**St. John United Church of Christ**

***“In Christ We Live, Celebrate, & Serve”***

November 29, 2020 First Sunday of Advent

9:30 a.m. Worship (618) 877-6060

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**WE COME TO WORSHIP GOD**

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

HAND BELLS CALLING TO WORSHIP

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE

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 Introduction and Reading of Scripture from Isaiah 60

 Lighting of the Candle

 Song: ***“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”*** vs. 1

***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!***

 Unison Prayer

***O God, we thank you that Jesus brought hope into our world. By the good news of the Bible you are still bringing hope to people. Help us to be ready to welcome Jesus Christ so that we may think good thoughts and do good deeds, and so that we may be a people of hope in our world. Amen.***

PRELUDE *Trio on “Lo, How a Rose E’re Blooming”* Lasky

CALL TO WORSHIP AND PRAYER

 From *“Watchman, Tell Us of the Night”*

Watchman, tell us of the night, What its signs of promise are.

 ***Trav’ler, o’er yon mountain’s height, See that glory-***

***beaming star.***

Watchman, does its beauteous ray Aught of joy or hope

foretell?

***Traveler, yes; it brings the day, Promised day of Israel.***

Watchman, tell us of the night, Higher yet that star ascends.

 ***Trav’ler, blessedness and light, Peace and truth its course portends.***

Watchman, will its beams alone gild the spot that gave them

birth?

***Traveler, ages are its own; See, it burst o’er all the***

***earth.***

Let us pray together.

 ***We are watching and waiting, O Lord, awake to your coming again into our hearts and lives. Help us follow the beams of light that offer hope and peace in every age. Forgive our turning back to wrong ways, and keep us alert to your desires for us, so we may be righteous followers of your glory. Amen.***

RESPONSIVE PSALTER READING Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

 Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock!

 ***You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh.***

 Stir up your might, and come to save us!

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

 O Lord God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people’s prayers?

 ***You have fed them with the bread of tears, and given them tears to drink in full measure.***

 You make us the scorn of our neighbors; our enemies laugh among themselves.

 ***Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved…***

 But let your hand be upon the one at your right hand, the one whom you made strong for yourself.

 ***Then we will never turn back from you; give us life, and we will call on your name.***

 Restore us, O Lord God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

HYMN ***“Come, Thou Long-expected Jesus”*** Stuttgart tune

***Come, thou long expected Jesus, Born to set thy people free;***

***From our fears and sins release us; Let us find our rest in thee.***

***Israel’s strength and consolation, Hope of all the earth thou art;***

***Dear desire of ev’ry nation, Joy of ev’ry longing heart.***

***Born thy people to deliver, Born a child, and yet a king!***

***Born to reign in us forever, Now thy gracious kingdom bring.***

***By thine own eternal spirit Rule in all our hearts alone;***

***By thine all sufficient merit Raise us to thy glorious throne.***

EPISTLE READING 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

SOLO  *Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne* Matthews

GOSPEL READING Mark 13:28-37

REFLECTION

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE, LORD’S PRAYER & RESPONSE

 ***Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.***

STEWARDSHIP INVITATION & BLESSING

 ***We give thanks to you, O God, with our offerings of time, talent, and treasure. Thank you for inspiring us to use our abilities and gifts for your good purposes. Amen.***

HYMN ***“The King of Glory Comes”***

Words: Willard F. Jabusch. Music: Israeli folk song; arr. John Ferguson. Words © 1966, 1985 Willard F. Jabusch. Music Arr. © 1974 The Pilgrim Press Lyrics reprinted by permission, CCLI License #1334401

***The King of glory comes, the nation rejoices.***

***Open the gates before him, lift up your voices.***

***Who is the King of glory: what shall we call him?***

***He is Emmanuel, the promised of ages.***

***The King of glory comes, the nation rejoices.***

***Open the gates before him, lift up your voices.***

***In all of Galilee, in city or village,***

***he goes among his people, curing their illness.***

***The King of glory comes, the nation rejoices.***

***Open the gates before him, lift up your voices.***

***He gave his life for us, the pledge of salvation,***

***he took upon himself the sins of the nation.***

***The King of glory comes, the nation rejoices.***

***Open the gates before him, lift up your voices.***

***He conquered sin and death; he truly has risen,***

***and he will share with us his heavenly vision.***

***The King of glory comes, the nation rejoices.***

***Open the gates before him, lift up your voices.***

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *A Joyous Postlude*  Mallard

We begin a new church year today with the first Sunday of Advent. We watch for Jesus’ advent, or coming, among us: Welcome!

If you would like to place flowers in the background of Zoom worship, and pick them up Monday, please call Sharon O’Toole at 314-420-1548.

Our November Mission of the Month is support for the vital programs at Community Care. Monetary and non-perishable food gifts please.

Council has voted to have Zoom only worship on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. Call the office at 877-6060 for Zoom information.

Today is a “Fifth Sunday”, and traditionally our cash plate offering has been given to a project or program. The local Salvation Army is to receive it this time. Therefore, please mail or drop-off clearly identified gifts for this worthy cause.

Council will have a special Zoom meeting on Monday, November 30, at 6:00 p.m. and Cemetery Committee will meet on Thursday, December 3, at 5:00 p.m. at the Maryville Chapel.

Next Sunday our Zoom worship service will include the Sacrament of Holy Communion, so prepare with your elements at home. All of the Altar Guild and Council members will also be installed. And, in December we will be collecting the Veterans of the Cross-Christmas Fund special offering, layette items for Church Women United, and Misison of the Month gifts for Kindercottage. Please clearly mark any financial donations so the counters can properly credit them.

Tomorrow is the last day to turn in poinsettia orders.

﻿Although in-person Sunday morning worship services are being placed on hold, the scrip program will continue. Orders will be submitted to the scrip company on December 6th and 13th. Not a problem if you do not have an order form as you can just list the cards you are purchasing. Please include your check payable to St. John UCC with your order. You can mail your order and check to the church or drop it off through the mail slot at the office. I will go to the office two or more times each week to pick up orders. Another option is to mail your order to my house (2317 Cleveland Blvd., Granite City 62040) or call me 618 451-1968. **Date change**: Last day to order for delivery before Christmas is December 6th.  Orders will still be submitted on December 13th, but remembering difficulties with UPS delivery last year, suggestion is to order early. Arrangements will be made for delivery of gift cards after shipment is received at church. Thank you for your support. If you have already ordered, I will be contacting you personally to arrange delivery.

Sending good wishes for a safe Thanksgiving, Betty Meszaros

**OUR PRAYERS**

**Nursing and Assisted Living**

Loretta Cook, JoAnn King, Karen Luddeke, Shirley Thompson, Mary Lee Krohne, and Richard & Ruth Buer.

**At Home**

Ritch Alexander, Isabella Boyer, Marlene Brokaw, Myra Cook, Mary Franz, Diane Gerdt, Norman Hente, Olen Hermes, Bill McAmish, Billie Meyer, Cliff Robertson, Valara Schorfheide, Merle Rose, June Stille, and Don Young.

**Illinois South Conference**

Nashville St. Paul UCC, Rev. Beverly Kahle; New Athens St. John UCC, Rev. Dr. Robert (Cathy) Koch; Retired Pastors Revs. Janis Dashner and Robert Goddard.

**SCRIPTURE READINGS**

**1 Corinthians 1:3-9**

3Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 4I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, 5for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind— 6just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you— 7so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. 8He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Mark 13:28-37**

**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.”