



Second Congregational UCC/First Presbyterian Church PC(USA)
Energizing downtown Rockford and beyond with God's grace

Second Sunday of Advent
Order of Worship

December 10, 2023
10:00 am

**= please rise, whether in body or in spirit*

Thank you for being vaccinated. Wearing masks is strongly recommended.

PRELUDE	“Besancon: People Look East”	ARR. W. WOLD
INTROIT	“O Come, All Ye Faithful” Peanut Bells	ADESTE FIDELES
WELCOME		Becky Erbe

Leader: May the Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

CALL TO WORSHIP-ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING♦ Jennifer Archer, Linda Oshita

Leader: O God, we light the second candle of Advent. The Candle of Peace.

All: We seek your comfort. Both mighty and tender, you come. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you.

Leader: Isaiah announced God's coming to a people exiled in a broken and parched wilderness. He declared that God's redemption would make a highway in the desert and change the rough places into plain. God would come as a shepherd—feeding, leading, and cradling the weary flock. This Advent, we seek such a God.

All : Saving God, look upon your world and heal your land and your people. Prepare us to be changed. This Advent, teach us to be tender and just, as you are.

***HYMN #77** vs 1-2 “Isaiah the Prophet Has Written on Old” SAMANTHRA

Isaiah the prophet has written of old how God's new creation shall come. Instead of the thorn tree the fir tree shall grow; the wolf shall lie down with the lamb. The mountains and hills shall burst forth into song, the peoples be led forth in peace, for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea.

Yet nations still prey on the meek of the world, and conflict turns parent from child. Your people despoil all the sweetness of earth; the briar and the thorn tree grow wild. God, bring to fruition your will for the earth, that no one shall hurt or destroy, that wisdom and justice shall reign in the land and your people shall go forth in joy.

CALL FOR TRANSFORMATION♦ Phil Davidson

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE

God of tenderness and love, breathe your grace into our lives. Forgive our wandering ways, and guide us along your paths of peace. When we lose our way, and forget the reason and purpose of this season, carry us back to you. Lead us up to that high mountain of faith and hope, that we might truly proclaim: "Here is our God!" In your holy name, we pray.

One Minute of silent reflection

WORDS OF GRACE

***THE PEACE**

Leader: Peace be with you.

All: And also with you.

***SONG OF ADVENT**

“While we are waiting, come; while we are waiting, come. Jesus, our Lord Emmanuel, while we are waiting come.”

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Darlene Riddle

EARLY WORD

Aubrey Barnett

SCRIPTURE READING

Mark 1:1-8

ANTHEM

“As the Deer”
Bellcantos

M. NYSTROM/ARR. R. L. LITTLETON

SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 40:1-11

Reader: The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

All: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

“Clearing the Highway”

Becky Erbe

***HYMN #347** vs 1-4

“Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”

PICARDY

Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and with fear and trembling stand; ponder nothing earthly minded, for with blessing in his hand Christ our God to earth descendeth, our full homage to demand.

King of kings, yet born of Mary, as of old on earth he stood, Lord of lords in human vesture, in the body and the blood, he will give to all the faithful his own self for heavenly food.

Rank on rank the host of heaven spreads its vanguard on the way, as the Light of light descendeth from the realms of endless day, that the powers of hell may vanish as the shadows clear away.

At his feet the six-winged seraph, cherubim, with sleepless eye, veil their faces to the presence, as with ceaseless voice they cry, “Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, Lord most High!”

PASTORAL PRAYER

Phil Davidson

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

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Darlene Riddle

There are many ways to give of yourself to the church: The obvious, money. You can mail in your offering or click the orange DONATE button top right at secondfirst.org. Text to give is live! Text Give \$__ to 815-335-9911 and follow the instructions. Please send your prayer requests to Pastor Becky: becky.erbe@secondfirst.org.

SONG OF OFFERING

“Come, Thou Long-expected Jesus”
Martin Ringers

ARR. R. LITTEREST

***DOXOLOGY #606**

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

HYMN #93 vs. 1-3

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

TRURO

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates; behold the King of glory waits; the King of kings is drawing near; the Savior of the world is here.

Fling wide the portals of your heart; make it a temple, set apart from earthly use for heaven’s employ, adorned with prayer and love and joy.

Redeemer, come! I open wide my heart to thee; here, Lord, abide. Let me thy inner presence feel; thy grace and love in me reveal.

***BLESSING AND BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE

“Ukrainian Bell Carol”
Martin Ringers

ARR. R. LITTEREST

*The postlude today is offered as a prayer for all Hostilities in Ukraine to come to an end
please remain seated for the postlude*

◆ *Ministry Matters*

Val Blair, organist, pianist, director of music

Richard Stiltner, choir director

Steve Muntz, Wes Hegge, sound, video

Katy Paterson, van driver

Prayer Requests

- Continue prayers **Alice Uphouse, Jayne Pheiffer**, Gabriel Phillip Wills, Lenore Lund, Sharon Ockerlander, Bethany Stiltner, Linda Miller, Kathy Moton, Ann Stites, Katy Paterson, Peter Joachim, Sally Baker, Stephanie Cooper, Beckett Krieg, Philip and Shirley Davidson.
- And we pray for all those at home and in long-term care facilities, who may not be in worship regularly, but who remain part of our family of faith: Betty Klingensmith, Shirley Anderson, Jeanne Page, Marsha Martin, Billye Vernam, Nancy Gallegos, Willene Ziebell, Jan Elliott, Wally Gayle, Charles Rosche, Carol Eggleston, and Ruby Beckman.

