



JANUARY 2, 2022

ANNOUNCEMENTS

De-Greening the Sanctuary - following worship this morning, we ask any who are available to stay to help us take down and put away the Christmas decorations. Many thanks!

Appeal for Tornado Storm Assistance: From now until January 31st, 2022 we will be collecting funds to assist those whose homes were damaged or destroyed in the recent tornados. 100% of the proceeds will go to assist those in need. You can give online, or send in a check with "tornado assistance" written in the memo line.

Veterans of the Cross: Now called the Christmas Fund, is one of the 5-for-5 offerings of the UCC and has helped to care for active and retired clergy, lay employees, and widows/widowers for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks. Let's show our appreciation of our retired ministers and give generously.

For the month of January, the Page Turners are reading "Madison Park: A Place of Hope," Eric Motley. The discussion will be on Monday, January 24th at 2pm.

The Anti-Racism Study Group will next meet on Tuesday, January 4th from 7-8pm on Zoom, and will discuss the experience of seeing the Sacred Ally Project "The Last Words of George Floyd."

Welcome to First Congregational Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

Epiphany Sunday—January 2, 2022

***Please stand if you are able**

PRELUDE

O Morning Star, How Clear and Bright (Public Domain)

Annie

GREETING

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

And also with you.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SENTENCES OF ADORATION

*Hymn of Adoration: #154 Go, Tell It on the Mountain (African-American Spiritual)

Confession of Sin:

Let us make our confession together -

Most holy and most loving God, we admit to you and to each other, that we are creatures who either foolishly or willfully often choose darkness instead of light.

Here and now we surrender to you our fears and proud opinions, our short-sighted folly and our pompous wisdom, our deep seated sins and our apathy towards change and renewal.

Please forgive the darkness and pain we have inflicted on others, and restore the light-starved hopes and ideals within our own souls. Trusting your grace, we earnestly pray: "Create in us a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within us." Through Christ Jesus our Savior. Amen!

Moment of Silence

Prayer for Mercy:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

*Assurance of Pardon:

My friends, Epiphany is good news! The Light comes not to sear and blind us but to save us. Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners. In his name I declare to everyone: Your sins are forgiven!

Thanks be to God!

Take up your forgiveness with thanksgiving, and live without shame or anxiety.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ empowers us. Amen!

*Act of Praise ("Gloria Patri") #759

Glory to God the Creator, the Christ, the Holy Spirit, Three-in-one; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

Here now Psalm 16 from the Rev. Benjamin Chavis psalter...

Psalter Lesson Psalm 16

Here ends the Psalter Lesson.

Amen.

Listen for the Word of God in Psalm 66...

Psalter Lesson Psalm 66:1-5 (NRSV)

Sheila Swenson

Here ends the Psalter Lesson.

Amen.

Listen to the Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Christ.

Gospel Lesson Matthew 2:1-12 (NRSV)

This is the good news.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Living in the Light of Christ

Rev. Emilia Halstead

Affirmation of Faith (A New Zealand Prayer Book)

You, O God, are supreme and holy.

You create our world and give us life.

Your purpose overarches everything we do.

You have always been with us.

You are God.

You, O God, are infinitely generous, good beyond all measure.

You came to us before we came to you.

You have revealed and proved your love for us in Jesus Christ,

Who lived and died and rose again.

You are with us now.

You are God.

You, O God, are the Holy Spirit.

You empower us to be your gospel in the world.

You reconcile and heal; you overcome death.

You are our God. We worship you.

*Hymn: #159

As with Gladness Those of Old (Public Domain)

Annie

Prayers of the People

(Response to each prayer:)

Christ, in your mercy,

Receive our prayers.

Pastoral Prayer (written by Rick Morley)

Offertory

Invitation:

Through Christ let us continually praise God and share what we have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

Let us prepare Christ's table with the offerings of our life and labor.

Gratitude Music

Immortal Love, Forever Full (Public Domain)

Annie

*Doxology: #780

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, you heavenly host:
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost**

*Prayer of Gratitude: (written by Christian Aid)

Loving God, we offer you our gold:

**The morning on the wing
The glow on the faces of children at play
The shining moments that brighten our lives.**

We offer you our frankincense:

**The quiet reassurance of familiar things
The grace of care and friendship
The blessing of bread and our heart's yearning in prayer.**

We offer you our myrrh:

**The ashes of our dreams
The bitter taste of our failures
The shadows through which we stumble.**

Transform our inadequate gifts,

**so that they may be an acceptable sacrifice of praise, and transform our lives
to reflect more deeply your justice and joy in the life of the world. Amen.**

Sacrament of Communion

Invitation (written by Rev. Elsa Peters)

Communion Prayer (written by Moira Laidlaw)

We give you thanks, O God, for making your love evident [...] We join with them and with all the saints to praise your holy name:

**Holy Lord, God of endless love,
Heaven and earth are surely full of your glory.
The angels sang of it—we have been lavished with it.
Blessed is he who was born that we might have life.
Glory to God and on earth peace to all people.**

Holy God, as the travelers with their treasures [...] After they had eaten, he took the cup, and said: 'Remember me as you drink from this, for it is my life, poured out for you—the beginning of a new relationship with God.'

**Christ's death, O God, we proclaim.
Christ's resurrection we declare.
Christ's coming we await.
Glory be to you, O God.**

Send the power of your Holy Spirit upon these gifts of bread and wine, O God, that we may experience the presence of the Word-made-flesh—Jesus Christ. Breathe your Spirit in us that we may be one body with him—living out his ministry in the world today and every day.

Be present with us as we share this meal, and throughout all our lives, so that we may know you as the Holy One, who with Christ and the Holy Spirit loves forever. Amen.

Prayer of our Savior

Let us pray as Christ our Savior has taught us:

Our Father, which 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, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Breaking Bread and Pouring Wine

Call to the Supper

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Almighty and ever-living God, you revealed the incarnation of your Son by the brilliant shining of a star. Shine the light of your justice always in our hearts and over all lands, and accept our lives as the treasure we offer in your praise and for your service, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

*Hymn of Parting: #160 Jesus, the Light of the World (Public Domain)

*Song of Simeon

Holy One, now let your servant go in peace; your word has been fulfilled: my own eyes have seen the Salvation which you have prepared in the sight of every people: a light to reveal you to the nations and the glory of your people Israel.

*Commissioning

*Benediction

The blessing of God Almighty: the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Sanctifier, be with you all.
Amen.

Postlude

Arise, Your Light Is Come (Public Domain)

Annie