

TRINITY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

December 24, 2017

Fourth Sunday of Advent

8:15a 10:30a

Welcome to Trinity United Church of Christ. We seek to offer a warm greeting to our visitors, whether you are visiting the area or seeking a church family. To assist you as you worship, we have large print bulletins and hearing assistance devices available. Please see an usher for assistance. We would be happy for you to sign the guest book in the gathering area while you are with us this morning. Whoever you are, wherever you are in life's journey, we are glad that you have come, and pray that you will be blessed by your worship experience. Come and see what God is doing!

**denotes the congregation standing as you are able; congregational responses in bold print*

The birth of Christ reminds us that all of us are involved in some way with children. We may be parents, or grandparents, or uncles, or aunts, or brothers, or sisters, or friends, or teachers, or neighbors. Whatever our relationship, we love to hear their laughter, we value their hugs, we are concerned about their welfare. And each of us, whether we want to or not, are involved in some way in molding their young lives. So we raise a prayer for children this morning. We ask that as they grow in knowledge, they will also grow in wisdom. As they grow in stature, may they also grow in character. As they grow in maturity, may they also grow in responsibility. We pledge that whatever our role in regards to children, we will take that duty seriously. We pray that we will never do anything that will disillusion or twist these young lives, and that we will set a Christian example worthy to be followed.

PRELUDE – “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel!” – *R. Lau*

TIME OF SHARING

PREPARING OUR HEARTS AND MINDS FOR WORSHIP

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE OF PEACE

8:15 – **The Ron Milhimes Family**

10:30 – **Pam and Megan Poland**

The long dark nights of waiting are nearly behind us:

this people who have walked in darkness begin to see the light;
we have been living in a land of darkness – but the light is on the way.

That light is the light of the world:

God's presence here as one of us, as part of us, as new beginning born within us.

O come, O come, Emmanuel!

Hear us, O Shepherd, you who leads us like a flock.

Awaken your might, come and save us.

Restore us, O God; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.

But you, Bethlehem, though you are small among the clans of Judah,
out of you will come from me one who will be ruler over my people.

Restore us, O God; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.

He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord,
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.

Restore us, O God; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.

The people will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.

And he will be their peace.

Restore us, O God; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.

Today we light four candles.

The first candle is the candle of hope as we wait for God to fulfill the promises made to us.

The second candle is for the peace that comes from God.

The third candle represents our joy in God's promises.

And the fourth candle is the candle of love, for we have experienced the love of God continually.

During Advent we wait, knowing that the Good Shepherd loves his sheep and gives his life for them.

Restore us, O God; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.

Advent Hymn - "Star Child" – *see back page - (first four verses)*

Let us pray, saying:

In love, O Lord, we wait for you to restore us. In joy we wait to celebrate the coming of the Good Shepherd. Help us to be your sheep, depending upon you for food, assurance, and protection. Watch over us and keep us safe. May we live securely with you forever. Amen.

*GATHERING HYMN # 116 – "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" *(verses 1-2, 6-7)*

TIME OF CONFESSION

The promises of God are meant for all to enjoy.

Yet we have broken covenant and declared our independence from the Giver of Life.

Then, when we are brought down from our self-satisfied smugness, we wonder why.

Let us confess the sin that separates us from God's promises.

We confess, compassionate God, that we have been quick to speak but slow to listen;

we have been quick to voice opinions but slow to consider other views;

we have been quick to defend ourselves but slow to support others;

we have been quick to criticize but slow to praise.

Pardon us, we pray, for the sins of tongue and ears, and help us to learn the love of Christ.

Now let us silently reflect on the personal struggles and fears that keep us from being fully free.

WE PRAY FOR GOD'S MERCY

Kyrie, Kyrie, Kyrie eleison

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

"Return to the Lord, your God," said the prophet Joel,

"for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love."

Know God's forgiving mercy is near as you sincerely repent.

Thanks be to God for this magnificent gift of love.

*HYMN RESPONSE # 23 – "There's a Wideness in God's Mercy"

*** AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

And now, experiencing once again the forgiving power of our loving God, let us say what we believe, using the Apostles' Creed.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:

And in Jesus Christ his only begotten son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

CHILDREN'S TIME

ANTHEM

"Fit for a King"

By Joseph M. Martin

Senior Choir

THE WORD OF GOD

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26 Romans 16:25-27

Luke 1:26-38

HYMN # 119 – "My Soul Gives Glory to My God"

QUIET PREPARATION

SERMON

*** THE PRAYER FOR THE MORNING AND OUR LORD'S PRAYER**

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

For we ask it in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray, saying:

**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 sins**

as we forgive those who sin against us.

**And lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever. Amen**

PRAYER RESPONSE # 423 "Great is Your Faithfulness" (verse 1)

Great is your faithfulness, God, O Creator, with you no shadows of turning we see.

You do not change, your compassions they fail not; all of your goodness forever will be.

Great is your faithfulness! Great is your faithfulness! Morning by morning, new mercies I see;

All I have needed your hand has provided, Great is your faithfulness, God unto me.

THE GIVING OF OURSELVES AND OUR OFFERINGS

"The Lord has done great things for us, and we rejoice," said the Psalm writer (Ps. 126:3).

Not only do we rejoice, but we respond with an offering of thanks.

To our visitors - - the finances of the church are the responsibility of our church members.

As our guests, we ask visitors to simply pass the offering plate to the person sitting next to you in the pew.

Please sign the Registration Booklet at the end of each pew, then pass it to the next person. Thank you!

OFFERTORY – "My Soul Gives Glory to My God" – C. Callahan

* OFFERTORY RESPONSE # 9 – "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

(3rd verse of the red Christmas Carol book)

* PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Lord, you give us everything that is good

— our food, our clothing, our homes, our families, and our very lives.

It's only right that we express our thanks in a concrete way by sharing with others.

*CLOSING HYMN – 110 – "Now Bless the God of Israel"

*COMMISSION AND BLESSING

May God, with whom nothing is impossible,

fill your deepest needs and work miracles in your life.

POSTLUDE – "Let All Together Praise Our God" – P. Manz