

December 5, 2021
Order of Worship
Grinnell United Church of Christ

As a safety precaution during COVID, please remain silent during the worship service (as in no congregant singing nor praying aloud). Thank you for helping to keep each other safe.

PRELUDE *Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying*, Two settings by Johann Gottfried Walther (1684-1748)

INVOCATION

Shepherding God,
guide us through this season of anticipation and hope.
Comfort our troubled minds and strengthen our tired bodies.
Restore the hope this season offers, that we might lift our voices with strength and joy!
Straighten the crooked paths, that we might walk in your ways.
Level the rocky ground, that we might prepare for your arrival in our world.
In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

WELCOME and PASSING OF THE PEACE

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

The Peace of Christ be with you.... *(silently)* And also with you.

SCRIPTURE *Malachi 3:1-4; Philippians 1:3-11*

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Reader 1: O God, we light the second candle of Advent.

Reader 2: We seek your comfort. Both mighty and tender, you come. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you.

Reader 1: Isaiah announced God's coming to a people exiled in a broken and parched wilderness. He declared that God's redemption would make a highway in the desert and change the rough places into plain. God would come as a shepherd—feeding, leading, and cradling the weary flock. This Advent, we seek such a God.

Reader 2: Saving God, look upon your world and heal your land and your people. Prepare us to be changed. This Advent, teach us to be tender and just, as you are.

Reader 1: Shine on us, O God of justice. Guide our path through gloom of night.

Reader 2: Bear within us Wisdom's glory. Come to us, O Christ the Light.

HYMN NCH 122 *Come, O Long Expected Jesus*

Words: Charles Wesley, 1744, alt. Music: Christian F. Witt (1660-1716)

- 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.
- 4) By your own eternal Spirit, come to claim us as your own;
By your all sufficient merit, let us share your cross and crown.

SERMON *Luke 3:1-6*

SILENT REFLECTION

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

We pray for health and strength for George Drake, Betty Anne Francis, Gene McCaw, Verlene Mitchell, Emily Pfitsch, and Gayle Strickler.

PASTORAL PRAYER

Now is the time of watching and waiting,
A time pregnant with hope,
A time to watch and pray.

Christ our Advent hope,
Remind us to prepare for your coming;
Remind us to prepare for this time
When the soles of your feet touch the ground,
When you will become one of us
To be one with us.

May we watch for the signs,
Listen for the messengers,
Wait for the good news to slip into our world, our lives.
Christ our Advent hope,
Help us to clear the way for you;
To clear the clutter from our minds,
To sift the silt from our hearts,
To move the boulders that prevent us meeting you.

May sorrow take flight,
And your people sing a song of peace
And may hope be born again.

LORD'S PRAYER *(Inclusive Version) (Please pray silently)*

Blessed One, our Father and our Mother

Holy is your name.

May your love be enacted in the world.

May your will be done

On earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread

And forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us in the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

For all that we do in your love,

and all that your love brings to birth,

and the fullness of love that will be

are yours, now and forever. Amen.

GRATITUDE FOR OFFERING & DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow

Praise God all creatures here below

Praise God above ye heavenly hosts

Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Prayer of Confession

The voice of one comes

crying out in the wilderness

... prepare the way of the Lord.

A messenger prepares the way,

transforming us like the refiner's fire

... calling us to account.

For the prophets of old have spoken,
announcing the breaking open of the dawn
... guiding our feet in the way of peace.

Merciful God forgive us...
Forgive us when we are quick
to point the finger at someone else.
Forgive us when we put our heads down
and ignore the cries of injustice.
Forgive us when we presume to understand
the complexity of issues that divide and distract
the peoples of the land your feet once walked.

Merciful God...
forgive us, heal us,
encourage us and speak through us,
that we may be transformed through the refiner's fire,
and the offerings of our hands and our hearts
may prepare the way for the Christ child
to be welcomed among us in peace.

Words of Assurance

Do you feel it?
God's tender mercy rests on you, heals you, transforms you.
Do you see it?
God's Light breaks into our lives, and shows us the way.
Renewed and made whole,
we see the path God has prepared for us—
the way of peace,
 the way of hope,
 the way of grace,
 the way of service.
Thanks be to God. Amen.

Blessing of the Elements

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

We give thanks, gracious God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith; increase our love for one another; and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit, in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

HYMN NCH 117 *Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates*

Words: Georg Weissel, 1641

Music: Thomas Williams, 1789

- 1) Lift up your heads, O mighty gates; behold, the glorious ruler waits!
The Sovereign One is drawing near; the Savior of the world is here!
- 2) Fling wide the portals of your heart; make it a temple, set apart
From earthly use for heaven's employ, adorned with prayer and love and joy.
- 3) Redeemer, come! I open wide my heart to you; here, Christ, abide!
Let me your inner presence feel; your grace and love in me reveal.
- 4) So come, my Sovereign; enter in! Let new and nobler life begin;
Your Holy Spirit guide us on, until the glorious crown be won.

BENEDICTION

May the path that Christ walks
to bring justice upon the earth,
to bring light to those who sit in darkness,
to bring out those who live in bondage,
to bring new things to all creation:
 may this path run through our life.
 May we be the road Christ takes.

POSTLUDE *Savior of the Nations, Come*, arr. Andreas Nikolaus Vetter (1666-1734)

ATTENTION: For everyone's safety, please exit the building quietly and in a timely manner and reserve socializing for outside the church building.

Liturgists: Rick and Sue Ramsey

Vocalist: Shane Estes

Organist: Kenneth Davis

Pastor: Rev. Jessica Margrave Schirm

We give thanks to these helping hands who take turns throughout the month...

Mayflower Drivers: Rick Ramsey, George Britton, Denny Conway, Shane Estes, Jay Hansen

Chancel Flowers and Paraments: Sue Ramsey, Glenyce Conway, Karen Edwards, Sarah White, Olive Wright

Worship Resources:

Invocation ~ posted on the Ministry Matters website of the United Methodist Publishing House.

Confession ~ originally posted on the *Monthly Prayers* page (now *Weekly Worship*) of the Christian Aid website.

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/churches/weekly-worship>

Words of Assurance ~ written by Thom Shuman, and posted on <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.ca/>

Pastoral Prayer ~ Kate McIlhagga; posted on MinEmergent's Daily Communique, December 16, 2011.

Lord's Prayer ~ Copyright © 2003 Richard D. McCall, posted on the *Worship Well* website.

Benediction ~ written by Jan L. Richardson, and posted on <http://paintedprayerbook.com>