Annual Budget Meeting Announcement

Join together at 11:15 am Today, Sunday, December 10, for the Annual Budget Meeting. Budget packets are available at the back table. You will be admitted into the Zoom Meeting.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81203235476?pwd=WHZubzdHMHVhQUnBBcGFuZ3N1TTZXZz09>

Meeting ID: 812 0323 5476 Passcode: 318NChurch Phone 1-312 626-6799

Birthday Card Party for Jayne Pheiffer, Long time member Jayne is turning 103 on Tues. Dec. 18

Even if you are not familiar with Jayne, let us send her as many birthday cards as possible and make it a great birthday for her! Please send cards to: Jayne Pheiffer, St. Anne's Place 4405 Highcrest Rd. Room D 35, Rockford, Illinois 61107

Our Christmas Bell Concert will be Saturday Afternoon, December 16, at 3:00 PM.

Invite your friends! All four bell choirs will present music, and there will even be some bell tree pieces. Don't miss a great opportunity to enjoy Christmas music played by the bells of SecondFirst Church. A free will offering will support the bell program.

Christmas Pageant Sunday, December 17, During Worship

This year the children will perform a short musical called the "The Birthday Party"

Sunday, December 17, Christmas Cookies, Wassail, Cocoa

Join the Hospitality Team for Christmas cookies, Cocoa, and Wassail in the Dining Room after Church.

Poinsettia Sunday is December 17

We will be taking Poinsettias orders now through Monday, December 11. The cost this year is \$14.50. You can send or drop off your check to the office. Let us know if you want the poinsettia in Memory or in Honor of your loved ones. There are order form envelopes in the friendship pads and on the usher table.

Join us for Christmas Eve! Sunday, December 24, 4:30 pm. in the Sanctuary and Facebook Live

Come and join us as we proclaim Christ is born through word and song. This is a family worship with music from our Sanctuary Choir and guest musicians and strings. There will be a Children's Early Word. In the winter's deepest night let us welcome the light of the Christ child, the light and long promised King who will bring peace and justice to our world.

Special Christmas Offerings Sunday, December 24

Presbyterians and United Congregationalists have special Christmas offerings for expressing thanks to retired and active pastors and lay church workers. The PCUSA *Christmas Joy Offering* and the UCC *Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross* offer assistance to families facing financial need, providing direct assistance to supplement pensions, help with the cost of medical insurance and other emergency needs. It provides a way to say 'thank you' for their years of dedication to our two faith traditions.

Office Hours Changing

Beginning January 2, 2024 our church office hours will be changing. The office will be open Monday through Thursday from 9:00 am-1:00 pm. The office will be closed on Fridays. Pastor Becky is available by cellphone in case of an emergency.

Let's Celebrate!

Join us January 7, 2024 for a special coffee hour after worship as we celebrate Debbie Wise. Debbie, our long time Church office manager extraordinaire will be retiring. Her last official day is December 31, 2023.

Calendar at a Glance December 10,- December 17

<p>Bell Sunday, Dec. 10 8:30 AM – Adult Ed 10:00 AM –Worship Service 10:20 AM – Sunday School 11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store 11:15 AM – Budget Meeting</p> <p><u>Monday, Dec. 11</u> 11:30 AM – Serious Soup 5:00 PM - Deacons/Fellowship</p>	<p>Tuesday, Dec. 12 7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast 9:00 AM – Thrift Shop 12:00 PM - Bible Study 5:00 PM – Adult Ed 5:30 PM – Missions via zoom</p> <p>Wednesday, Dec. 13 10:00 AM - Staff Meeting 6:00 PM – Martin Ringers 6:00 PM - Trustees</p> <p>Thursday, Dec. 14 9:30 AM – Carillons 6:00 PM – Bellcantos 7:00 PM - Choir</p>	<p>Friday, Dec. 15 No Scheduled Activities</p> <p>Saturday, Dec. 16 3:00 PM – Bell Concert</p> <p>Sunday, Dec. 17 Christmas Pageant 8:30 AM – Adult Ed 10:00 AM –Worship Service 10:20 AM – Sunday School 11:00 AM – Wassail, Cocoa, Cookies 11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store</p>
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Second Congregational (UCC) / First Presbyterian Church (PCUSA)
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Ministers: All Members

Moderator: Darlene Riddle moderator@secondfirst.org

Acting Senior Pastor: Becky Erbe becky.erbe@secondfirst.org

Children and Family Coordinator: Aubrey Barnett aubrey.barnett@secondfirst.org

Youth Director: Rachel Huffman rachel.huffman@secondfirst.org

Director of Music, Organist/Pianist: Valerie Blair valerie.blair@secondfirst.org

Choir Director: Richard Stiltner rlstiltner@aol.com

Director, Peanut Bells: Sarah Hallberg sarah.hallberg@secondfirst.org

Director, Carillons: Joyce Zartman joyce.zartman@secondfirst.org

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