



**COMMUNITY CHURCH OF WALKER  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
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***“No matter who you are, or where you are, you are welcome here!”***

***“For All the Joy”  
First Sunday of Advent  
December 1, 2024 – 10:00 a.m.***

**Worship Leaders:  
Pastor: Michael Small  
Liturgist: Joanna Aamodt  
Special Music: Chancel Choir  
Greeter:  
Keyboard: Sabbastian Wilson-Webb**

**Tech:** Aurora Diehl (Video), Esther Covert (Audio)  
Spiritual Life, Chancel and Communion Preparation

## **PRELUDE**

## **WORDS OF WELCOME**

† HYMN                      **“Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent”** (vss. 1, 2, 3)                      #345

## **CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: In the midst of night’s shadows and anguish,

**All: We pray earnestly to experience your presence.**

One: As dawn slips into the horizon and relieves night of its reign,

**All: We pray earnestly to sense your presence.**

One: As daylight grows into noontime, filled with the glow of sun’s light,

**All: We pray earnestly to know your presence.**

## **A TIME OF CENTERING**

*(During this time of centering, open your hearts to God; be in the present, here and now.)*

## **1<sup>st</sup> WEEK OF ADVENT: CANDLE OF HOPE**

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† For those who are able, please stand.

One: My kin in Christ, as we gather around this Advent wreath, how might we embody the gift of hope this season? Perhaps we will sense ourselves tethered to the future,

**All: or hear belief in our voices as we share our plans for tomorrow.**

One: I wonder what we will notice, when we take a minute to look back from this moment—how today is the future of the past.

**All: Some of us see our hope made into reality,**

One: and others find a journey to now that we never expected,

**All: while others still feel the pain of yesterday and simply being here is a gift.**

One: What if this year, our hope comes to us with a reached-out hand?  
With a match already lit, waiting for us in anticipation?

**All: May we praise our God whose light of hope shines on all our circumstances.**

One: Let us worship our God who waited and imagined us into being,

**All: who made us into dreamers who dare to dream despite an unknown future,**

One: creatures of space and time,

**All: who are God's hope come alive. Amen**

*(Light Candle of Home)*

**Sing Verse of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"**

#116

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel  
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Child of God appear.

## **PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

One: Lover God, Creator of Our Hearts,

Through your Spirit, our love grows for our neighbors. Our hearts are drawn to your expanding light as we see through the faces of our neighbors. May the joy of your Divine Love spill into each corner of your Realm as we anticipate your love and light in this season of longer nights and bleak days. Amen.

## **PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE**

**All: God of the Possible and Probable,**

**Gloom often encapsulates us when life is confusing and conflict is great. Our faith is rattled, and we are swallowed by shadows of fear. The world often feels like the end is near even when a new beginning is around the corner. We forget that even when shadows have lengthened, there remains a crack in the surface. Light begins to stream into our space, and warmth dances upon our hearts. When fear unnerves us, may we cling to the hope of God's love and the possibilities of joy once again. Amen.**

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## MOMENT OF SILENCE

*(Each person can take this time to surrender to God privately anything weighing heavy on their heart.)*

## WORDS OF GRACE

One: Take comfort, dear friends, that God's grace will fill our hearts with joy as we know that light grows ahead. May we cling to the crumbs of hope as we step into the nighttime with faith, knowing Divine Bliss accompanies us in each step.

## † PASSING THE PEACE

One: The Peace of Christ be with you.

All: **And also, with you.**

## SPECIAL MUSIC

**"Song of Joy"**

Chancel Choir

**Focus Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13** (In conversation with **Luke 21:25-36**)

*Priests for Equality. The Inclusive Bible* (pp. 2486). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. Kindle Edition.

<sup>9</sup> How can we thank God enough for you, for all the joy we feel before God on your account? <sup>10</sup> We earnestly pray night and day to be able to see you again and make up for any shortcomings in your faith. <sup>11</sup> May our loving Abba God and Jesus, our Savior, direct our steps back to you. <sup>12</sup> May Christ increase to overflowing your love for one another and for all people, even as our love does for you; <sup>13</sup> may Christ strengthen your hearts, making them blameless and holy before our Abba God at the coming of our Savior Jesus with all the holy ones.

**Luke 21:25-36** *Priests for Equality. The Inclusive Bible* (pp. 2269-2270). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. Kindle Edition.

<sup>25</sup> "Signs will appear in the sun, the moon and the stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish, distraught at the roaring of the sea and the waves. <sup>26</sup> People will die of fright in anticipation of what is coming upon the earth. The powers in the heavens will be shaken. <sup>27</sup> After that, people will see the Chosen One coming on a cloud with great power and glory. <sup>28</sup> When these things begin to happen, stand up straight and raise your heads, because your ransom is near at hand."

<sup>29</sup> And he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, or any other tree. <sup>30</sup> You see when they're budding and know that summer is near. <sup>31</sup> In the same way, when you see all these things happening, know that the reign of God is near. <sup>32</sup> The truth is, this generation will not pass away until all this takes place. <sup>33</sup> The heavens and the earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

<sup>34</sup> "Be on your guard lest your spirits become bloated with indulgence, drunkenness and worldly cares. That day will suddenly close in on you like a trap. <sup>35</sup> It

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† For those who are able, please stand.

will come upon all who dwell on the face of the earth, so be on your watch.<sup>36</sup> Pray constantly for the strength to escape whatever comes, and to stand secure before the Chosen One.”

