

ADVENT IN PLAIN SIGHT

Finding the magic of Christmas in ordinary objects.

FIFTH AVE. UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
323 South 5th Avenue, West Bend WI 53095



Second Sunday of Advent ~ December 10, 2023

Brett & Mary Barnett, Advent Readers
Kelly Louk, Liturgist
Deanna Gibeau, Organist
Rev. Clarissa Martinelli, Senior Pastor

JOIN US IN PERSON OR ONLINE ~ Sundays, 9:30 A.M.

WELCOME TO FIFTH AVE. UMC

We Are Glad You Are Here! We are so thankful that you have joined us today for Worship. We would love to get to know you and help you get to know us. Join us following worship for Fellowship Hour. There will be yummy refreshments and coffee and lots of *friendly faces*.

***Note: L - denotes worship "Leader"; P - denotes "People"**

~FAITH ON THE GO~

You can contact Pastor Clarissa at any time: you're going into the hospital; you would like a prayer said for you; you are not able to come to church for more than a month; you have a question or concern about something at church; your conscience is troubling you and you want assurance of God's grace; you're wrestling with a spiritual issue or have a question about something the Bible says; you have a friend or relative who wants to know more about Jesus; fellowship with the Pastor. This is not an exhaustive list. You can certainly contact Pastor Clarissa at other times too. In addition to Pastor Clarissa, Ellen Johnson, as our Lay Servant, is available to assist you in these needs as well. Their contact information:

Pastor Clarissa: 847-721-1826; Ms. Ellen Johnson: 262-339-7673.

~GATHERING GOD'S PEOPLE~

PRELUDE:

"Prayer"

J. Carleton Drew

GREETING:

Pastor: This morning “Advent in Plain Sight” draw our attention to: **TEARS**. As we prepare for Jesus’ birth and Christ’s coming, looking ahead to the promised new thing that God is surely doing, I cannot help but look back, often with **TEARS**, **TEARS** of joy and **TEARS** of loss. **TEARS** of longing, too. In this worship experience, we are reminded of all the saints who shaped our lives and our faith, husband, wives and partners, grandparents and parents, children, and friends, all of whom envelope us in a spirit of love that bring **TEARS** of joy. Come as we joyfully share our abundant harvest of hard-won faith with the world.

~CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY~

Reader: This Sunday we light the second candle, the candle of **PEACE**. We light it knowing full well that peace is elusive, and in some parts of the world, it is almost completely absent. Yet in this season of Advent, we trust that God is never absent from us. God is always preparing something new. And even where there is war and discord, whether between countries, within families, or within our own hearts, God is present, gently leading us to new possibilities.

All: Loving God, in this time of preparation and planning, we thank you for the Hope and Peace, you unfailingly offer us. Show us the creative power of Hope. Teach us the Peace that comes from justice. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you that we may walk in the light of Christ.

Reader: Welcome Christ into your heart and go forth in **Hope** and **Peace**.

Advent Hymn: “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” vs. 2 UMH 211

CENTERING MUSIC: “Without Seeing You” David Haas

***CALL TO WORSHIP: (Responsively)**

L: In these darkening days,

P: we come seeking peace.

L: We seek serenity within ourselves.

P: We seek harmony within our families.

L: We seek goodwill among our neighbors.

P: We seek a ceasefire among all nations.

L: We seek not just the absence of conflict,

P: But the presence of shalom—

L: the abiding peace

P: the healing life

L: the unrelenting justice

P: that God calls us to in Christ.

All: Let us worship with Divine hope

***OPENING PRAYER: (Unison)**

All: 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. Raise our heads in expectation, that we may yearn for the coming day of the Lord and stand without blame before your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

***CALL TO CONFESSION: (Unison)**

All: With the weepers we weep. With the warriors we yearn for peace. With the exiles we wander far from home, for our hearts wander far from you. We live in an uncertain world—time and again we turn to people who promise us security. But God, you are our only source of safety. Help us turn to you, our heart's true home. Call us again and lead us home. Author of peace, teach us to seek our peace in you. Source of every blessing, forgive us for the multitude of our transgressions. Rekindle a spirit of love and self-discipline within us, through Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.

Silent confession.

***ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS: (Responsively)**

L: By the mercy and grace of our Good God, may we live in peace with one another for we have been forgiven and Christ welcomes us as a parent welcomes home a long-lost child; loved and forgiven.

All: Alleluia! Amen!

***OPENING HYMN: “There’s Something About That Name” x2 UMH 171**

EcuMen Choir: Dave Bertelsen, Director

“Beautiful Star of Bethlehem

“Children Go Where I Send Thee”

**Christopher
Crocker**

~WE PROCLAIM~

***PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION – 2 Timothy 1:3-10 (Unison)**

L: May we be people of living faith. May we live as people of gospel power. May we embody the spirit of self-discipline and love—the spirit that is ours by the grace and power of God, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

All: I am grateful to God—whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did—when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. For this reason, I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands, for God did not give us a spirit of fear but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline. Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his

prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, in the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace, and this grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

L: The Word of God for the People of God.

P: Thanks be to God.

SERMON:

“ADVENT IN PLAIN SIGHT - TEARS”

Pastor Clarissa

~PRAYERS, JOYS & CONCERNS~

Pastor: God of all goodness:

People: hear our prayer.

~PASTORAL PRAYER~

Pastor: Merciful and Patient God, how we must try your patience. We rush through the seasons of our lives as though we had a mighty schedule to keep. We plot out our days, minute by minute, crowding each moment with tasks, stresses, and pressures. And we begin to notice the growing darkness and anxiety in our lives. We proclaim boldly each year that we will not let ourselves get so caught up in the commercial pressures and demands and yet, here we are, back in the same old trap of "not enough time; not enough energy". The very plans we weave become bonds which imprison us. Help us bind ourselves to you, loving God. Help us slow down and reflect on the many ways in which you bless us. Let us drink deeply of your peace. Remind us again of the most precious gift of all, the gift of loving relationship between you and your Creation. May we cherish the people and the peaceful moments you offer to us. As we have lifted before you our joys and concerns, so lift our spirits to remember that you are always with us, offering your healing touch and your compassionate care. Help us to place our trust in you, for we ask it in Jesus' Name. Amen.

All: 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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

~INVITATION TO SHARING OUR GIFTS, TITHES, & OFFERINGS~

***DOXOLOGY:**

“Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow”

UMH 94

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise God, the source of all our gifts! Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts! Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

OFFERTORY PRAYER:

All: God of peace, complete in us the good work you have started. As you refine us, melt our cold hearts, mold our lives, and nurture us into the good stewards you would have us be. May giving these gifts be a part of that process. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN:**

“Shalom to You” x2

UMH 666

~SENDING FORTH/BENEDICTION~

L God has given us a spirit of power and love.

All: Let us go forth into the world in the power of God’s Spirit.

Pastor: Go forth from this place an awakened people, aware of the world’s darkness, yet reaching for the light. Go forth from this place an expectant people, conscious of judgment in our midst, yet welcoming God’s new order and justice. Go forth from this place a serving people, sensing anew the pain so many bears, yet confident God will bring healing, even through you. Go forth from this place opening yourselves as channels of God’s grace, for we have heard good news and we have been empowered to share it.

***POSTLUDE:**

“The Eternal Song”

James Southbridge

Please join us for Fellowship Hour in the lounge.