

First  
Congregational  
Church of St. Louis

UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST



UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST  
a just world for all



*Hope*

**SUNDAY • DECEMBER 5, 2021**  
*Second Sunday of Advent*

**First Congregational Church of St. Louis**  
**United Church of Christ**  
*An Open & Affirming Congregation*

***Welcome!***

*Whoever you are, and wherever you are on life's journey,  
you are welcome here.*

**Restrooms** are located down the hall on the main floor.

**All Gender Restrooms** are located at the back of the sanctuary  
and downstairs in the Fellowship Hall (which is accessible).

**Changing tables** are located in the Nursery on the main floor  
and at the back of the sanctuary.

**Childcare** for infants-preschoolers is located  
in the nursery on the main floor.

**\*An asterisk** is an invitation to rise, in body or spirit.  
**Bolded text** is an invitation for the congregation  
to read or sing in unison.

**For everyone's health and safety:**

- Masks are required for everyone ages 5 and over while indoors.
- Ushers will not collect offerings. Instead, you may place your offerings in the baskets located in the Tower Room and Narthex.
- Children remaining in worship should sit with their parents in the pews. Children may get activities from the Prayground and then return to the pews.
- At the conclusion of worship, attendees should exit the sanctuary promptly to avoid prolonged, close contact.

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## **The Second Sunday of Advent**

### **Hope**



**Welcome & Announcements**

Bert Merrell, S&A

**Prelude**

**"Keep Your Lamps"**

*André Thomas*

*Keep your lamps trimmed and burning, the time is drawing nigh.*

*Children, don't get weary 'til your work is done.*

*Christian journey soon be over, the time is drawing nigh.*

**Stewardship Moment**

David Greenhaw

**\*Call to Worship**

**Leader:** The day foretold is coming,

**People:** When our deafened ears will hear a choir,  
a heavenly host proclaiming peace!

**Leader:** The one foretold is coming –

**People:** Whose cry will pierce the deepest gloom:  
a newborn's wail in the silent night!

**Leader:** The day is at hand!

**People:** World, listen!

**Leader:** The savior draws near!

**People:** Praise the Lord!

**\*Opening Hymn**      **"Come, O Long-Expected Jesus"**

**Come, O Long-expected Jesus, born to set all people free;  
From our fears and sins release us; grant us your true liberty.  
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth impart;  
Dear desire of every nation, enter every longing heart.**

**Born all people to deliver, born a child, you came to reign!  
Born to rule on earth forever, come, be known to us again.  
By your own eternal Spirit, come to claim us as your own;  
By your all-sufficient merit, let us share your cross and crown.**

## \*Passing of the Peace

### \*Sung Response "His Kingdom Now Is Come"

The musical score is written on five staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and repetitive, with lyrics written below the notes. The lyrics are: The light shines in the dark - ness, and the The val - leys will be lift - ed, and the Hear the voice cry from the high - way, dark - ness can - not o - ver - come. The light shines in the dark moun - tains will be brought down low. The val - leys will be lift "Make way for the Prince of Peace!" Hear the voice cry from the high - ness, and the dark - ness can - not o - ver - come. - ed, and the moun - tains will be brought down low. - way, "Make way for the Prince of Peace!" Be - hold, be - hold, God's king - dom now has come!

### \*Advent Candle Litany

**Leader:** The season of Advent continues. We light these candles as symbols of our faith and signs of God's love.

**People:** The first candle of peace, with its gentle and persistent fire, calls out the violent forces and lets in God's deep and tranquil Spirit.

**Leader:** As we light the second Advent candle, let it stand for hope based not on wishful thinking, but on deep conviction. In the midst of darkness and imperfection, we hope.

