

Christ Congregational United Church of Christ
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Web site: www.christcongregationalucc.org
The Rev. Candace Thomas, Designated-Term Pastor
Jay Harragin, Director of Music
Joan Chandler, Liturgist

Our Vision: A church that listens, praises God, inspires, and serves others.

December 6, 2020 – 10:30 a.m.
Second Sunday of Advent

Preparation for Worship

“One day we must come to see that peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but that it is a means by which we arrive at that goal. We must pursue peaceful ends through peaceful means.”

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*CALL TO WORSHIP:

One: Even now, the Peaceful One is drawing near.

Many: Even now, the day of our salvation is at hand.

One: The God who comforts us speaks tenderly to God’s people.

Many: The Shepherd who feeds us longs to take us into his arms.

One: While we watch and wait for steadfast love and faithfulness to meet,

Many: While we wonder if justice and peace will ever kiss, One: We can prepare the way of the Lord.

Many: We can clear a path for him in our hearts and in our world.

One: In these days of setback and struggle, we choose to prepare and not to despair.

Many: In a world drunk on wealth and power, we choose to walk the path of peace.

One: For such a time as this, the Holy One comes speaking peace.

Many: For such a time as this, we are called to make peace.

One: Get ready! Our savior comes.

Many: Get ready! The peace of Christ is given for one and for all.

(The second purple candle is lit-PEACE.)

**ALL: O Holy One, we light this second candle,
A candle offering comfort to weary spirits
After a year of pain and loss.
Let its glow remind us of your tender care
And warm our lives in the Light of Peace.
Let it guide us to your presence in our midst,
Leading us to your Justice and Joy in the service of Love.**

***OPENING HYMN: "It Came upon the Midnight Clear" (No. 131, NCH)**

**It came upon the midnight clear, That glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold!
"Peace on the earth, good will to all, great news of joy we bring."
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.**

**Still through the cloven skies they come, with peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing,
And ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.**

**And you, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way, with painful steps and slow,
Look, now for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing;
O rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing!**

**For lo, the days are hastening on, by prophet before told,
when the ever-circling years comes round the age of gold;
When peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
And all the world send back the song which now the angels sing**

***THE COMMANDMENT OF JESUS (John 15:5, 12)**

I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

PRAYER OF INVOCATION (Unison)

**O Holy One,
you are tender shepherd,
architect of the Way,
beguiling hope of all who go looking for you
deep in their lives.
Surprise us here with
Sweetness, challenge, vision—
Whatever we may need
In this moment to recognize you
and follow you into the future.
We pray in the name of Jesus, the Beloved.**

SCRIPTURE LESSONS:

Isaiah 40:1-11

NRSV

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever. Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

Mark 1:1-8

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'"

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SPECIAL MUSIC "Lo! How a Rose E'er Blooming" arr. Lloyd Larson

SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Unison)

**The year past has been riddled with crisis and losses:
Covid-19, natural disasters of fire and hurricane,
exposure of societal injustices rooted in racist and sexist structures,
painful political reckonings.
In this moment we are called to examine our hearts
for our role in the last year:
to name what traditionally have been called
Sins of Commission—
 that is, what we may have done
 to contribute to the pain and chaos of these days;
Sins of Omission—
 that is, what we may have left undone
 which contributed to the pain,
 or failed to help alleviate suffering.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON-Pastor

Comfort, comfort, my people, says the God of Justice and Compassion.
You are forgiven your sin, And showered with grace to change your life,
And to work toward the kin-dom of the One who is to Come:
New heavens and new earth, where righteousness is at home.
Amen.

PRAYER SONG: "Come, O Long-Expected Jesus" (*verse 1*) (NCH, No.122)

**Come, O Long-Expected Jesus, born to set all people free;
From our fears and sins release us; grant us your true liberty.**

PASTORAL PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF JESUS(*Unison*)

We join our hearts together as we pray:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen

OFFERING INVITATION

The season of waiting and watching is also a season of preparing. Our generosity prepares the way for hope, peace, justice, and community. In struggle and in joy, God is faithful to us.

We bring forth our offerings – our tithes, our treasures, and our very lives – to demonstrate our faithfulness to God.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION:(*Unison*)

O Faithful One, accept these gifts of our hearts and hands.

May they be multiplied and magnified as the living presence of Christ in the world. Amen.

MUSICAL OFFERING: “Awake! Awake and Greet the New Morn” Marty Haugen

MESSAGE: “Comforted By God” Pastor Candy Thomas

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation

Communion Prayer

Words of Institution

Sharing the Elements

Prayer of Thanksgiving (unison)

Thank you for bread and wine through which we have remembered your life and love and all you taught. May we now be filled with your living word. Build a stable in my body, place a manger in my heart. Fill it with your love, as if it were a newborn child. Amen

CLOSING HYMN: “Let There Be Peace On Earth”

Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me;
Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.
With God our creator, children all are we.
Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.
Let peace begin with me; let this be the moment now.
With every step I take, let this be my solemn vow;
to take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally.
Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.

COMMISSION

Go forth into the world
energized to seek signs of God’s future everywhere:
especially in the unruly, unkempt, and persistent voices
of Prophets in our midst:
calling us to prepare the way in our lives and our world
For the Holy One who is coming! Amen.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE



Welcome to Everyone!

*Whoever or whatever brought you to our on-line worship service this morning, we believe that the Spirit of God had a hand in you joining us. We hope that you feel the Holy Spirit in our service of prayer and praise. At Christ Congregational Church we strive to love one another as God has loved us and welcome one another as Christ has welcomed us. Therefore, we are an **Open and Affirming** church, loving and welcoming all people in all of God’s variety; including racial, ethnic, and economic diversity, gender diversity and expression, sexual orientation, and physical and mental abilities.*

TODAY WE SHARE IN THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION. ALL WHO LOVE OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ARE WELCOME AT HIS TABLE. YOU WILL EACH HAVE INDIVIDUAL, PREPACKAGED, DISPOSABLE JUICE AND WAFER CONTAINERS FOR YOUR USE.

