

**Sunday November 28, 2021  
Be Alert & Pray**

**Prelude**

**Words of Welcome**

**Announcements**

A brief **Special Meeting of the Congregation** is called for **Sunday, December 5**, immediately following the worship service to vote on a revision of the church By-Laws regarding the number of people needed to serve on a Pastoral Search Committee. Our current By-Laws call for a Pastoral Search Committee of 9-12 members. In consultation with Rev. Marvin Silver (Associate Conference Minister) who will be guiding us through the Pastoral Search process, the Church Council recommends revising the By-Laws to call for a Pastoral Search Committee of 5-7 members as more in keeping with the size of our present congregation.

This meeting will take place via Zoom, and for those church members who will not be attending service on December 5, but who wish to attend the meeting, we ask that you join the Zoom meeting as close to 11:15 as possible. We will go directly into the meeting after the Benediction. This will be the only item on the meeting agenda, so we expect it will be a fairly short meeting.

**Call to Worship**

Leader: Emmanuel! God with us!

**People: Incarnate one! Embodied one!**

Leader: At-table one! Loving one!

**People: Come! Be here now and we will open ourselves to you. Replenish and renew us in this time of shared worship.**

**Opening Prayer Unison**

**O God of all the prophets,  
you herald the coming of the Son of Man  
by wondrous signs in the heavens and on the earth.  
God of justice and peace,  
from the heavens you rain down mercy and kindness,  
that all on earth may stand in awe and wonder  
before your marvelous deeds.**

**Guard our hearts from despair so that we,  
in the company of the faithful  
and by the power of your Holy Spirit,  
may be found ready to raise our heads  
at the coming near of our redemption,  
the day of Jesus Christ. Amen.**

### **Advent One Candle Lighting (Hope and Faith)**

Mike and Carla Crompton

**Leader:** Arise and be bold, good news of hope and faith are here!

**People:** **The warm glow of the Divine lightens our hearts.**

**Leader:** Here we are together, not alone. We join with the cloud of witnesses here, there, elsewhere, and everywhere. On this first Sunday in Advent, we will dream and imagine a different future, a rising-up and life-flourishing one. We are witnesses to hope and faith rekindling life anew.

**People:** **Hope and faith find sustenance and meaning in God's promise of fullness of life.**

### **Advent Reflection on Hope**

Hope is the thing with feathers  
That perches in the soul,  
And sings the tune without the words,  
And never stops at all....

-- Emily Dickinson

**On this first Sunday in Advent the first day of our new church year, we will be lighting the candle of hope and faith. People in such diverse settings and in such varied stages of life the flame of God's hope and faith can seem to be distant. Yet in our dreams, imaginations, and hearts there burns this eternal flame of God's hope-fullness and grace-fullness of faith. We are called to light this candle as a symbolic act of remembrance that Christ's light offers us hope and his birth as a human among us offers us a way of faith.**

### **Lighting of the First Advent Candle**

#### **Let Us Pray:**

God-of-righteous-dreaming, lighten our hearts with an enlarged imagination to dream new possibilities: to imagine a world where transformation will happen, where creation is mended and restored, and where exiles and strangers will find a home. Become in our lives the way to what we need, to what we can become, and to what we can do. Amen

**Hymn #112: Keep Awake, Be Always Ready**  
(Please see separate attachment for the score)

*Hymn Leader: Tom Gill*

- 1) Keep awake, be always ready, God's time approaches sure and steady,  
God's strength will keep your heart from blame.  
Clouds, the Spirit's light concealing, disperse, God's purest light revealing;  
creation will its Sovereign name.  
Dry branches burst forth green, God's advent signs are seen: Hallelujah!  
Christ's judgement won, God's will be done; God's new dominion thus begun.
  
- 2) Rise and shine for One is coming whose love will quench all nature's thirsting  
to be made whole forever more.  
On that day to end all weeping, death's swords transformed to tools of reaping,  
the God of might will mercy pour.  
Incarnate, God appears embracing all our tears: Hallelujah!  
God's majesty eternally revealed to set the cosmos free.

### Prayer of Confession **Unison**

**Our hearts are stirred as we arrive in this time of Advent when hope and faith are rekindling fresh flames of life with and between us. There are too many times in which we turn from this inner flame and seek to get through life on the basis of our own collection of reactions, fears, impulses, and desires. We realize following such a stream of ever so human ways only fragments our lives and leaves us feeling distant from you Living Christ. Yet we turn to these ways as we're under pressure and tensions of so many kinds. Amen.**

*Moments for Reflection and Silence*

### Assurance of Pardon

Animating Sacred Source you are our creator/still creating God. We pause, remain still, and yearn once again with an open heart for your presence and guidance. Rekindle within us the passion for love that has holy regard for all your creatures and creation. Amen.

### Passing of the Peace

Pastor:       The Peace of Christ be with you  
People:       **And also with you!**

**Reading**

Carol Griffith

### **Jeremiah 33:14-16 (NIV)**

33:14 The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

33:15 In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

33:16 In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

### **Psalm 25 excerpts (NIV)**

1 To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

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

5 Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.

6 Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.

10 All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

### **Special Music**

Tom Gill

### **Gospel Reading**

#### **Luke 21:25-36 (NIV)**

21:25 "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.

21:26 People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

21:27 Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory.

21:28 Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

21:29 Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees;

21:30 as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near.

21:31 So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near.

21:32 Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place.

21:33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

21:34 "Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly,

21:35 like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth.

21:36 Be 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."

## **Musical Interlude**

**Sermon:** Be Alert & Pray

## **Music for Meditation**

## **Prayers of the People**

**Hymn #119** My Soul Gives Glory to My God (verses 1, 3 and 5)

**1) My soul gives glory to my God. My heart pours out its praise.  
God lifted up my lowliness in many marvelous ways.**

**3) From age to age, to all who fear, such mercy love imparts,  
dispensing justice far and near, dismissing selfish hearts.**

**5) Praise God, whose loving covenant supports those in distress,  
remembering past promises with present faithfulness.**

## **Pastoral Prayer**

## The Lord's Prayer **Unison**

### Offering Invitation

The earth distresses. Nations are confused.  
The power structures we've grown accustomed to are being shaken.  
And we will not be shaken. We will look up.  
We are the children of our God of Mercy, hope, and faith.  
Let us give of what we have accordingly.

### Offering and Dedication **Unison**

**The day of redemption draws near. We offer these gifts as a taste of the equitable and loving world to come.**

### Benediction **Unison**

**Emmanuel! God with us!  
Incarnate one! Embodied one!  
Send us forth with confidence to seek you where you dwell  
in the signs-in-the-moon-and-sun-and-stars,  
in the turbulence of our lives,  
and in unexpected Hope**