*
- *Home landline, 970-200-2668. [Paul is always up until midnight, do not be shy about calling late when there is need.]*

*To share a prayer request with the congregation, contact Beth Rakestraw, office@uccgj.org or 970-242-0298 x 105. **Deadline for publishing in the Sunday bulletin is Thursday noon.***

This Week at FCUCC
November 27 – December 4, 2022

Sunday 27	9:00	Choir Practice	music room
	10:00	Worship	sanctuary/YouTube
	11:00	Happy Hour/Bringing Down The Christmas Decor	pilgrim
	11:15	Fall Book Study	chapel
Tuesday 29	10:00	Women's Coffee	pilgrim
	10:00	Men's Coffee	mayflower
	5:30	Cantabile Ringers	music room
Wednesday 30	1:00	Through the Bible Study	chapel
Thursday 1	12:15	Health & Wellness	mayflower
Friday 2	10:00	Zoom Coffee Hour	zoom
Saturday 3	10:00	Deck the [Church] Halls	many rooms
Sunday 4	9:00	Choir Practice	music room
	10:00	Worship	sanctuary/YouTube
	11:00	Happy Hour	pilgrim
	11:15	Worship & Celebration	library

Church office hours: Monday through Thursday, 9:00 to 3:00.

Save the Dates:

December 18 | Annual Congregational Budget Meeting After Worship

December 24 | Christmas Eve Worship | 5:00 pm

February 22 | Ash Wednesday

April 9 | Easter

Vision & Mission

As a progressive Christian community of faith, we seek to walk with compassion, inclusion, acceptance, bravery and understanding as Jesus did.

We STRIVE to:

- ◇ *be a welcoming congregation where you are safe to be who you are.*
- ◇ *be life-long learners that question and challenge each other to grow in faith, thought and actions.*
- ◇ *work for peace, equity and justice for all people.*
- ◇ *protect and restore the integrity of our earth and all of creation.*
- ◇ *be change-makers.*