

November 28, 2021
First Sunday of Advent



“Starry Night” by Vincent van Gogh
from Art in the Christian Tradition,
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To join worship this morning via zoom app, click this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83928727469?pwd=WFhzWkJFQjBhTlp4UEUvdWRhS2lKdz09> (if you are asked for a password, it is: 890967). To dial in by phone call 1 312 626 6799. When prompted, enter 839 2872 7469#. Next, you will be prompted to enter your participant ID or to push #; simply push # again.

Prelude

Welcome

If you're new to First Church, we'd love to get to know you better. You can sign up to receive our email communications on the home page of our website, www.firstchurchmn.org (scroll down to the heading "stay connected" on the right side of the page). You find us on Facebook by searching for "First Congregational Church of MN, UCC." You're also welcome to introduce yourself in the chat or comments.

Gathering Words: "Keeping Our Small Boat Afloat" by Robert Bly

Lighting of the First Advent Candle

*Light dawns on a weary world when eyes begin to see all people's dignity.
Light dawns on a weary world: the promised dawn of justice comes.*

Jesus said: "Come to me, all you who are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."

[the first Advent candle is lit]

As we rest in the holy darkness of Advent,
light dawns, love grows, hope blooms.

*The trees shall clap their hands; the dry lands gush with springs;
The hills and mountains shall break forth with singing!
We shall go out in joy, and be led forth in peace,
as all the world in wonder echoes shalom.*

Where in your body are you carrying the weariness of the world? How are you experiencing joy? What are the signs of dawn?

[silence for reflection]

Hymn: *Light Dawns on a Weary World, verses 2-3*

Readings: I Thess. 3: 9-13; Luke 21:25-36

Sermon: Jane McBride

Hymn 116: *O Come, O Come Emmanuel, verses 1-4*

For verse 1, these alternate words will be sung:

**O come, O come, Emmanuel, and with your people always dwell
Who mourn in lonely exile here until the child of God appear
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to us and with us ever dwell**

Prayers of the People

To share a prayer concern with the community today, please share your prayer in the chat on the zoom call or comment on the livestream. To honor the privacy of those you pray for, please seek their permission, and pray for them using their first name only. Please respond to each prayer with the words: "Hear our prayer."

Lord's Prayer

A commonly used form is printed below. Please use the version most meaningful to you.

Let us pray with words and in the spirit of Jesus:

Our God, 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 for ever. Amen.

Offering Invitation

We invite your financial gifts to support our ministries within and beyond First Church. November's Special Offering will go to the Good Neighbor Fund, which includes organizations we partner with: Eastside Meals on Wheels, Marcy-Holmes Neighborhood Association, Restorative Justice Community Action, and Southeast Seniors.

You can give by going to our website: www.firstchurchmn.org, and clicking on the "Support Us" link. You can also give by texting 612-255-4109: "\$(amount) Special" (for the monthly offering) or "\$(amount) General Fund. If you give by check, please make it out to First Church with "Good Neighbor Offering" in the memo line.

Thank you!

Offertory

Offertory Response: *Never Ending Joy*

Prayer of Dedication

We give ourselves to the joy of your coming, O Emmanuel. Light dawns. Love grows. Hope blooms. We will wait and watch, and prepare. Amen.

Announcements

Service of Committal for Steven Noel Sorensen

Hymn 116: *O Come, O Come Emmanuel, verses 6-7*

Benediction

Choral Benediction Long Is Our Winter and Passing the Light Video

Postlude

Thanks to those who serve in the following roles today:

Ushers: Jean Anderson, Marilyn Burns

Reader: Carl Dyar

Special Music: Carl Dyar, Lisa Keitel

Tech Support: Cynthia Hendricks, Ruth Lemire, Gabe Magby

Valet: Tom Lincoln

Coming up this week

Sunday, November 28

10a: Worship / Advent 1: hybrid in-person and Zoom/YouTube. Jane McBride preaching

Tuesday, November 30

1p: Study Group (in the parlor)

Sunday December 5

10a: Worship / Advent 1: hybrid in-person and Zoom/YouTube. Jane McBride preaching

11:15a: Annual Meeting of the Congregation: hybrid in person and Zoom

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Announcements

Looking for a meeting link? We place all the links for zoom meetings in the church calendar. To find a link, please visit www.firstchurch.org. Look for the calendar on the right side. Click on the link for the meeting you wish to join.

Our Annual Meeting will take place will take place next Sunday December 5 at 11:15a in a hybrid in person/Zoom format. The agenda and meeting materials were emailed this week. The annual report will be available soon!

Advent Community Journal This Advent, we're going to share a traveling Advent journal – a blank notebook that you can fill with Advent reflections and messages to share with the congregation. Similar to Las Posadas, the journal will “travel” from household to household. All you have to do is sign up to receive and deliver the journal. You can contact Jane to sign up for a date. When you receive it, include a personal reflection, a short poem, a favorite quotation, or a drawing or picture, then deliver it to the next household on the schedule. Some guidelines and suggestions for your messages will be included, but there will be ample room for creativity.

To make scheduling easier, you won't necessarily have to be home to receive or deliver the journal; it can be left inside a porch or mailbox. If you aren't able to drop off the journal yourself, there will be a place on the sign-up sheet to indicate that you'd like help with delivery. After Advent, the journal will be available in the church library (or by special delivery) for all to appreciate. We want this to be something everyone can enjoy!

Faith Foundations and Leadership Skills are two distinct learning pathways offered by The Damascus Project (a joint ministry of the MN and WI Conferences of the UCC). These learning pathways are designed specifically for anyone who longs to deepen their faith, grow as a leader in their community or explore how God might be calling them to ministries of various kinds. You can explore the many registration options available by visiting the Damascus Project website: <https://the-damascus-project.org/faith-leadership>.

Looking for Snow Angels for Southeast Seniors! Southeast Seniors helps neighborhood seniors with snow removal in two ways. For folks who can afford to pay for it, they help them find individuals or services who are available for hire. For neighborhood seniors who are not able to pay for snow removal assistance, SE Seniors tries to find a volunteer Snow Angel who can help this neighbor free of charge.

If you know anyone looking for this type of work this winter (including teenagers) please reach out to Southeast Seniors at 612-331-2302 or ann@seseniors.org.