



CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
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WORSHIP FOR DECEMBER 6, 2020  
THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT  
CHORAL MUSIC SUNDAY

PRELUDE    “Comfort, Comfort Now My People”            Paul Manz

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING OF THE SECOND ADVENT CANDLE  
Matt and Hope Spragg, Nadia and Peter

CALL TO WORSHIP

Let us hear tender words for a burdened people:

**Comfort, comfort, my people!**

**The days of sorrow are ending!**

Let us hear encouraging words for an anxious people:

**Prepare a way for the Holy One;**

**Through deserts of despair**

**build a highway for our God!**

Let us receive the peace of God coming to us in scripture and song.

HYMN            “Comfort, Comfort You My People”

**Comfort, comfort you my people;  
tell of peace, thus says our God;  
comfort those who sit in darkness  
bowed beneath oppression's load.  
Speak you to Jerusalem  
of the peace that waits for them;  
tell them that their sins I cover,  
and their warfare now is over.**

**For the herald's voice is calling  
in the desert far and near,  
bidding us to make repentance  
since the kingdom now is here.  
Oh that warning cry obey!  
Now prepare for God a way;  
let the valleys rise in meeting  
and the hills bow down in greeting.**

**Make you straight what long was crooked;  
make the rougher places plain;  
let your hearts be true and humble,  
as befits God's holy reign,  
for the glory of the Lord  
now o'er earth is shed abroad,  
and all flesh shall see the token  
that God's word is never broken.**

OPENING PRAYER

**God, come to us as a way through the wilderness of life. Come to us, for the mountains we need to climb seem much too high and the valleys through which we must pass seem much too deep. Come to us, for life is rough and rugged.**

**Come to us, O God, with a new way. Come to us with a new meaning and purpose for our lives. Come to us with a love that will not let us go. Free our imprisoned hearts and our chained up minds, that a new day of promise may stir us and our weary world to rejoice in the hope of new day dawning. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE LESSON            Isaiah 40:1-11

PSALM 85:1-2, 8-13

**You have been gracious to your land, O Lord,  
you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.**

**You have forgiven the iniquity of your people  
and blotted out all their sins.**

I will listen, O Lord God, to what you are saying,  
for you are speaking peace to your faithful people  
and to those who turn their hearts to you.

**Truly, your salvation is very near to those who fear you,  
that your glory may dwell in our land.**

Mercy and truth have met together;  
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

**Truth shall spring up from the earth,  
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.**

O Lord, you will indeed grant prosperity,  
and our land will yield its increase.

**Righteousness shall go before you,  
and peace shall be a pathway for your feet.**

SCRIPTURE LESSON      Mark 1:1-8

SERMON      “How Comfort Arrives”

A CHORAL OFFERING

"A Babe Is Born"      Paul Bouman

Avery Nabholz, Wen Chin Liu, Colin Wilson, Josh Ramseyer

A Babe is born all of a may,  
To bring salvation unto us.  
To Him we sing both night and day:  
Veni, Creator Spiritus. (Come, Creator Spirit)

At Bethlehem, that blessed place,  
The Child of bliss now born He was;  
And Him to serve God give us grace,  
O Lux beata, Trinitas. (O Trinity, most blessed Light)

There came three kings out of the East  
To worship the King that is so free,  
With gold and myrrh and frankincense,  
A solis ortus cardine. (Risen from the quarter of the Sun)

The Shepherds heard an angel's cry,  
A merry song that night sung he,  
Oh, why are ye so sore aghast?  
Jam ortus solis cardine (“Already the rising of the sun from its direction,” the East, has  
taken place.)

The angels came down with one cry,  
A fair song that night sung they  
In the worship of that Child.

Gloria tibi, Domine! (Glory to Thee, O Lord)

"Climb to the Top of the Highest Mountain" Carolyn Jennings  
Virtual Choir

Climb to the top of the highest mountain,  
Joyous tidings proclaim to the world,  
Lift up your voice, Shout the good news:  
Behold, your Lord comes to you.

He will feed his flock like a shepherd,  
He will carry the lambs in his arms,  
He will ever keep them safe from harm.  
Behold, your Lord comes to you.

He who made the stars in the heaven,  
He who fashioned the earth and the sea,  
From time eternal he was God,  
the Alpha and Omega, He.  
Behold, behold, your Lord!

He will come in pow'r  
He will rule with truth,  
Hope of all the nations,  
Light of the world, of all the world.

He will love the little children,  
He will hold them in his arms.  
Love him and trust him as a child,  
Behold, your Lord. Love him as a child.

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

There is no rose of such virtue  
As is the rose that bare Jesu:  
Alleluia!

For in that rose contained was  
Heav'n and earth in little space:  
Res miranda! (O Thing of Wonder)

By that rose we well may see  
There be One God in Persons Three:  
Pares forma! (Incomparable, perfect form.)

The angels sang, the shepherds too:  
Gloria in excelsis Deo!  
Gaudeamus, Gaudeamus! (Let us rejoice.)

Leave we all this worldly mirth  
And follow we this joyful birth:  
Transeamus! (Let us pass over.)