**People:** Hope lives in us and will abide with us.

**Leader:** In following Christ's teachings, we nurture our hope for peace even today.

**People:** Today we light the candle of hope.



**Children's Moment**

Emily Stokes

### **Lighting of the Advent Wreath**

#### **Scripture – Luke 3:1–6**

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:  
‘Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight.  
Every valley shall be filled,  
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,  
and the crooked shall be made straight,  
and the rough ways made smooth;  
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”

**"Comfort, comfort O my people, tell of peace," thus says our God;  
Comfort those whose hearts are shrouded, mourning under sorrow's load.  
Speak unto Jerusalem of the peace that waits for them;  
Tell them that their sins I cover, and their warfare now is over.**

**For the herald's voice is calling in the desert far and near,  
Bidding us to make repentance since the realm of God is here.  
Oh, that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God a way;  
Let the valleys rise in meeting and the hills bow down in greeting.**

**Straight shall be what long was crooked, and the rougher places plain!  
Let your hearts be true and humble, for Messiah's holy reign.  
For God's glory evermore shall be known o'er all the world;  
And all flesh shall see the token that God's word is never broken.**

### **Communion**

The congregation will be invited forward to partake in communion.  
Come by the center aisle and return by the side aisles.  
The ushers will place a piece of bread in your hand and you may pick up  
a cup of juice from the table. There are also individually packaged  
gluten free wafers on the table.

#### ***Invitation to the Table***

**Leader:** God's banquet is coming.

The time we await when all will gather  
from North, East, West and South.

**People:** A banquet where the rich and powerful  
will sit with the least and the last and the lost.

Leader: A table where young and old will learn from each other.  
A time when all will sit together in peace,  
“and the wolf will lie down with the lamb”.  
Here at this table we get a foretaste of God’s banquet.  
This is indeed your table, O God. It does not belong  
to this congregation. So all who come in humble faith  
are welcome to eat and drink here.

**People: Come and taste the grace eternal.  
Come and see that God is good!**

### *The Great Thanksgiving*

Leader: God is with us.

**People: We are not alone.**

Leader: Christ is present here.

**People: The Spirit moves within us.**

Leader: Let us give thanks to God.

**People: It is right to give God thanks and praise!**

Leader: Blessings be to you, Creator God, who in the beginning brought  
light and life to the world, and who continues to bring it  
love and light everlasting.

**People: Your song of wisdom echoes through the ages,  
your ancient promise still brings us hope.**

Leader: Over the ages you have called people to embrace your hope and  
share your love. But even when they have closed their ears  
to the song, you did not stop singing. You sent prophets and  
messengers to your people, reminding them of the promised  
time of peace and justice that would surround the world.  
They came in the midst of our despair, and filled us with hope.  
And then you came to a young woman named Mary,  
and offered the promise in a new way.

**People: Promising her a son, who would be called Jesus.  
Promising her that in her son, the world would be changed.**

(a time of silent prayer, then the pastor will continue with the Prayers of the People)

### *The Prayer of Our Savior*

Our Mother, 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 sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

### *Words of Institution*

(The ushers will come forward.)

### *Sharing the Bread and Cup*

### *Prayer of Commitment (Unison)*

What a risk there was in your becoming flesh!  
What a depth of self-giving love for your world!  
We stand amazed, at such power bent by such love,  
to accept such humiliation for us.  
We stand amazed, that suffering love should be the power above  
all power; the power which transforms the universe,  
and wins its freedom.  
As we depart your table and return to Advent waiting,  
we commit our lives and our church to imitate your love. Amen.

### **Anthem**

### **"Gabriel's Message"**

*Basque Carol  
arr. David Willcocks*

*The angel Gabriel from heaven came, his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;  
"All hail," said he, "Thou lowly maiden Mary. Most highly favored lady, Gloria!"  
"For known a blessed Mother thou shalt be, all generations laud and honor thee,  
Thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold, most highly favored lady, Gloria!"  
Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head; "To me be as it pleases God," she said.  
"My soul shall laud and magnify his holy name." "Most highly favored lady, Gloria!"  
Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,  
and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say, "Most highly favored lady, Gloria!"*



Homily

Rev. Mia White

**\*Closing Hymn**

"Watcher, Tell Us of the Night"

#103 vv. 1 & 3

Watcher, tell us of the night,  
what its signs of promise are.  
Traveler, O a wondrous sight!  
See that glory-beaming star!  
Watcher, does its beauteous ray  
news of joy or hope foretell?  
Traveler, yes; it brings the day,  
promised day of Israel!

