

First Congregational Church
Our Church in Worship

November 28, 2021 10:00 AM

First Sunday in Advent

PRELUDE *Veni, Veni Emmanuel* – arr. Pamela Decker Adam Peithmann

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS Rev. Barbara Papagian

LIGHTING THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE The Candle of Patience Sam & Ruth Knowles

Reader: As the days grow shorter and the nights longer, we who are people of faith turn to symbols such as candles, evergreens, and wreaths to proclaim our belief in the unquenchable light. In patient anticipation, we prepare for the coming of the Reign of God.

People: In this season of hustle and bustle we are tempted to get frantic and join the panic to shop our way into the holiday spirit. In this moment, we resist that temptation and patiently choose to be at peace with who we are and where we are on this path.

Reader: Scripture reminds us that the days are surely coming when the promises will be fulfilled, and the powers of heaven will be shaken. We are urged to be on guard, for at any moment, all things will change, and the world will turn upside down.

People: In this season of Advent, we are ready for God's work to transform the world, to bring heaven to earth. A new, righteous branch is planted, and we are rooted, ready to grow into God's new creation.

Reader: We recognize the need for patience, as we wait with anticipation for God's promises to be fulfilled. And so, we light this first candle and name it Patience.
(the candle is lit)

ALL: Come into our hearts, O God, as we wait with patience. Help us to be ready, for Christ is entering our world and our lives in a new way. Prepare us to grow into your new creation this Advent season. Amen.

ADVENT WREATH SONG *He Came Down*
He came down that we may have love; hallelujah forevermore.
(the soloist sings first and then the congregation repeats)

CALL TO WORSHIP (Responsive) Rev. Barbara Papagian

Leader: Once again we begin our journey to Bethlehem, looking toward the day when God's promises are fulfilled.

People: We are not yet ready to see the 'Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and might.

Leader: We have been grafted to the royal branch from the ancient stock of Jesse's line.

People: We pray this heritage, and our lives bear fruit worthy of Jesus Christ.

Leader: On this day of anticipation and hope, in the days of doubt and worry,

People: We remain awake to the Coming of Christ.

CALL TO CONFESSION Rev. Carolyn Keilig

Leader: If only our hurtful words, our damaging actions, our foolish choices would just go away. But they don't, and so we offer them, as well as ourselves, to God for forgiveness and for our healing. Please join me, as we pray together:

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Unison)

All: The chances we have to be more compassionate; the moments to offer hope to a lonely friend; the good fortune we could give to those who have so little. The signs are all around us, O God of Righteousness, of how we fail to live as your people. We ask that you do not dwell on our missteps but look upon us with your mercy and love. Help us to be on guard and alert to anything that might move us away from reflecting your goodness. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON (Responsive)

Leader: Raise your heads, children of God! In the bleak mid-winter of our lives, God's Reign is drawing near.

People: Even when we feel most alone, the One who comes to us is the salvation promised so long ago. Thanks be to God, we are forgiven! Amen.

*OPENING HYMN NO. 125 *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

PASTORAL PRAYER Rev. Barbara Papagian

OUR PRAYER CONCERNS

SILENT MEDITATION

OUR LORD'S PRAYER (Unison)

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.

SCRIPTURE READINGS Dan McKenney

Jeremiah 33:14-16; Luke 21:25-36

SERMON *The Days are Surely Coming* Rev. Carolyn Keilig

The Sacrament of Communion

*COMMUNION HYMN NO. 124 *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*

CALL TO COMMUNION AND WORDS OF REMEMBERING

PRAYER OF BLESSING

SHARING THE BREAD AND THE CUP

(a Deacon will invite you forward row by row; should you wish, a Deacon will bring Communion to you. When all have received the elements, we will eat and drink)

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (Unison)

Holy Creator, Bread of Life, Everlasting Salvation; a light shines in the night and the night will not overcome it. In this meal we have been replenished and strengthened, and the light of your love rekindled within each of us. We will be bold to carry this light into the world. Thank you for giving us patience and hope when the way is dark and long. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN NO. 136 *Christians All, Your Lord is Coming*

BENEDICTION (Responsive)

Leader: Go forth into a world that does not recognize the difference between God's Spirit and the holiday spirit.

People: We will be on our guard so that we will not be caught up in the trivialities and anxieties of the world.

Leader: Be alert at all times and pray for strength to escape the traps that would keep you from God.

People: We are heirs grafted to the righteous Branch of David, and this heritage we will honor.

Leader: May God make you increase in love for one another; May Christ Jesus teach you how to live in God's ways; and may the Holy Spirit strengthen your hearts in holiness, as you ready yourselves for the coming of the Lord.

People: We go in peace to love and serve the Lord, Amen.

POSTLUDE *Joy to the World!* – arr. Don Hustad

*You are invited to stand if you wish.

SCRIPTURE READINGS (See bulletin insert)

First Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

508 Union Street • Manchester, New Hampshire

FCCManchesterNH.org • 603-625-5093

You are welcome here! • We are an Open & Affirming Congregation