"Wexford Carol" arr. Elaine Hagenberg  
Virtual Choir

Good people all, this Christmas time,  
Consider well, and bear in mind,  
What our good God for us has done,  
In sending his beloved Son.  
With Mary holy, we should pray  
To God with love this Christmas day;  
In Bethlehem upon that morn,  
There was a blessed Messiah born.

Near Bethlehem did shepherds keep  
Their flocks of lambs, and feeding sheep;  
To whom God's angels did appear,  
Which put the shepherds in great fear.  
"Prepare and go," the angels said,  
"To Bethlehem. Be not afraid.  
For you'll find this happy morn  
A princely babe sweet Jesus born."

With thankful heart and joyful mind,  
The shepherds went the babe to find,  
And as God's angels had foretold,  
They did our Savior Christ behold.  
Within a manger he was laid,  
And by His side the virgin maid  
Attending on the Lord of Life  
Who came to earth to end all strife.

With Mary holy we should pray  
To God with love this Christmas day;  
In Bethlehem upon that morn,  
There was a blessed Messiah born.

TIME OF GRATITUDE

HYMN        “What Child Is This?”

**What Child is this who, laid to rest  
On Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet  
While shepherds watch are keeping?**

**Refrain:**

**This, this is Christ the King,  
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
Haste, haste, to bring Him laud,  
The Babe, the Son of Mary!**

**Why lies He in such mean estate,  
Where ox and ass are feeding?  
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here  
The silent Word is pleading.**

**So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh,  
Come one and all, to own Him.  
The King of kings salvation brings;  
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

HYMN        “Prepare the Way”

**Prepare the way, O Zion,  
your Christ is drawing near!  
Let every hill and valley  
a level way appear.  
Greet One who comes in glory,  
foretold in sacred story.  
O blest is Christ that came  
in God's most holy name.**

**Christ brings God's rule, O Zion;  
he comes from heaven above.  
His rule is peace and freedom,  
and justice, truth, and love.  
Lift high your praise resounding,  
for grace and joy abounding.  
O blest is Christ that came  
in God's most holy name.**

**Fling wide your gates, O Zion;**

**your Savior's rule embrace.  
His tidings of salvation  
proclaim in every place.  
All lands will bow rejoicing,  
their adoration voicing.  
O blest is Christ that came  
in God's most holy name.**

## BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

“Prepare the Way, O Zion”

Stephen Weber

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Call to Worship—adapted from UCC Worship Ways, Advent 2, 2020 by Rev. Susan A. Blain, Minister for Worship and Gospel Arts, Faith INFO Ministry Team, UCC. Used with permission.

**TODAY IS THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT.** We will light the second Advent candle as we prepare for the celebration of Christmas. This morning we are especially happy to continue our long-standing Advent tradition of the December Choral Music Sunday. As with everything else, it's a little different this year but still an event that brings joy in these days. Thanks to Kristin Ramseyer, Bill Crouch, and the choir members for their work to bring this to fruition.

### **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*

**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.

**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](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: Heifer Project, 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

**HEIFER GIFTS.** You can see the full catalog at <https://www.heifer.org/gift-catalog/index.html>.

Heifer cards can be personalized for your recipient by Ginny Clemons.

Top gifts:

Goat Full : \$120

Share: \$10

Sheep Full \$120



Share \$10  
 Heifer Full \$500  
     Share \$50  
 Water for life \$750  
 Flock of chicks \$20  
 Alpaca Full \$150  
     Share \$20  
 Gift of trees  
     Full \$60  
     Share \$10  
 Biogas stoves for a village  
     Full \$1000  
     Share \$50

Instructions: Please complete your Heifer orders by November 30!

1. Select Heifer gift from short lists on the church webpage or the bulletin
2. Send check to the church or pay via paypal donate button on the church website. Memo line on check or paypal page should indicate Heifer.
3. Fill out a form describing your order. If you are paying by paypal, email or mail the form. If you are paying by check, include the form with your check.

Mission Board will pick up the forms from the church office and deliver them to Ginny. Ginny will personalize the cards, and Mission will address and mail the cards or return them to you as you have indicated.

**ORDER FORM for Heifer Project gifts**

Your name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

email address \_\_\_\_\_

Description of order	Person to be honored (print)	Amount (see list or use catalog)
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Example: gift of trees (full)                      Jonah                      \$60

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

Use addition forms for additional orders

\_\_\_ I would like to have the cards returned to me

\_\_\_ I would like the Mission Board to address and mail the cards (add addresses below).

\_\_\_ I have paid by paypal through the church webpage

\_\_\_ I have sent a check to the church

Please provide addresses on this form for cards to be mailed by the Mission Board. Be sure to indicate which address goes with which giftcard.

Address for giftcard 1:

Address for giftcard 2

**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/>.

**Thanks to everyone who gave to the Neighbors in Need (NIN) Offering earlier this month.**

We received \$1240 for this special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds of this offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants. Neighbors in Need grants are awarded to UCC churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. These grants fund projects whose work ranges from direct service to community organizing and advocacy to address systemic injustice.

### **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>

If you missed the **CRC RELIGION FOR RACIAL JUSTICE** event, or if you would like to share it with others, you can find a recording on [YouTube](#) and on [Facebook](#).

And here is a [1-page document of some Next Steps](#). These suggested next steps are of course not exhaustive.