



CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
30 N. CLINTON ST.
IOWA CITY, IA 52245
319-337-4301

WORSHIP FOR DECEMBER 13, 2020
THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

PRELUDE “Of the Father's Love Begotten” Wilbur Held

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING OF THE SECOND ADVENT CANDLE
Chris and Amy Lewis, Ella, Lily, Oscar, and Malia

CALL TO WORSHIP
Let us open our hearts in welcome.
Let us rejoice and be glad.
Let us worship God.

HYMN "People, Look East"
[Because of copyright, we cannot print the words here]

OPENING PRAYER

We would like to rest and we would like to be ready, O God. We are busy and we are waiting. In all this there is an inner agitation and an outward dissatisfaction. So we turn to you and seek these things that elude us on our own. Help us come into your presence and find them here. Reconcile in us our need to regain our strength and our desire to respond to the peril and grief which surrounds us.

Let us rest from the anxiety and fear that is with us.

Let what keeps us busy be transformed into what prepares us to restore and to make new.

Let us allow joy into all you give us to do. Amen.

SCRIPTURE LESSON Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

PSALM 126

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
then were we like those who dream.

**Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy.**

Then they said among the nations,
"The Lord has done great things for them."

**The Lord has done great things for us,
and we are glad indeed.**

Restore our fortunes, O Lord,
like the watercourses of the Negev.

**Those who sowed with tears
will reap with songs of joy.**

[Unison]

**Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed,
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.**

SCRIPTURE LESSON Luke 1:46-55

SERMON "How Joy Increases"

TIME OF GRATITUDE

ANTHEM "Rosa Mystica" Chrysogonus Waddell
Avery Nabholz, Wen Chin Liu, Colin Wilson, Josh Ramseyer

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

HYMN “God Rest You Merry, Gentle Friends”

**God rest you merry, gentle friends,
let nothing you dismay,
remember Christ our Savior
was born on Christmas day,
to save us all from Satan's pow'r
when we were gone astray;**

Refrain:

**O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.**

**From God in highest heaven,
a blessed angel came;
and unto certain shepherds
brought tidings of the same:
how that in Bethlehem was born
the son of God by name, [Refrain]**

**Now to the Lord sing praises,
all you in every place,
and send true love and kindness
across our separate space,
pray this whole world in waiting
receive redeeming grace, [Refrain]**

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE “God Rest You Merry” Wilbur Held

Besancon - People look east - harmonization - Martin Shaw, Music - ©1928 Oxford University Press. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE #A-715458. All rights reserved.

TODAY IS THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT. We light the third Advent candle as we prepare for the celebration of Christmas.

WINTER SOLACE SERVICE: The days before Christmas can be difficult, especially this year as we are more isolated. This coming Thursday, December 17, Bill Lovin will be leading a Winter Solace Service at 7:00 p.m. This will be a Zoom gathering that will allow us to talk with one another as we hear scripture, listen to music, pray, and seek strength together in these days of diminishing light and early evenings. A Zoom invitation for this will be sent out soon, so look for that—and contact Bill if you don't receive it.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT: As part of our worship next Sunday, December 20, we will include last year's "Noisy Christmas"—a delightful telling of the Christmas story filled with carols and lots of opportunities to make a joyful noise. We'll send out ways that you can participate and what noisemakers you'll need.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP AND GALA RECEPTION: All of this will be online this year, but it will be wonderful if you join us. The worship service will begin at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 24. Our gala reception will follow on Zoom at 6:30 p.m. This year you'll have to provide your own cookies and hot cider. And we'll be able to see and talk with everyone who shows up! If it gets crowded, we'll set up some breakout rooms for small group conversations.

Stewardship Is Heart Work: Pledge/estimate of giving cards for 2021 have been sent out. If you have not received one, please contact the church office. If you have received a card, please prayerfully fill it out and return it to the church. 2020 has been filled with unexpected trials and tribulations. We anticipate more challenges in 2021. Your deeply considered, prayerful support will help us to continue our Church's mission in downtown Iowa City. **If you would like, you can now make your pledge online by clicking on this link:**

<https://forms.gle/yx7K5buGsJybRzAP8> Thanks again for your generous giving.

