

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

Third Sunday of Advent ~ December 17, 2023

Marolyn Kell and Linda Smeaton , Advent Readers

Alana Dalton, 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:

"Andante"

M. Bartlett

GREETING:

Pastor: Our journey with “Advent in Plain Sight” continues as we put on a **BELT**. Perhaps when you hear the word “**BELTS**” at this time of year, you imagine the pictures of Santa Claus with his black **BELT** with a large buckle. Or, maybe you think about how you have to loosen your own **BELT** this time of year as you allow yourself to enjoy more sweets than usual. Come as we explore this object on “rejoice” Sunday! All are invited; all are welcome!

~CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY~

L: We have lit the first two candles, one for **HOPE** and one for **PEACE**. Today we light the third candle, the candle of **JOY**. This should be the easy one, because **JOY** is all around us--in the children, the lights, the music, the gathering together. But how often do we let our preparations--or our memories--push **JOY** to the side? **JOY** is like an underground spring that wells up within us, but **JOY** is also a choice, an attitude. Like a muscle, it needs to be exercised. So today we open ourselves to **JOY**, trusting that God has already planted it in us...all we need to do is give it care and offer to share.

All: Loving God, we open ourselves to you, trusting that this is how you made us: you created us for JOY-filled hearts and lives. Show us the creative power of HOPE. Teach us the PEACE that comes from justice. Fill us with the kind of JOY that cannot be contained but must be shared. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you that we may walk in the light of Christ.

L: Rejoice in God always, rejoice. For God has created you with the capacity for **JOY**. Trust in God's good will for all of creation and open yourself to God gentle, transforming love. Go forth in **HOPE**, **PEACE**, and **JOY**.

Advent Hymn: “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” vs. 3 UMH 211

CENTERING MUSIC: “Nino Lindo (Child So Lovely)” Traditional Venezuelan

CALL TO WISCONSIN BELOVED COMMUNITY INITIATIVE:

Message From Bishop Jung, <https://youtu.be/m6QInbPRpHE>

*THE WESLEY COVENANT PRAYER: (Unison)

“I am no longer my own, but thine. Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt. Put me to doing, put me to suffering. Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee, exalted for thee or brought low for thee. Let me be full, let me be empty. Let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal. And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.”

*OPENING HYMN: “What a Friend We Have in Jesus” UMH 526

~WE PROCLAIM~

***PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION – Isaiah 11: 1-5 (Unison)**

L: Calm us now, O Lord, into a quietness that heals and listens. Open wounded hearts to the balm of your Word. Speak to us in clear tones so that we might feel our spirits leap for joy and skip with hope as your resurrection witnesses. **Amen.**

**All: A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow[a] out of his roots.**

**The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.
His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.**

**He shall not judge by what his eyes see
or decide by what his ears hear,
but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor
and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth.
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips, he shall kill the wicked.
Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.**

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

P: Thanks be to God.

CHANCEL CHOIR

“The Prophecy”

Dave Bertelsen, Director

SERMON:

“ADVENT IN PLAIN SIGHT - BELTS”

Pastor Clarissa

~THE GREAT THANKSGIVING~

L: The God who is coming to us be with you!

P: **And also with you!**

L: Lift your hearts to the One who turns barren deserts into seas of grace.

P: **We lift them to the Lord!**

L: Beloved of God, let us come to the table with songs of joy on our lips. (TMS, adapted)

**All: O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King, the triumphs of His grace!**

L: It is right to give you thanks and praise, Great God of the Coming Dawn, for in each new day you surprise the earth with splendor. Your Spirit moves across the face of the waters and brings forth life. At the dawn of all things in a garden you worked the earth. Elbow deep in mud you fashioned us, gifted us, gave us work to do. Made from the earth, made by your hand, we forgot who we were, we

forgot who you were, and we tried to remake ourselves. We rejected your love and fell into sin and death. Yet even in our darkness you continued to speak light and life.

