Worship on the Fourth Sunday of Advent December 22, 2024

The Rev. Dr. Rosanna Anderson, Designated Term Pastor Diane Dawson Dexter, Organist

Prelude "Christmas Lullaby" John Rutter

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship

Today we bear witness to the light of Christ shining in our midst. Advent means arrival. We are preparing ourselves for the arrival of the risen Lord Jesus.

We are preparing for the days "when the nations shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (Isaiah 2:4).

"The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them" (Isaiah 11:6).

"The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; Like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing" (Isaiah 35:1). "The Lord will give you a sign: a virgin is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel: God is with us" (Isaiah 7:14b). Let us walk in the light of the Lord!

Prayer of the Day

God of grace, your eternal Word took flesh in Jesus Christ and dwelled among us when Mary placed her life at the service of your will. Prepare our hearts for Christ's return. Keep us steadfast in hope and faithful in serving you, that we may be ready to receive the coming of his kingdom. We pray for the sake of Christ our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.

Hymn 216 "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"

Prayer of Confession

Gracious God, you are the Shepherd of Israel! You call us each by name and invite us to follow you. But we are sheep who stray from your path. You claim us for service and assure us that we have nothing to fear. But we wonder if you can use a flock like us to help usher in your reign. By your Spirit, enfold us with love. As we await the babe of Bethlehem, give us the steadfast faith of Joseph and the expectant hope of Mary, that we, may worship the newborn king. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Prayer for Illumination

Old Testament Micah 5:2-4

New Testament Luke 1:39-55

Sermon Dr. Anderson

Offertory "All Earth Is Hopeful" Alberto Taulé

Hymn 238 Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains, and the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains: *Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!*

Prayer of Dedication

Faithful God, you astonish us with your miracles! We rejoice that you sent your Son Jesus to bring light and salvation. Help us to be more like Mary and Joseph, believing your Word and trusting in the fulfillment of your promises. We dedicate our gifts for the mission of this church, so that more people will find hope in Christ. Amen.

Sharing Joys and Concerns

Prayers of the Church and The Lord's Prayer 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and

lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Hymn 218 "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"

Benediction Dr. Anderson

Postlude "Toccata (from Symphony No. 5)" C-M. Widor

Church Calendar

Sunday, Dec. 22 **Worship and Fellowship** 10:00 a.m. All are welcome to join us onsite or via live stream on our website.

Tuesday, Dec. 24 **Christmas Eve Worship** 5:00 p.m. Join us onsite or online for a traditional Christmas Eve worship service, concluding with candlelight as we sing "Silent Night."

Sunday, Dec. 29 **Worship and Fellowship** 10:00 a.m. Our Guest Preacher will be the Rev. Pam Vollenger. All are welcome to join us onsite or via live stream on our website.

May God bless you and your family with a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2025!

Union Chapel (United Church of Christ)

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