

First Sunday of Advent
December 3, 2023
United Church of Christ, Neillsville
Pastor James Mohr

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PRELUDE *"Of the Father's Love Begotten"*
Gilbert Martin Karen Mohr

RINGING OF THE CARILLON

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS
STEWARDSHIP MISSION MOMENT – Dave Harnisch

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Tear open the heavens and bring forth your presence.

We watch and we wait for the glory to come.

**All: We gather with hope, remembering your mercy.
Lead us in love; shine from above.**

Leader: Awaken the earth, enflame and enflame
We watch and we wait for what's birthing ahead.

**All: We gather with hope, remembering your justice.
Revive us, restore us; shine from above.**

Leader: Make us your love wave to broaden your reach
We watch and we wait for your deeds to appear.

**All: We gather with hope, remembering your handiwork.
Make us, mold us; shine from above.**

HYMN *"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"*
#86 vs 1-3 (Red UCC Hymnal) John M. Neale

**1 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 you, O Israel!**

**2 O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer,
Our spirits by thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Refrain**

**3 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**

LIGHTING OF THE HOPE CANDLE

HYMN *"O Come, O Come Emmanuel"*
#86 vs 4 (Red UCC Hymnal)

**4 O come, Desire of nations, bind
All peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife, and quarrels cease;
Fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Refrain**

PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE
(Pastor – light print **People – bold print**)

We come singing songs of hope, this morning.
Though we may not be inspired much right now,
we still sing.

Though it may take us time to sit with our hampered thoughts and sift through the growing pile of despair,
we still sing.

In spite of everything ridiculous and sad—
Though we may be beyond belief, depressed, confused,
and mad—

Some of us got dressed, and
Some of us made it out of bed or out the door
And we still sing of hope.

God, remind us that we have gotten through a lot of things we didn't think we could—
that you have not left us nor forsaken us—
That our individual and collective ancestors still sang new songs in the valleys of death.

And so, we still sing, too.
Embolden us as we try to show the world that we can find hope even when it seems impossible to bear.
Hope must be there.
Fear never wins.
The work begins in us.
Amen.

WORDS OF GRACE (PASTOR)

PASSING OF THE PEACE

All are invited to greet one another with such words as
“The peace of Christ be with you, and
the response: “And also with you.”

PRAISE RESPONSE “Gloria Canon” sung twice

Gloria, gloria in excelsis Deo!

Gloria, gloria, alleluia, alleluia!

CHILDREN’S TIME

SCRIPTURE READINGS

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Isaiah 64:1-9

64 O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence—²as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil— to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! ³When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. ⁴From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. ⁵You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed.

⁶We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. ⁷There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. ⁸Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. ⁹Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

Mark 13:24-37

²⁴“But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, ²⁵and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. ²⁷Then he will send out the

angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

²⁸“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³²“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

SERMON “The Backdoor God” Pastor Jim

HYMN “Come, O Long-Expected Jesus”
#122 NCH (vs. 1-3) Charles Wesley

**1 Come, O long expected Jesus,
born to set all people free;
from our fears and sins release us,
grant us your true liberty.**

**2 Israel's strength and consolation,
hope to all the earth impart;
dear desire of every nation,
enter every longing heart.**

**3 Born all people to deliver,
born a child you came to reign!
Born to rule on earth forever,
Come, be known to us again.**

MORNING PRAYERS

THE OFFERING SERVICE

Invitation to Generosity

Offertory

Doxology

**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**

Prayer of Dedication

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

The United Church of Christ practices open communion.

People of all ages who confess Christ as savior are welcome.

Today we will celebrate the sacrament at the altar.

