



Christmas
before the
World Ended

second sunday in advent

Before
and
After

December 6, 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



*****Assisted Listening Devices Available – Please Ask Your Usher*****

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

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

RINGING OF THE TOWER BELL

PRELUDE “Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming” – arr. James Mansfield 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 Hope (1 Peter 1:13)

Leader: God, you are our hope and solace in a troubled world.

People: **Holy One, your justice is our hope!**

Leader: Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober,

People: **We set our hope on the grace to be brought to you
when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming.**

Leader: We light our second candle of hope. *(Candle is lit)*

We do not wait alone, nor do we wait in despair.

People: **We hope in the Lord!**

Leader: And that hope has been working on us,

People: **with us, and through us for 2,000 years,**

Leader: And will come in its fullness.

People: **Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

SPECIAL MUSIC “Twenty Four” – originally by Switchfoot

Jessika & Bennett Petersen

SCRIPTURE 2 Peter 3:8-15

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 "Christmas Before the World Ended"

Rev. Luke Lindon

HYMN

"It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" (vs. 1 & 4)



1. It came up-on the mid-night clear, that glo-ri-ous song of old,
4. For lo! the days are has-tening on, by proph-et seen of old,



from an - gels bend-ing near the earth, to touch their harps of gold:
when with the ev - er - cir-cling years shall come the time fore - told



"Peace on the earth, good will to men,* from heaven's all-gra-cious King."
when peace shall o - ver all the earth its an-cient splen-dors fling,



The world in sol - emn still-ness lay, to hear the an - gels sing.
and the whole world send back the song which now the an - gels sing.

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, true, whom we adore. Amen.**

Prayer of Dedication (*Macrina Wiederkehr in Seasons of Your Heart*)

**I was just thinking one morning during prayer,
How much alike hope and baking powder are:
Quietly getting what is best in me,
To rise,
Awakening
The hint of eternity within.
Amen.**

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation to the Table

The Words of Institution

Virtual Communion

Prayer of Thanksgiving

BENEDICTION

Leader: As God's Own, clothe yourself with faith, hope, 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 hope and its 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.**

POSTLUDE

"Youth Group Fall Review" – video

“MORE THAN CHURCH ON SUNDAY”

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 6, 2020

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

December 6, 2020 thru December 13, 2020

WEEK AT A GLANCE

Sun **SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**
10:00 am Live Stream Worship Only
11:45 am **Mission Team Meeting**

Mon

Tues

Wed

Thurs

Fri

Sat

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

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.

Worship Highlights: 10:00 am Live Stream Only

Scripture: 2 Peter 3:8-15

Sermon: “Christmas Before the World Ended”
– Rev. Luke Lindon

Altar Flowers: The altar flowers are given by Barb Rosen in memory of Keith Rosen.

POINSETTIA ORDERS LAST DAY!

It's time to order your beautiful poinsettia again! You may donate a poinsettia to decorate the Sanctuary for Christmas services. With Christmas Eve being a pre-recorded service, you may claim it before Christmas Eve, or you may donate a poinsettia to be delivered by the Flower Committee to a shut-in to be enjoyed before the holiday. The cost is \$8.50. **Deadline for ordering is tomorrow, December 7th.** Please fill out a green poinsettia order sheet (available on the website and on the table in the Welcome Area) and turn it in to the church office. **Since we are not having in person worship right now while the County is in the red, you may also call the church office to place your order.**

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

Thank you to the 97 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.

WINTER CRAFTS ARE READY FOR DELIVERY DECEMBER 7TH

Help is needed delivering 13 winter crafts to members at home. If you are able to deliver, please take a craft(s) from the table in the Welcome Area and sign your name next to the recipient's name so that there's a record of it being taken and delivered. **Pick up for delivery is scheduled Monday thru Friday 12/7 – 12/18 during office hours of 9am – 3pm.** Make sure to call the recipient ahead of time to let them know that you'd like to arrange a drop-off. Don't forget to wear your mask when at the church and when delivering the craft! Invitations extended to stay for a visit in-person will be at the discretion of the recipient. If asked, please feel free to stay and visit! Afterwards, please email the Visitation Pastor, Karen Brocco-Kish at karenb7777@aol.com if there are any concerns that may need her attention.

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 weekender 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.

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!

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.

THANK YOU

Dear Church Family... Just a note of appreciation and thankfulness to you all for awarding me the TOM EVANS AWARD. I am humbled! Such a surprise and such an honor! I will try to continue to be worthy of it as we serve together. Your love and help will be cherished. -Jane Langol

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.

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.

GOSPEL GALLEY

by Alice Metzloff

Last Sunday, 11/29. Was the First Sunday of Advent. The first Advent candle of three was lit. **Today is the Second Sunday of Advent. What happens next in the Nativity story?** The Gospel of Luke 2:1-4 tells about Caesar Augustus decreeing that all the Roman World be counted in a census. Joseph and Mary were living in Nazareth in Galilee at the time this decree went out. Luke 2:4 tells that Mary and Joseph were engaged, and being of the house and line of David, were required to return to their town of origin to register. Being very pregnant, Mary and Joseph leave Nazareth in Galilee, through Judea to Bethlehem. No details of this journey are recorded in any of the four Gospels. However, one can surmise that traveling by donkey and foot would have been mind-numbingly long, arduous, uncomfortable, hot, dusty, tedious, sometimes dangerous and boring!

ADVENT Season began Sunday, November 29th. Create an Advent Wreath tonight, if not have one up already. You will need 5 candles...4 of one color placed in a circle around 1 white, placed in the center. Begin your Advent Reflection by lighting the First Advent Candle of Faith. Read Luke 1:26-33. Next **LIGHT the Second Advent Candle of Hope.** Read Luke 2:1-4. **What is the message for us...traveling through these current COVID restrictive times?** *Travel with Faith, Hope, and Trust in God...secure in the knowledge that Emmanuel-God with us, walking beside us, giving us strength and courage to reach the end of this road in, safety, with confidence.*

Dedicated Excited Confident Emboldened Mindful Blessed Enlightened Reversed

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

Isaiah 40:1-11

Messengers of Hope

The prophets are not always easy company. As a body, they would be difficult dinner companions. It's hard to imagine them sitting down to conversation about the weather or kindly inquiries about how the grandchildren are doing. Others shake hands politely. They blow raspberries.

The prophets calling and passion is to reveal the truth that God has shown them. Most of their listeners, in their time and ours, would rather have their truths served with a sugar coating. So, the prophets rarely win any "likeability" polls.

But if you can handle your truth served rare and with minimal dressing, the prophets are bracing conversation partners. Their bluntness springs from a deep and always unsatisfied yearning to bring everyone closer to God. And yet, sometimes, the poets surprise with an after-dinner song of joy.

Today, in the fortieth chapter of the book of Isaiah, the prophet leaves behind his fiery ranting and offers words which at last sound less like a lecture and more like a lullaby. Maybe this comfort, this intimacy with God is what the prophets had in mind all along. Can you listen past their prickly rhetoric to hear what they really want for those who listen - in their time and in ours?

*Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem*

Today, on this second Sunday of Advent, listen! There are prophets speaking in your city, in your county, in your church. Sometimes those prophets are cranky. Sometimes they stick out their tongues instead of smiling. Sometimes they lecture, rather than hum lullabies. And that lecture can feel like it's really close to home.

But you'll know a true prophet by this. That their words bring you ever closer and more intimately into relationship with a God who wants nothing more than to know and be known.