

December 1, 2019 – 10:00 am
First Sunday of Advent



ST. JOHN
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

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Rev. Rosemary Captain

- CCLI LICENSE #11164431
- PLEASE RESPOND WITH WORDS IN BOLD PRINT
- COMMUNION LITURGY BY REV. THOM SCHUMAN
- SCRIPTURE TEXTS FROM THE COMMON ENGLISH BIBLE.
- *PLEASE STAND IF COMFORTABLY ABLE.
- **NCH** IS THE NEW CENTURY HYMNAL

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

INVITATION TO ADVENT:

LIGHTING THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE: (on screen)

PRELUDE: **“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” Lani Smith**

*RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP:

One: We may not know when,

**Many: but you are coming to us, grace overflowing
from your heart, O God.**

One: We may not know who,

**Many: but your hope will be shared by the least likely
people, Friend of the poor.**

One: We may not know how,

**ALL: but your peace will transform our angry words
into warm welcomes, our bitterness into cups
of love, Spirit of Joy.**

*OPENING HYMN: **NCH 102**

“O How Shall I Receive You”

*CALL TO RECONCILIATION

We may not know the time, but our every moment is held in God’s hands. We may not do and say what we should or could, but God offers us words of forgiveness. Join me as we pray together, saying,

*UNISON PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS:

Sometimes it is hard for us to take you seriously, God of our lives. With our world divided and discourse among our family and friends, our hopes have turned to ashes. How can we become beacons of light this

Advent season and especially for those in the shadows?

Forgive us, God of holy seasons, and have mercy. In the days to come, may we discover the grace which has always been ours, so we can share it with others. May we taste the sweet goodness of your love, and feed those around us. May we be filled with the peace of your Spirit, so we may expect you to come in those we least expect, in places which surprise us, in moments we overlook, just as you did in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. *Silence for personal confession*

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON:**

Reach out and touch the kingdom, for it is right next to you. Breathe in, and feel the Spirit of peace and hope. Trust and believe this good news: God is nearer than you might ever imagine.

Thanks be to God, we are forgiven! We can set aside our differences and embrace everyone, we can seek peace for all in our lives, our neighborhoods, our world. Amen.

***GLORIA: NCH 759**

Glory to the Creator, the Christ, the Holy Spirit, Three- in-One; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

FIRST TESTAMENT READING: Isaiah 2:1-5 Lay Liturgist

RESPONSIVE READING OF Psalm 122 Page 705

EPISTLE READING: Romans 13:11-14 Lay Liturgist

CHOIR ANTHEM: "Come Expecting Jesus"

TIME FOR THE CHILD IN US ALL:

***GOSPEL READING: Matthew 24:36-44**

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

SERMON:

***HYMN OF RESPONSE: NCH 329**

“Jesus, the Joy of Loving Hearts” Verses 1-3

PASTORAL PRAYER: Beginning with silent personal prayer

THE LORD’S PRAYER: **Our Father 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 thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

PRAYER RESPONSE: **NCH 124 Verse 3**

**Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
And fit us for heaven to live with you there.**

INVITATION TO SHARE:

OFFERTORY: **“Chanson De Noel” George Blake**

***DOXOLOGY: NCH 780**

**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. Amen.**

***UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION:**

Our gifts seem so insignificant considering the need, so paltry when we look at the brokenness around us. But in the days to come, you promise to take them so that others might be fed, clothed, housed, and embraced in your grace and hope. Amen.

***HOLY COMMUNION: (On the Screen)**

***UNISON PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING:**

For what you have given us, God, thank you. For what you call us to, God, thank you. For filling us again, thank you! Help us to be, all that you know we can be. In Christ's name, in your love, we ask it. Amen.

***SENDING HYMN: NCH 110**

“Now Bless the God of Israel”

***BENEDICTION AND COMMISSION:**

One: We may not know when, but we will go,

Many: to bring God's grace to our broken world.

One: We may not know who, yet we will go,

Many: to receive Jesus' hope from those we are uncomfortable being around.

One: We may not know how, so we will go,

ALL: to share the Spirit's peace in the most unusual places.

***POSTLUDE: “Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord”**

Stephen Schwartz



