



First Congregational

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**“Where is the Light?”
1st Sunday of Advent
November 29, 2020
10:30 a.m. Facebook Live Service**

*Following Jesus, our mission is to serve God
by building an inclusive community where uplifting worship
and relevant messages deepen spirituality
and inspire acts of justice, service, and compassion.*

Our Church's Mission Statement

Chris Clark, Preacher
Rev. Dr. Laura Miller-Purrenhage, Pastor
Anita Calcagno, Office Administrator
Nicole Finney, Child Care
Sue Sackett, Custodian
Rev. John Baumgartner, Pastor Emeritus

Judy Nielsen, Organist
Darlene Banks, Bell Choir Director
Brandon Frost, Choir Director
Chuck Byam, Choir Accompanist

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Welcome to First Congregational United Church of Christ!

*As you look over the bulletin, please notice that you are invited to read aloud **bold** text.*

MOMENT FOR CENTERING

GREETING

One: The grace of Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Many: And also with you.

INTRODUCTIONS and ANNOUNCEMENTS

BELLS/CHIMES

CALL TO WORSHIP

(Adapted with permission from Rev. Susan Blain, Copyright 2020 Justice and Local Church Ministries, Faith INFO Ministry Team, United Church of Christ)

One: After a year of suffering and struggle, we go searching for a sign, any sign.

Many: Be aware, stay awake, change is coming.

One: We hope that the Human One is on the way, gathering the faithful from the four winds, into a place of peace –We need a sign, any sign.

Many: Be aware, stay awake, change is coming.

One: Nature once offered signs to depend on: The fig tree put out tender leaves, and we knew summer was near—But climate today is hurting, and unpredictable. We need a sign, any sign.

Many: Be aware, stay awake, change is coming.

One: So together we search for a sign of the One who is coming—
Clarity in confusion
Green shoot in a barren landscape
Song arising in a weary soul.

**Many: Be aware, stay awake, change is coming
Come, let us worship!**

OPENING HYMN #101 (verses 1-3)

(please feel free to sing loud and strong from your place at home)

“Comfort, Comfort Oh My People”

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE OF HOPE-Chris, Kelly & Nora Clark and Sue Sackett

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

ANTHEM

“Light of the World”
(Kelly Stuible-Clark)

FRESH PERSPECTIVES

Rev. Dr. Virginia Schiefelbein

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Isaiah 64:1-9 NRSV (pg. 680)

GOSPEL LESSON

Mark 13:24-37 NRSV (pg. 925)

One: Words from the past, made new for us today.

Many: Thanks be to God.

SUNG RESPONSE #116 (verse 1)

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

**O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

HOMILY

“Where is the Light?”
(Chris Clark)

MUSICAL REFLECTION

“Jesus Loves Me”
(Kelly Stuible-Clark)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

(Since our services are posted publicly on Facebook, we ask that you either leave people unnamed in your prayer requests [ex: prayers for a friend who is in his last stages of life] or that you obtain permission from anyone you wish to name in prayer.)

OFFERING MOMENT

*Please give what you can by mail or through prayers.
If you have any questions, please reach out to Lynn Hart hartacre3@aol.com*

INVITATION TO HOLY COMMUNION

COMMUNION PRAYER

One: God be with you.

Many: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

Many: We lift them to God.

One: Let us give thanks to God Most High.

Many: It is good to give God thanks and praise.

CALL TO CONFESSION:

(Based on Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 and adapted with permission from Susan Blain, 2020)

One: Please join me in this responsive prayer.

This has been a year to lament—

Grief and loss.

Crisis when social structures have failed the common good,

Complicity when age-old prejudices found new and cruel expression.

Have we really given up these social structures and prejudices?

Many: Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

One: This has been a year to wake up—

To read the “signs of the times”

To wake up to painful truths, and give them voice

To ponder the changes needed for a just world for all.

Have we really woken up?

Many: Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

One: This has been a year to call God into our sorry midst—

Show us your face!

Encourage us in the face of brutal realities,

Empower us to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with you

On the way in which you make all things new.

Have we really sought God in all of this? Have we really sought to do God’s will in love for our neighbors?

Many: Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

Silence

ASSURANCE OF GRACE

(From 1 Corinthians 1: 3-9 and adapted with permission from Susan A Blain, 2020)

One: God is faithful, and gives us grace in Christ Jesus. In this fellowship we can count on being enriched in speech, in knowledge, in every spiritual gift. Let us give thanks, in Christ, we are forgiven and sent forth to work for God’s reign among us. Knowing this, we can approach this first Sunday of Advent with renewed hope.

