



**Before I
heard the
Prophet**

December 13, 2020

*Before
and
After*

December 13, 2020 - One Service Only – 10:00 a.m. Live Stream

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, CONGREGATIONAL

217 E. Liberty St. Medina, Ohio 44256 330-725-4559

www.uccmedina.org

LIVE STREAMING OF THE SANCTUARY SERVICE IS AVAILABLE AT UCCMEDINA.ORG

“WELCOMING, LOVING, SERVING, WHERE GOD HAS NO LIMITS”

RINGING OF THE CHURCH BELL

PRELUDE “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” – arr. Eugene Butler

Cathy Fafrak, Organist

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASSING OF THE PEACE

VISIONING PRAYER

by Sharon Alberson

God, help us to be welcoming. God, help us to be loving.
God, help us to see that serving you can lead us to
A place full of grace with no limits where we can be free...
To open our hands, welcoming. To open our hearts, loving.
To be more than church on Sunday, to live in the light from above;
To celebrate in service and love.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH: The Candle of Joy

Leader: Giver of Joy,

People: Grant us the gift of questions

Leader: Dig out our ears to hear the hard words of the prophet

People: And find the springtime edge to a bleak question.

Leader: Break open my certainties,

People: For we too often settle for smallness of heart and mind.

Leader: We shall find your joy in the wide open spaces of the heart and mind,

People: Where we see each and every neighbor as your child.

Leader: To this end, we light the candles of Waiting, Hope, and Joy. (Candle is lit)

Grant us the joy in the question and words of the prophet,

People: Who is ironing out our crooked ways, leveling the obstacles we put in front of you.

Leader: Your justice is our peace,

People: Your justice is our joy!

Leader: This day and forever more,

People: Amen

SPECIAL MUSIC “What Child Is This?”

Tracy, Max & Ruby Gabrielsen

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Stacie Yates

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 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.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

SERMON "Before I Heard the Prophet"

Rev. Luke Lindon

HYMN

"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"



1. Lo, how a Rose e'er bloom-ing from ten-der stem hath
2. I - sa - iah 'twas fore - told it, the Rose I have in
3. O Flower, whose fra-grance ten - der with sweet-ness fills the



sprung! Of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing, as those of old have
mind; with Ma - ry we be - hold it, the Vir - gin Moth - er
air, dis - pel in glo - rious splen - dor the dark - ness ev - ery -



sung. It came, a flower - et bright, a - mid the
kind. To show God's love a - right, she bore to
where. True man yet ver - y God, from sin and

cold of win - ter, when half spent was the night.
 us a Sav - ior, when half spent was the night.
 death now save us, and share our ev - ery load.

WORDS: Sts. 1-2, 15th cent. German; trans. by Theodore Baker, 1894; st. 3 from
The Hymnal, 1940 (Is. 35:1-2)
 MUSIC: *Alte Catholische Geistliche Kirchengesänge*, 1599; harm. by Michael Praetorius, 1609
 St. 3 © 1940, 1943, renewed 1971 The Church Pension Fund

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OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

Offering Invitation

In this holy season, when the sun's light is swallowed up by the growing darkness of night, you renew your promise to reveal among us the splendor of your glory. May what we offer be light to reveal you to the nations. Thank you, Precious Lord, for all your gifts given to us. Let us sing of your goodness!

Doxology (*Thomas Ken, 1674; adapted*)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Christ all creatures here below;
 Praise Holy Spirit, Comforter: One God, triune, whom we adore. Amen.

Prayer of Dedication

Holy One, we give these gifts not to make people happy. Happiness is a fleeting feeling.
 May these gifts point to the deeper state of being. A joy that cannot be troubled.
 A peace that surpasses all understanding.
 For us, and for our neighbor we pray. Amen.

BENEDICTION

Leader: As God's Own, in your waiting clothe yourself with hope, joy, and love.

People: And the greatest of these is love!

Leader: For God so loved the world,

People: That God sent Jesus to us.

Leader: Not to destroy the world,

People: But to save it.

Leader: And should troubles visit and tempt you to despair,

People: remember the candle of joy and it's message:

Leader: Your sins have been forgiven!

Go now blessed to be a blessing, for this service has ended.

People: And our service now begins! Amen!

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE "God Be with You"

God be with you 'til we meet again; By His counsels guide uphold you;
 With His sheep securely fold you; God be with you 'til we meet again.