FREE LUNCH PROGRAM NEWS *Providing Good Food and Hospitality since 1983*

Our church prepared **95** lunches to go at the Free Lunch Program on November 30, 2020. Since the dining room is now closed due to the COVID-19, new procedures have been established that are working very well. So many generous members of our church volunteered by donating food for take-home lunches. Heartfelt thanks to: **Dianne Atkins, Ginny Clemons, Sue Dayton, Betsy Henson, Marge Hoppin, Jane Kinney, Marcy Kuechenmeister, Tom Mittman, Linda Muston, Joyce Myer, Connie Parsons, Edie Roberts and Lee Wood.**

Special appreciation to **Kyle Flippo, Betsy Henson, Joan Jehle and Edie Roberts** for their cheerful onsite support. Our next scheduled serving date is Monday, March 29, 2021.

Vicki Thomae

RECORDINGS OF THE WORSHIP SERVICES are posted by early Sunday morning each week at <https://vimeo.com/channels/1547852>. The recordings remain up permanently, so you can watch past worship services at your convenience or recommend them to a friend.

DO YOU HAVE A HYMN THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SING IN THE COMING MONTHS? Let Bill Lovin know. This is no guarantee that we will sing it, as the hymn will need to be covered by our reprint license, fit with the rest of the worship service and work for the person who will be leading the singing—but we'd like to hear from you and sing a new song.

WE WANT TO SEE YOU! We would like to have members and friends be a part of the greeting time during our online worship. Please send us a brief—10-30 second—video of you or your family waving, saying "Hi," singing, or whatever you would like. Or send a photo. We'll start including a few of these in the worship service each week as a way to strengthen our

connections with each other. Send your greeting videos to
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1UcrZ4ya9xFir39cG_1x-SCO6dVPBbV0B?usp=sharing

ALTERNATIVE GIVING-2020

This year, of course, all our alternative giving opportunities will be online. We still have many traditional options: Project Holiday, Church World Service, and Toys for Tots.

Salvation Army TOYS FOR TOTS: Here is the link for purchasing TOYS FOR TOTS through Walmart for our local Salvation Army, and instructions from the site.

<https://www.salvationarmyusa.org/usn/walmart-angel-tree/?fbclid=IwAR0W4P18HCd-bjbTuMTiHnabFtBSfKXdIGJjEjBrJJ5jFN0rUKLIVfdXxZ4>.

How to Shop Online

1. Enter your zip code below to search for your local Salvation Army unit.
2. Add gifts you would like to purchase for children in your community to your Walmart shopping cart.
3. Choose delivery and Walmart will ship the items directly to your local Salvation Army.

If you prefer, you can also drop items off at a Walmart collection point which can be found in participating Walmart stores starting November 1, or you can hand deliver them to your local Salvation Army

PROJECT HOLIDAY through CommUnity, holiday meals.

Project Holiday is CommUnity Food Bank's annual holiday meal distribution. Typically held the week before Christmas, **this distribution provides more than 1,500 Johnson County families with all the ingredients needed to make a traditional holiday dinner.**

In its 33rd year, the Project Holiday distribution will take place at CommUnity Food Bank's new location in Pepperwood Plaza and will also be available for delivery to those who face barriers to transportation.

Each \$25 donation will purchase a complete holiday meal for a local family in need.

You can donate here: <https://builtbycommunity.org/project-holiday/>.

CHURCH WORLD SERVICE

If you would like to give a gift through Church World Service, you can now do so through the special Congregational UCC site connected to the CWS site. Please note that this site will be available from November 29 through December 31. To reach the website, please follow this link:
<https://fundraise.cwsglobal.org/uccic-best-gift>