JOYS AND CONCERNS – Please let Pastor Candy know of any joys or concerns you would like lifted up in worship by notifying her by Sunday morning at 10 a.m. via phone, text or email.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRIME TIME, EVERY Sunday, from 9:00-9:45 a.m.

We will continue to discuss the book:

"An Altar in the World"

A Geography of Faith"

by Barbara Brown Taylor.

To Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6917354836?pwd=QnNrdE1VWWUvNjMvOWkzU1UwYzdPUT09>

Meeting ID: 691 735 4836

Passcode: 338243

FELLOWSHIP HOUR

VIA ZOOM at 12:30 p.m.

MEETING ID 691 735 4836

PASSWORD 338243

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The Board of Christian Ed is suggesting to our youth that they watch and listen to the messages presented by Pastor Candy each Sunday during our live -stream/in-person church services during the month of December. Use this as a spring board for discussion of the Advent season. Ms. Judy also emailed some suggestions for fun activities in which families could engage as we prepare for the birth of the Christ. Sunday School on zoom will resume after the new year.

from Cindy Ketzle on behalf of the Board of Christian Ed. 12-1-2020

BIBLE STUDY

We will meet on Zoom at 6 p.m. on Mondays.

To Join Zoom Meeting

Sign-in information is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82547685992> Meeting ID: 825 4768 5992 One tap mobile
+13126266799,,82547685992# US (Chicago)
+16468769923,,82547685992# US (New York) Dial by your location

Please stipulate when your giving is other than pledge or plate by letting Judy Carlson or Michelle Simone know.

ONLINE GIVING - We invite you to use our online giving option as a quick, simple and secure method to make your pledges and any ancillary contributions. **Clicking on the “Give Online Today” button at the bottom of this newsletter, or going to our church website at christcongregationalucc.org and clicking “online giving”** will bring you to the secured Moon Clerk site which will allow you to enter your credit card information.

Please let Michelle, our Administrative Assistant, know if there are names you'd like added to the Prayer List She may be e-mailed at christch@bellsouth.net or call her at 305-235-9381. Thanks be to God for prayers answered and for comfort given!

Prayer List:

The family of Gloria Fuller, Gail Kenan, Graham and Carmen Andrew and their entire family, Mr & Mrs Jerry Parks, Linda Dalrymple, Barbara Parker, Lindsay Robertson, Mary Ellen Prather, Frank Tirb, Rosemary Daniels, The Family of Margie Fickes, The Family of Dollie Bryan, Rhonda Johnstone Cepedes, The Family of Ray Radkiewicz, Lauren Kline, Margarita Morell's sister, All medical professionals and first responders, The Family of Bill McDowell, Wendy Olson, Ezell Smith, The family of Tula Vernon.

For Pastoral Care Needs, please call *Pastor Candy* at 925-640-9289 or you may call or leave a message at the Church Office, 305-235-9381, Monday-Friday, from 9:30 a.m – 2:30 p.m. and our Office Administrative Assistant, *Michelle Simone*, will assist you in reaching *Pastor Candy*. When the office is closed you may call the Board of Deacons Chairperson, *Jim Ketzle*, at 305-495-4452 and he will be able to help you. For Use of Property Needs or if you identify a Maintenance Concern call the Board of Trustees Chairperson, *Julio Balcells*, 305-282-7882. For Other General Questions or Needs call the Church President/Moderator, *Lorrie LeGrand*, 305-978-3801

CALENDAR - December 6, 2020 – December 13, 2020

- Sun. 6** 9 00 a.m. Prime Time ZOOM Meeting
 10:30 a.m. Worship in the Garden Chapel in person
 & live- streamed on Facebook with
 Holy Communion
 12:30 p.m. Fellowship via Zoom
- Sun. 13** 9 00 a.m. Prime Time ZOOM Meeting
 10:30 a.m. Worship in the Garden Chapel in person
 & live- streamed on ZOOM



Safety Protocols For Outside Services at Christ Congregational UCC

- In-person worship services held in the Garden Chapel on Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

It is expected that people will attend only if they are well. A photo will be taken of those in attendance in the event that contact tracing is needed. Ushers will obtain contact information from any guest visitors.

Live streaming on Facebook will continue. Worshippers may choose the option with which they are most comfortable.

- All attendees and participants are required to wear masks at all times which cover both mouth and nose.

Social distancing must be observed at all times—prior, during, and following the worship service. As much as you would like to extend a welcoming handshake or warm hug, **please don't** out of respect and love for the health of our community.

- An Usher will be stationed at each of the three entrances to the Garden Chapel to assist in seating the congregation.

- Hand sanitizers will be available at each entrance.

Seating can be on the rock pews or chairs may be brought by congregants if desired. If cushions are needed for the rock pews they must be brought in as they cannot be provided. If assistance is needed to carry chairs from cars an Usher will help.

- Worship programs will continue to be online each Friday and will also be handed out by Ushers wearing gloves.

The Kelsey building will remain locked. There will be no refreshments after worship. Water fountains will not be available. Only bathrooms in the linear classroom building will be available.

- A receptacle will be available for offerings.

Monthly Holy Communion will be observed using individual Celebration pre-packaged elements.

- Trash cans with bag liners will be placed at all exits.

Live Streaming on Facebook will be continued. ***In case of bad weather, worship will be held in the Sanctuary with doors and glass side walls open.**