MORE THAN CHURCH ON SUNDAY"

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PASTORAL STAFF

Rev. Luke Lindon, Senior Minister - email: luke@uccmedina.org
Karen Brocco-Kish, Visitation Pastor

OFFICE STAFF

Cindy Korecky, Office Manager - email: office@uccmedina.org
Kelly Charnley, Financial Manager - email: financial@uccmedina.org

PROGRAM STAFF

Stacie Yates, Director of Christian Education
Nicole Rubino, Co-Director of Youth
Jim Kiser, Director of Music
Cathy Fafrak, Organist
Rebecca Rosen, Nursery Supervisor
Jennifer Vilimonovic, Director of Hobby Horse Preschool
Laura Garcia, Assistant Director of Hobby Horse Preschool
Jack Sharpe, Maintenance
Jack Manhoff, Custodian

THE PILGRIM MESSENGER

DECEMBER 13, 2020

**“WELCOMING, LOVING, SERVING, WHERE GOD HAS NO LIMITS.
MORE THAN CHURCH ON SUNDAY!”**

December 13, 2020 thru December 20, 2020

WEEK AT A GLANCE

Sun **THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**
10:00 am Live Stream Worship Only

Mon 10:00 am All gift card orders due!

Tues

Wed

Thurs

Fri

Sat

Sun **FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**
10:00 am Children’s Christmas Pageant
Live Stream Worship Only

Worship Highlights: 10:00 am Live Stream Only

Scripture: Mark 1:1-8

Sermon: “Before I Heard the Prophet”

– Rev. Luke Lindon

Altar Flowers: The altar flowers are given by Bruce & Sally Bauer in honor of their 60th wedding anniversary.

VETERANS OF THE CROSS

A light is surely coming! Please give generously this holiday season to **THE CHRISTMAS FUND FOR VETERANS OF THE CROSS**, the unique UCC Special Mission Offering, collected on Christmas Eve, which recognizes and honors our **beloved ministers and their spouses who dedicate their careers and so much of their lives to the church.** For over a century, these offerings have been a tangible expression of God’s love and light in the world. Year after year, United Church of Christ members and congregations have reached out in kindness, compassion, and gratitude to those who have faithfully shepherded our Church in the past and who now find themselves facing unexpected financial needs. This ministry cares for the active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ. Your gift will also provide for the Supplementation of Small Annuities, Supplementation of Health Premiums, Emergency Grants and Christmas “Thank You” Gift Checks next December to lower-income retirees.

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE SCHEDULE

Advent services will be live streamed on the website and facebook every Sunday at **10:00 am.**

Christmas Eve at 6:00 pm We will have a parking lot Carols and Candle Lighting service, weather-permitting. We will gather in a socially distant fashion to pray and sing carols and light candles.

Christmas Eve at 8:00 pm A live streamed, pre-recorded service featuring a message, music and scripture readings from members.

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

Thank you to the 111 people who have already turned in their pledge cards for 2021! **In order to best forecast 2021 budgets the church is still in need of your 2021 Stewardship Card.** Blank cards are available on the table in the Welcome Area or on the website. Click on "Give Online Here" and download your own copy.

SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE JANUARY 3, 2021

Live streamed service at 10:00 am

On January 3rd we will remember those persons who have passed away this year. During the worship service, the names of the members of Medina UCC who have passed away during 2020 will be read. For each member a candle will be lit and a chime will ring. We would also like to read the names of family members and loved ones who have passed away during this past year.

If you have a loved one that you would like remembered, please call the Church Office no later than December 28th with the full name of the loved one, their relationship to you, and the date of their passing.

ALTAR FLOWERS

The 2021 Flower Chart is now hanging in the East Room Hallway. Please sign up to sponsor the Altar Flowers. This is a wonderful way to honor or remember someone, or to celebrate a special occasion.

Please fill in your name and **write "Church" or "Self"** to let us know if you would like the church to order the flowers for you or if you will be ordering them yourself. The cost of the flowers ordered through the church office is \$22.50.

Also, please write what you would like printed in the Messenger and if you want to claim your flowers after the 10:30 service.

SUPPORT OUR YOUTH!

Support our youth and buy gift cards for all your special occasions! The possibilities are endless: groceries, gasoline, home repairs, clothing and gift items are a few of the ways the shopping you normally do can help our youth. Remember, Christmas is just around the corner!

The last order date before Christmas will be Monday, December 14th by 10 a.m.
We will not have extra gift cards in the office to purchase this year as we have in the past. If you want to order any, now is the time!

ADVENT FOOD DONATION FOR CLAGGETT MIDDLE SCHOOL

As we prepare our hearts and minds for this year's Advent season, **the Mission Team has a "giving" mission to put before our congregation.** We would like to focus on the most vulnerable in our community, the children. The children in elementary school receive weekend food bags. Until recently there were no supplemental foods available for children once they moved out of the elementary schools. There is a food pantry at Claggett and the students can take items from the pantry as they need them. Together with the counselor at Claggett, we have compiled a list of their needs. A copy of this list (in the form of a Reverse Advent Calendar) was included in a mailing that you received from the church as well as on our website and facebook page. You may also email the church office for a copy or stop in the welcome area and pick one up. **Deadline for collection is Thursday, December 31st.**

It is our hope to help stock their shelves by filling boxes with food items they can use. If you are only able to "give" a few items, that would be wonderful too. Boxes (or bags) can be dropped off in the church welcoming area and we will deliver them to the school when they resume classes after the first of the year.