Invitation to the Table (Pastor)

All: (sung)

**This is the joyful feast
of the people of God.
Men and women,
Youth and children,
Come from the east and the west,
From the north and the south,
And gather about Christ's table.**

Communion Prayer (Pastor)

The Sanctus – from Argentina

(Santo, Santo, Santo – Holy, Holy, Holy)

#793 NCH (Sung by soloist in Spanish, then sung by congregation in English)

**Santo, santo, santo.
¡Mi corazón te adora!
Mi corazón te sabe decir:
¡Santo eres Señor!**

**Holy, holy, holy.
My heart adores you!
My heart knows how to say to you:
Holy are you, Lord!**

Remembrance and Consecration (Pastor)

We remember that on that night...Consecrate, therefore, by your Holy Spirit, these gifts of bread and wine, and bless us that as we receive them at this table, we may offer you our faith and praise, we may be united Christ and with one another, and we may continue faithful in all things and we may continue faithful in all things.

All: In the strength Christ gives us,
We offer ourselves to you, eternal God,
And give thanks that you have called us to serve you.
Amen.

Breaking Bread and Pouring Wine

Prayer of Our Savior

Sharing the Elements

Prayer of Thanksgiving (all)

Almighty God, we give you thanks for the gift of our Savior's presence in the simplicity and splendor of this holy meal. Unite us with all who are fed by Christ's body and blood that we may faithfully proclaim the good news of your love and that your universal church may be a rainbow of hope in an uncertain world; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer.

HYMN *"Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morning"*
#107 NCH (v. 1-3) Marty Haugen

**1 Awake! Awake and greet the new morn,
for angels herald its dawning.
sing out your joy, for Jesus is born,
behold! the Child of our longing.
Come as a baby weak and poor,
to bring all hearts together,
to open wide the heavenly door,
and lives now inside us forever.**

**2 To us, to all in sorrow and fear,
Emmanuel comes a-singing,
whose humble song is quiet and near,
yet fills the earth with its ringing.
Music to heal the broken soul
and hymns of loving kindness,
the thunder of the anthems roll
to shatter all hate and injustice.**

**3 In deepest night Christ's coming shall be,
when all the world is despairing,
as morning light so quiet and free,
so warm and gentle and caring.
One without voice breaks forth in song,
a lame one leaps in wonder,
the weak are raised above the strong,
and weapons are broken asunder.**

COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION

PRAISE RESPONSE

"Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morning"

#107 NCH (v. 4)

4 Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night,
though cold the winter and cheerless,
the rising sun shall crown you with light,
be strong and loving and fearless;
Love be our song and love our prayer,
and love, our endless story,
may God fill every day we share,
and bring us at last into glory.

POSTLUDE

JOYS AND CONCERNS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RADIO BROADCAST

11 AM Sunday radio broadcast on WCCN
98.5FM and 1370AM

This week's radio broadcast
is sponsored by a "faithful listener"

WELCOME

We welcome you to our service of worship!

We are glad that you have joined us in
person, through the internet or on the radio.

We pray that you will hear God's call,
seek to follow Jesus, led by the Holy Spirit.

YouTube link for Sunday, December 3, 2023

https://youtube.com/live/ffqSR_kRq9g



**Begins Sunday,
Dec. 3rd at 9 AM**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday, December 4th – Worship

- 10 AM Deacon – Sally Sadowska
Greeter(s) – Jenny Clarkson, John & Jacob
Usher(s) – Don Quicker, Jerry Quicker

Tuesday, December 5th –

- 1 PM – Marge Goetsch Bible Study –

*will begin meeting in the lounge of church

Coffee fellowship after worship -

Sign up now on the back bulletin board for
hosting future weeks.

Dec 3 – Kathy & Howie Mathis

Dec 10 – Barb Petkovsek

Dec 17 – Christian Ed.

Dec 24 – no morning service

Dec 31 -

**A special Congregational Meeting
will be held on Sunday, December 10th
following worship to review 2024
Budget and Election of Committees**

We are now taking orders for poinsettias from
Falls Florist for our



sanctuary's Christmas Eve
service. You can choose
between red or white and
the cost is \$16.00. They
can be ordered in honor,

in memory of or for any other reason you may
have. They can be taken home following the 5 pm
Christmas Eve Service. Thank you for your orders.
Deadline for ordering will be December 15th.