## REFLECTION

“The Joy We Feel”

Chancel Choir

## HYMN

“Now is the Time Approaching”

#609

### Advent Communion Liturgy

*Written by Alydia Smith, Program Coordinator, Worship, Music, and Spirituality,  
General Council Office, United Church of Canada*

One: As we come to this table, we are reminded that this is the table of Jesus Christ, a banquet prepared for everyone. All who seek to be nourished and sustained in the journey of faith, all who seek wholeness and compassionate paths to peace and justice, are welcome here.

One: God be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

One: Lift up your hearts.

**All: We lift our hearts in prayer.**

One: Let us give thanks to God.

**All: It is good to give God thanks and praise.**

## PRAYER

One: Blessed are you, Breath of peace, Giver of all life, Source of love that knows no boundaries. Your song of wisdom rang out before the world began; throughout the ages, your song of liberation has impregnated us with your hope for a world where: those considered last and least are first and most; violence is overcome by the power of your ancient love; and, all siblings work together for peace.

You bring our longings to birth, and send prophets to awaken us to your approaching Advent among us.

We thank you for those who, like Mary, have the strength and courage to give birth to your love in the world; for those who, like the shepherds, dare to seek out the Child of Bethlehem; for those who, like the wise ones, actively challenge violent and oppressive powers.

We praise you that your everlasting light is shown to us in womb and tomb, in cradle and cross, in tenderness and compassion. We join in the Advent prayer for all your people, “O come, Emmanuel.”

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† For those who are able, please stand.

And, as we wait and watch for your coming among us, we proclaim your goodness.

**Sing verse of “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”**

#116

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel  
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Child of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!

O come, Desire of Nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;  
Make envy, strife, and quarrels cease, fill the whole world with heaven’s peace.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!

At this time, we also remember all with whom you would have us share your feast.

We pray for all who are in sorrow or in pain...

all who are ill or alone...

all who are close to our hearts...

all our sisters who live with fear, oppression, or hunger...

all whose lives have been blighted by violence, racism, or poverty...

for all whom the world counts as last and least.

We pray for the church and its many ministries,  
for nations as they strive for peace and justice,  
for an end to violence against women.

God of hope, make this bread the means of our rebuilding,  
Make this cup the medium of our transformation,  
this table the foundation of our renewal,  
and this community the place of our rebirth. Amen.

**WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE**

One: At this time, we remember Jesus,  
Who on the night before he died,  
took a loaf of bread,  
gave you thanks, broke it, and said,  
“Take and eat; whenever you do this, remember me.”  
Likewise, after supper, he took the cup, saying,  
“This is the new covenant; remember me.”

One: Gracious God, Breath of peace, Source of love, we pray for your Spirit.

**All: Make us, while many, one.**

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† For those who are able, please stand.

**Make us, though broken, whole.**

**Make us, despite death, alive.**

One: And so we pray:

**All: Come, Holy Spirit, come.**

One: And so we join with our siblings around the world in the prayer of Jesus:

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER (Unison, using debts)**

**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.**

### **SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP**

One: The body of Christ,

**All: the Bread of life.**

One: The lifeblood of Christ,

**All: the cup of blessing.**

One: Let us eat and drink together for our strengthening in the faith, and for the sake of the world.

*Communion is served*

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

**All: We thank you, God, for breaking into our world and pouring into our lives and our experiences. We thank you, God, for this meal of thanksgiving and the stories of love, grace, and hope that it tells. Amen.**

### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE/PASTORAL PRAYER**

**SPECIAL MUSIC**      **"When You Believe"** from the Prince of Egypt, based on the Book of Exodus  
Soloist: Sara Chaffee-Bates

### **INVITATION TO GENEROSITY**

One: God continues to increase love in our hearts for our neighbors within our congregation, community, and world. Through our various gifts, we are able to strengthen our connections and grow with our God, Holy Crafter of Gifts.

### **MUSICAL INTERLUDE**

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† For those who are able, please stand.

**DOXOLOGY:** *(as collection plates come forward)*  
**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;**  
**Praise God, all creatures here below;**  
**Praise God for all that love has done;**  
**Creator, Christ, and Spirit One. Amen.**

Tune #780

## **PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND THANKSGIVING**

One: Joyous God, Originator of all Gifts,

This day and always, we celebrate the gifts of our hands and hearts. We share our talents and time, knowing our energy builds the world with love. We share our treasures, knowing that all gifts we entrust to your Church will build your Realm. With joy, we devote our first-fruits to loving you and your children. Amen.

† **HYMN"**

**Unite and Join Your Cheerful Song"** (Vss. 1, 2, 4)

#617

## **PARTING WORDS**

One: As we open the doors to the dawn of this season,

May the Creator of Our Hearts fill us with Joy,

May the Light of Christ fill our hearts with Hope,

And may the Spirit of Tranquility assure our souls with Strength. Amen.

## **POSTLUDE**

**WI-FI – "Guest" Scan QR Code for Internet Access**



***For All the Joy: Service Prayers for the First Sunday of Advent Year C*** was written by the Rev. Michelle L. Torigian, senior pastor of St. Paul United Church of Christ, Belleville, Illinois.

***Advent Candle Ritual*** from The Pension Boards United Church of Christ, Inc. – ***The Christmas Fund***