NOVEMBER FINANCIAL REPORT:

	November	YTD	Annual Budget	YTD as a % of Budget
Income:	\$30,385	\$310,542	\$358,252	86.7%
Expense:	\$26,876	\$299,249	\$372,383	80.4%
Net Income (Loss)	\$3,509	\$11,293	(\$14,131)	

- Thank you for all of your financial support during this difficult year, it appears that the church will end 2020 positive despite projecting a deficit.
- All 2020 contributions must be postmarked by December 31, 2020 to be eligible for tax deductions.
- Automatic Withdrawal Options are available for your weekly, monthly or even quarterly contributions; contact Kelly for form to complete.

2020 CHRIST TREE GIVE A GIFT CARD THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

In years past we have had our Christ Tree up during the holiday season. This Christmas tree had tags on it for needed items for different agencies in the community. We would still like to do something to help our community members, but since we will not be in the church much this holiday season to grab a tag, we came up with another way to help. We will be collecting gift cards so that when a need arises we have some to distribute to those in need. If you would like to contribute a gift card there are two ways to do it.

1. Here is the link for the for the Scrips Gift Card program where you can view the list of options available. <https://shop.shopwithscrip.com> Scroll to the bottom of the page and click on Retailer List. Here you can choose your option and contact Kelly (financial@uccmedina.org or 330-725-4559) to let her know which gift card you would like to purchase and then you send in your money. You cannot purchase directly from this site. By doing this the youth get a little kick back for each gift card ordered. **The deadline for ordering through Kelly is December 14th by 10:00 am.**
2. You can also purchase a gift card yourself and drop it off at the church. There will be a small basket on the table, inside the welcoming area, where you can put the gift card. We will be collecting gas cards and gift cards from Walmart, Target, Walgreens, Rite-Aid, Aldi, Giant Eagle.

If you have any questions, please contact Stacie Yates.

SENIOR SPOT

Alzheimer care falls most frequently to women. Although, husbands, siblings and children do help. According to the Alzheimer's Association, caregivers wait too long to ask for help for a job that is physically and emotionally wearing. They recommend that help needs to be explored as soon as the diagnosis of Alzheimer's is given. You should contact your local Alzheimer's Association. For caregivers call 330-208-9684, or the association's 24-hour help line at 1-800-272-3900. Make a plan for help before you need it.

PILGRIM MESSENGER MAILING

We will not be mailing the Pilgrim Messenger between Christmas and New Year's
on December 24th or 31st

We will resume mailing again on
Thursday, January 6, 2019

The deadline for submission of articles for NEXT Sunday's *Messenger* is this Sunday at 11:30 am

Please submit articles to the church office at office@uccmedina.org

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS: 9:00 am – 3:00 pm MONDAY THRU FRIDAY

Psalm 126

Shouts of Joy

If you've ever been through a period of grieving, it's likely that someone in your life has, at one time or another, shaken their head and clucked their tongue and assured you that "God doesn't give anyone more than they can handle." Or, maybe that someone patted your hand and said "God is just testing you right now. If you have enough faith, you can get through it." Or maybe even, "Don't cry."

These platitudes, although they are usually intended to comfort, can instead sting. They can leave the recipient feeling that if only their faith was stronger, they would not feel sad or angry.

The psalmist shows us a different way of thinking of God. The psalmist knows that hard times and sorrows are neither tests from God, nor signs of the displeasure of God. The author of Psalm 126 sings instead that sorrows and grieving are just part of life. These words remind us that God does not bring misfortune; instead God is with us in our grief.

One UCC church in New Hampshire wanted to demonstrate God-with-us to the whole neighborhood last Advent. Motivated by the tragic death in their congregation, the church decided to show God's light in the darkness of grief. They invited members of the church to purchase a string of Christmas lights in memory of someone who had passed. Overseen by a professional lighting design company, it took twenty volunteers to hang all the lights that were donated. When the thousands of lights were strung together all over the outside of the building and surrounding greenery, they were a very visible reminder to all who passed of the light of the presence of God in the community. *See link below.

During Advent, we anticipate the incarnation - the coming of the God to earth in the form of a human. The Divine One comes to us as Christ Jesus to remind us that through all the ups and downs and griefs of life, God is never far from us. And, like memorial lights in a New England winter, that presence can bring more joy than all the well-meaning words in the world.

*https://www.ucc.org/news_light_bulbs_tragedy_memorial_idea_set_n_h_church_aglow_for_christmas_12202019