Many: Thanks be to God.

SANCTUS

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.

Heav’n and earth are full of your glory.

Glory be to you, O Lord.

Blessed is the one who comes,

Who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest!

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

COMMUNION PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

SHARING THE BREAD & CUP

THANKSGIVING PRAYER

One: Let us pray.

Many: We thank you, God, for inviting us to, and nurturing us at, this table. Strengthen our faith, teach us to hope, increase our love for one another, and let us offer thanksgiving to you every day of our lives. Help us to be hope for all who are in need; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN (verses 1-4)

“The Holly and the Ivy”

(please feel free to sing loud and strong from your place at home)

BENEDICTION

CHORAL RESPONSE

“In the Lord I’ll be Ever Thankful” (sung once)

**In the Lord I’ll be ever thankful
In the Lord, I will rejoice!
Look to God, do not be afraid.
Lift up your voices, the Lord is near.
Lift up your voices, the Lord is near.**

BELLS/CHIMES

POSTLUDE

“This Little Light of Mine”
(Kelly Stuible-Clark)

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O Come, O Come Emmanuel
(#840428, One License, Contributor: Veni, Veni, Emmanuel, Adaptation by: Thomas Helmore 1811-1890, Text: LM with refrain)
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SUNDAY ROSTER

Liturgist – Rev. Dr. Virginia Schiefelbein

Fresh Perspective – Rev. Dr. Virginia Schiefelbein

Homily – Chris Clark

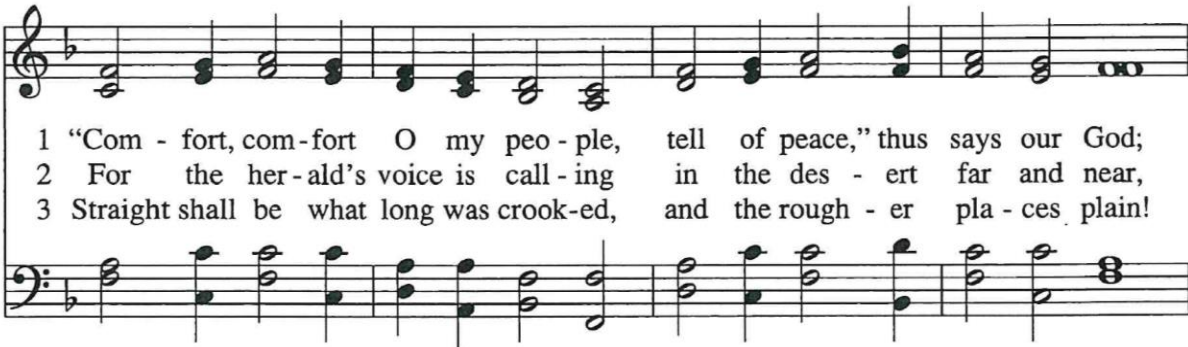
Virtual Coordinator – Kelly Stuible-Clark

Music Coordinator – Kelly Stuible-Clark

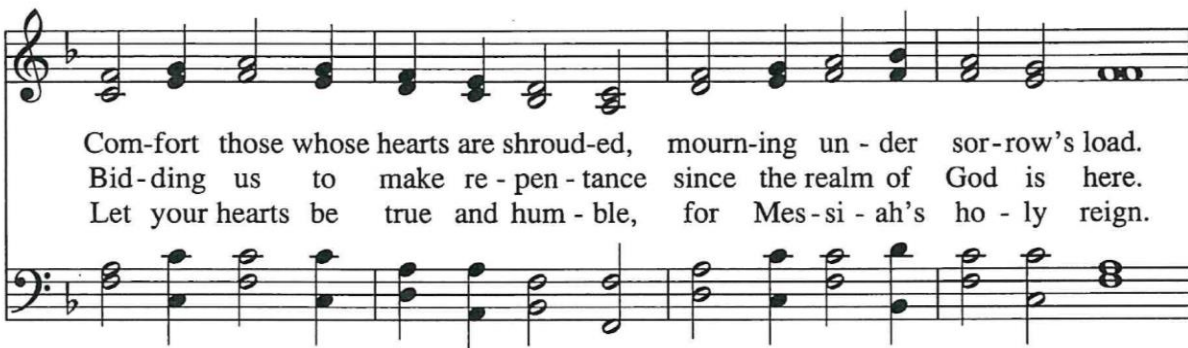
Advent Readers –The Clark Family

- If you're struggling to find hope amidst all of the troubles of our world right now, one source that maybe be helpful is this: <https://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/>
- The UCC is offering a special Advent series on faith-based justice training. Here is a link if you're interested in signing up or learning more: <https://frontline-faith.teachable.com/p/faith-based-organizing>