L: And so, we come to live on the edge of your new and promised day. We come to wait for your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. His coming was announced by wilderness prophets and Christ arrived to the song of angels in the choir stall of a manger. In Jesus you not only took our name but our flesh. Christ was the One promised. He announced the new day and the acceptable year when blind folks would see, and poor folks would rejoice when captives would be set free and the oppressed would once more walk upright in liberty. In stories Jesus spoke of waiting bridesmaids and prodigal sons, with tears and compassion he brought a dead man to life and gave a woman at a well the living water she sought. With anger he overturned tables and challenged the powerful. On the cross he revealed the power of weakness and in the emptiness of the tomb Jesus gave us a glimpse of your tomorrow that does not end in death.

*All: He speaks, and listening to his voice, new life the dead receive;
The mournful, broken hearts rejoice, the humble poor believe.
He breaks the power of canceled sin, he sets the prisoner free;
his blood can make the foulest clean; his blood availed for me.*

Pastor: On the night when he was betrayed Jesus sat at a table with his friends. He took bread, blessed it, broke it, served it to them, and said, "Take this. Eat it. It is my body, given for you. Do this to remember me." In the same way he took the cup, blessed it, served it to them, and said, "Drink from this every one of you. This is my blood poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sin. Do this to remember me."

And so we remember. And so we offer our praise and thanks and our very selves As a holy and living sacrifice in union with Christ's offering for us. We offer our lives as Jesus remembered that he offered his for our own.

*All: I felt my Lord's atoning blood close to my soul applied;
Me, me he loved, the Son of God, for me, for me he died!*

Pastor: May the gift of your Spirit, Advent's Hope, Peace, and Joy be poured out on these simple gifts of the bread and the cup, and on those who come simply to find healing and hope. And when we have been fed by your surprising grace and filled with your peace, may we go forth into the world, where our weak hands will become calloused by compassion; where we will bend our feeble knees, reaching down to lift up the fallen; where we will become fountains of living water for those parched by the wilderness and desserts of their lives. Then, when sorrow and sighing have been chased away from us, and we gather with all generations around your Table in heaven, everlasting joy will be our song, and gracious hope will be our refrain, as we sing to you through all eternity, God in Community, Holy in One.

*All: Glory to God, and praise and love be ever, ever given,
By saints below and saints above, the church in earth and heaven. Amen.*

~PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION~

All: From generation to generation, we are nurtured at the Lord's Table. As we once again tell your story of forgiveness and love, we proclaim our adoption in God's family tree of

kings, carpenters, foreigners, overlooked women, enslaved people, and the remembered thief. May our lives testify that there is a place for everyone in your story of forgiveness and salvation. Amen.

~PRAYERS, JOYS & CONCERNS~

Pastor: God of all goodness:

People: hear our prayer.

~PASTORAL PRAYER~

Pastor: Brothers and sisters, as we joyfully await the glorious coming of the Christ, let us pray for the needs of the church, our community, and the world. *(silence)* God of joy and exultation, you strengthen what is weak; you enrich the poor and give hope to those who live in fear. Look upon our needs this day. Make us grateful for the good news of salvation and keep us faithful in your service until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives for ever and ever. Let us pray in unison the prayer Jesus taught us:

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:

L: Sometimes we wonder how generous we should be. John the Baptist was very clear: share what you have so everyone has enough. Do not give into greed. Be content. I wonder what that could look like here at Fifth Ave. United Methodist Church? What **JOY** would that kind of generosity bring us? Friends, let us trust God to be sufficient in all things as we share our gifts for our community of faith and for God’s work in the world through our ministry and mission.

All: God of JOY, may giving these gifts be OUR deepest JOY. You are the God of abundance, and on this day, we give thanks knowing you are our salvation; we will trust and will not be afraid, for you are our hope and our strength. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN:** “Hark! the Herald Angels Sing” UMH 240

~SENDING FORTH/BENEDICTION~

L Jesus! The name that charms our fears, that bids our sorrows cease; ‘tis music in the sinner’s ears, ‘tis life, and health, and peace. My gracious Master and my God, assist me to proclaim, to spread through all the earth abroad the honors and glory of thy name.

Pastor: As you go forth from this place, may you be inspired both by God's mysterious darkness and by God's marvelous light. May you be called beyond your comfort zone to share God's Advent **JOY** with those to whom joy is a stranger. May you be Christ to a world in desperate need of Christ.

***POSTLUDE:**

"Noel"

Gordon Young

Please join us for Fellowship Hour in the lounge.