Watcher, tell us of the night,  
for the morning seems to dawn.  
Traveler, shadows take their flight,  
doubt and terror are withdrawn.  
Watcher, you may go your way;  
hasten to your quiet home.  
Traveler, I rejoice today,  
for Emmanuel has come!

Postlude

"Toccata on  
Watcher, Tell Us of the Night"

*arr. Brenda Portman*

**Thank you to those serving today.**

**Communion Preparer: Bert Merrell**

**Liturgist: Bert Merrell**

**Ushers: Chrissy Paterson, Bert Merrell**

**Coffee Bar: Chrissy Paterson**

### Upcoming Events:

**Sun. Dec. 12, 10 AM** - Celebration of ONA Covenant Reaffirmation

**Sun. Dec. 12, 3 PM** - *Early Music @ 1st: 17th* - C German Music of the Season

**Sat. Dec. 18, 10 AM** - Christmas Pageant Rehearsal

**Sun. Dec. 19, 10 AM** - Intergenerational Christmas Pageant

**Tue. Dec. 21, 12 PM - 2 PM** - Church Staff Open House Christmas Party

**Fri. Dec. 24, 5 PM & 10 PM** - Christmas Eve Worship Services

**June 12-18, 2022** - Mission Trip

### Enjoy a Cuppa!

Coffee bar is open at the back of the church from 9:30 until 11:30 Sunday mornings. Enjoy coffee, tea or hot cocoa in a compostable paper cup or bring your own to-go mug from home. Please keep your mask ON - and lower it just to take a sip so we can all stay COVID safe!

### 2022 Pledge

Thank you to those who have turned in your pledge cards for 2022. Extra pledge cards are available at each entrance to the sanctuary.

### Giving Tree

Our annual Giving Tree partnership with the Child Protection & Permanency Unit (formerly named the Truancy Initiative) is going virtual! Visit the sign up genius in the email newsletter or scan the News & Events QR code below.

### Church Staff Open House Christmas Party

Join Mia, Emily, Sarah, and Hannah for an open house Christmas party on December 21 from 12-2 at the church. Please RSVP to Hannah so we can plan food and beverages appropriately.

### Zoom Coffee Hour

Join us for Zoom Coffee Hour at 11:20 AM. Meeting ID is **3147215060** (church phone number) and the passcode is **coffee**.



News  
& Events



Give  
Online

## Share the Gift of Christmas

As you prepare your list this Advent & Christmas season,  
please remember the giving opportunities at FCC:

**The Clara B. & Paul S. McElroy  
and Tevis Huber & William Stanley Mellish Scholarship Funds**  
(providing scholarships for students at Eden Seminary)

**The Molly Suzanne Beavers Scholarship Fund**  
(educational assistance for FCC members)

**The UCC Christmas Fund**  
(One of the Special Mission Offerings of the United Church of Christ,  
supporting UCC clergy in times of financial or other crisis)

**Make a gift of a Poinsettia**  
to brighten our Sanctuary: \$30 suggested offering

Please complete this form and turn it in to the church office **by December 15**  
to be included in the December 19 and Christmas Eve worship bulletins.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Christmas Gift: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make all checks payable to First Congregational Church  
with the designation in the memo.**

McElroy Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_ In Honor/Memory/Celebration (circle one) of:

Mellish Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_ In Honor/Memory/Celebration (circle one) of:

Beavers Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_ In Honor/Memory/Celebration (circle one) of:

UCC Christmas Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_ In Honor/Memory/Celebration (circle one) of:

Poinsettia \$ \_\_\_\_\_ In Honor/Memory/Celebration (circle one) of:



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you are welcome here.*

**Our Ministry Team:**

**Dr. Sarah Bereza** (MM, MA, PhD), Minister of Music  
(sbereza@firstcongregational.org)

**Anne Chao**, Preschool Director  
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**Mehran Moslehikhah**, Maintenance

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**Emily Stokes** (MAPS), Minister of Children & Families  
(estokes@firstcongregational.org)

**Rev. Mia White** (MDiv, MATS), Senior Minister  
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