



ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

ADVENT: WE BRING OUR GIFTS TO GOD

www.zionuccindy.net/worshipathome

The 1st Sunday of Advent

November 28, 2021

Prelude

Veni, Emmanuel (O Come, O Come, Emmanuel)

We are Called to Worship – We enter a new season—a season of waiting and expectation, a season of preparation and celebration—the season of Advent. This year our theme is “We Bring Our Gifts to God.” Having received so very much from God through our Savior Jesus Christ, what might we bring in joy and thanksgiving? As we savor the hope, peace, joy, and love we find in God, how might that inspire us to be more generous and more compassionate in our lives? Today, we celebrate the gift of hope we’ve been given, and in return we bring the gift of service, as we seek to build God’s kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven.

Lighting Our Advent Wreath

The Gift of Hope

Reader 1: Hear these ancient words from Psalm 25:

¹ I offer my life to you, LORD.

² My God, I trust you.

Don’t let my enemies rejoice over me!

³ For that matter,

don’t let anyone who hopes in you
be put to shame;

instead, let those who are treacherous
without excuse be put to shame.

⁴ Make your ways known to me, LORD;
teach me your paths.

⁵ Lead me in your truth—teach it to me—
because you are the God who saves me.

I put my hope in you all day long.

⁶ LORD, remember your compassion and
faithful love—

they are forever!

Please don’t let me be put to shame!

⁷ But don’t remember the sins of my youth
or my wrongdoing.

Remember me only according to your
faithful love

for the sake of your goodness, LORD.

⁸ The LORD is good and does the right
thing;

he teaches sinners which way they
should go.

⁹ God guides the weak to justice,
teaching them his way.

¹⁰ All the LORD’s paths are loving and
faithful for those who keep his covenant
and laws.

Reader 2: At last, the end of yet another year is near!

Reader 3: It's amazing how quickly this year crept on; how slowly it sped by.

Reader 2: In this hemisphere, the days are getting shorter.

Reader 3: and the nights are growing colder.

Reader 2: We are ready to receive the wisdom hiding in the darkest of nights.

Reader 3: We are eager to experience the warm embrace of brand-new days.

Reader 2: We long for the sustaining hope that will usher us into all that lies ahead.

Reader 3: We await the arrival of the One who shows us new ways of being.

Reader 2: New ways that draw us nearer to God and each other.

Reader 3: New ways that illuminate God-with-us in every circumstance.

Reader 2: Good new, great joy, all the people!

(Reader 1: *lights the first **BLUE** Advent candle*)

Reader 3: Today we receive God's gift of HOPE with longing and expectation.

Sharing Our Joys and Concerns

You are welcome to send prayer requests to Pastor Sarah. Spend a few moments connecting with God and lifting up your prayers.

A Time of Prayer

The 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.

Choir

Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne

We Hear God's Word

Luke 21:25-36 (NRSV)

25 'There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. 26 People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27 Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in a cloud" with power and great glory. 28 Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.'

29 Then he told them a parable: 'Look at the fig tree and all the trees; 30 as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. 31 So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. 32 Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until

all things have taken place. ³³Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

34 'Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, ³⁵like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.'

Meditation

The Gift of Service

We Respond to God's Word with Our Giving

Invitation—Those who keep God's covenant and decrees walk in the paths of steadfast love and faithfulness. It is right to share our blessings in a world where justice for many is still but a dream, and mercy is but a hope seen from afar. With thankful hearts, let us joyfully share our gifts in gratitude to our God.~

Angel Tree Gifts— We are so grateful for everyone who was able to bring in Christmas Gifts for Hands for Hope and the Department of Child Services. Hands for Hope works to provide foster families with love and support, as they take on this big commitment of caring for children in need of safe and welcoming homes. You made it possible for foster parents to provide their kids with a joyful Christmas this year and touched the lives of four beloved kids. We pray that these gifts bring comfort and joy this Christmas.

November Benevolence— Our Church's Wider Mission is the main offering that goes to support the ministry of the United Church of Christ, both at our local conference level and for the whole denomination. Your generous gifts to this ministry enable to the UCC to love and serve like Jesus (Indiana-Kentucky Conference Mission) and to create a just world for all (UCC Vision).

You can mail your offerings to our office or give online at www.zionuccindy.net/donate

A Doxology for Advent

By Rev. Scott Cervas, to the tune of Greensleeves

These gifts we joyfully bring to you,

to fill the world with meaning;
our hearts and minds are longing for
the life of which you are dreaming.
This, this our gift we bring,
our lives we share, your praise we sing;
show us your vision, Lord,
for hope, and peace, and caring.

We Give Thanks— How can we thank you enough, Blessed One, for all you have given us. [We especially give you thanks this day for our Angel Tree gifts, for the work of Hands for Hope, and pray that you enrich the work of DCS as they seek to serve children in need. Bless those who gave these gifts and those to receive, that they might be signs of love and hope.] May we increase and enrich in love, even as you increase and enrich the gifts we bring before you this day. Send them forth into your world, as signs of the bounty of Christ coming into the world. In your precious name, we pray. Amen.~

Hymn

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus, #153

We Are Sent Forth with a Blessing—This season we celebrate God-with-us, Emmanuel. In Christ we find the hope we need to carry on, the hope that inspires our kingdom-living, the hope that beacons us to serve, knowing that Christ's love and light can change the world. So, go forth in hope to serve and enrich the world around you. Amen.

Postlude

Wake, Awake, For Night is Flying