Comfort, Comfort O My People

*Isa. 40:1-8**Johannes Olearius, 1671**Transl. Catherine Winkworth, 1863; alt.*


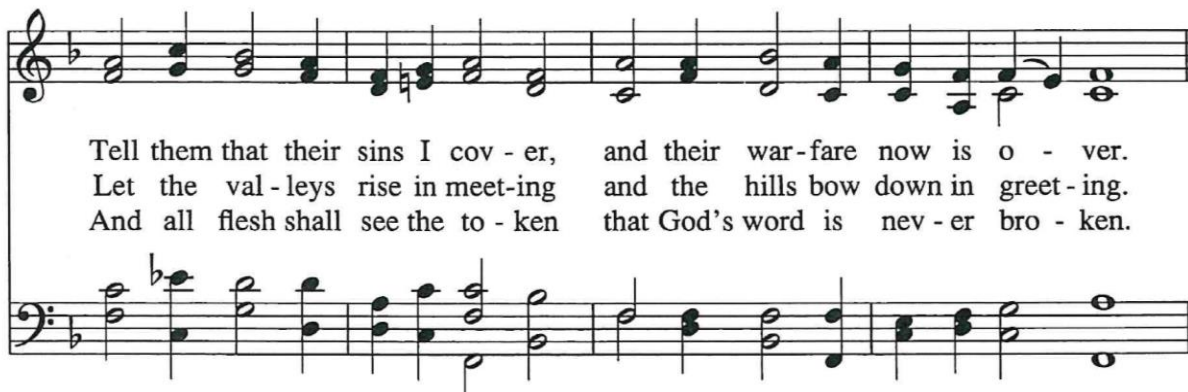
1 "Com - fort, com-fort O my peo - ple, tell of peace," thus says our God;
 2 For the her - ald's voice is call - ing in the des - ert far and near,
 3 Straight shall be what long was crook-ed, and the rough - er pla - ces plain!



Com-fort those whose hearts are shroud-ed, mourn-ing un - der sor-row's load.
 Bid-ding us to make re - pen - tance since the realm of God is here.
 Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, for Mes-si - ah's ho - ly reign.



Speak un - to Je - ru - sa - lem of the peace that waits for them;
 Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre-pare for God a way;
 For God's glo - ry ev - er-more shall be known o'er all the world;



Tell them that their sins I cov - er, and their war-fare now is o - ver.
 Let the val - leys rise in meet-ing and the hills bow down in greet - ing.
 And all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

Isaiah 64:1-9**New Revised Standard Version**

64 O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence—² as 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! ³ When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. ⁴ From 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. ⁵ You 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. ⁶ We 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. ⁷ There 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. ⁸ Yet, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. ⁹ Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.

²⁴ “But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, ²⁵ and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶ Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. ²⁷ Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the
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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. ²⁹ So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰ Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹ Heaven 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. ³³ Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴ It 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. ³⁵ Therefore, 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, ³⁶ or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷ And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

THE HOLLY AND THE IVY

Traditional English Carol



1. The hol-ly and the i - vy, when they are both full grown, of
2. The hol-ly bears a blos-som as white as an - y flower, and
3. The hol-ly bears a ber - ry as red as an - y blood, and
4. The hol-ly bears a branch__ as sharp as an - y thorn, and



1. all the trees that are in the wood, the hol - ly bears the__ crown.
2. Ma-ry bore sweet__ Je-sus Christ to be our sweet Sav - ior.
3. Ma-ry bore sweet__ Je-sus Christ to do poor sin - ners__ good.
4. Ma-ry bore sweet__ Je-sus Christ on Christ-mas day in the morn.



- 1-4. The ris-ing of the sun and the run-ning of the deer, the



- 1-4. play-ing of the mer-ry or - gan, sweet sing-ing in the choir.