Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 19, 2021

Rev. Jennifer Amy-Dressler

Congregation is invited to respond as indicated in **bold**

* Please stand as you are able

Prelude

* Prelude

Of the Father’s Love Begotten

arr. Mark Hayes

Welcome

* Prayer of Confession (from Psalm 80:1-7)

Shepherd of Israel, you yearn to guide and protect us.

**But we pull away, intent on our own wishes, our own wisdom; we insist on doing things our way.**

Lord of hosts, how long will our prayers fail before you?

**We beg and plead and cannot understand why you won’t do as we want.**

**We speak and speak, but do not wish to listen.**

Tears are our bread and drink; repentance comes to us slow, and is hard work.

**Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we might be saved.**

(silent prayer)

* Words of Grace and Sharing the Peace of Christ

* Song

“It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,

For lo, the days are hastening on, by prophet bards foretold,

from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold;

when with the ever-circling years comes round the age of gold;

“Peace on the earth, good will to all, great news of joy we bring.”

When peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,

The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing,

and all the world send back the song which now the angels sing.
A Time With Kids – Lighting of the 4\textsuperscript{th} Advent Candle

Moment for Mission

The Christmas Fund

A Time of Prayer

Sharing Our Joys and Concerns

A Time of Personal Prayer

A Time of Responsive Prayer

\textit{“God, in your grace,”}

\textit{“You hear our prayer.”}

Scripture

Luke 1, selected verses

Message

There are No Small Parts

Song

\textit{“In the Bleak Midwinter”}

\begin{verbatim}
In the bleak mid-winter, frost-y wind made moan,
Our God transcends all heaven,
Angels and arch-angels may have gathered there,
What can I offer, poor as I am?

earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
heaven and earth shall flee a-way when Christ comes to reign;
cher-ubim and ser-a-phant thronged the mid-night air;
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.

Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter a stable place sufficed the
But his mother only, in her maid-en bliss,
If I were a wise one, I would do my part; but

in the bleak mid-winter, long a-go.
soy-ereign God al-might-y, Je-sus Christ.
wor-shiped the be-loved with a kiss.
what I can I offer; all my heart.
\end{verbatim}

A Time of Offering

Invitation

Offertory

\textit{O Little Town of Bethlehem} \hspace{1cm} arr. Joel Raney

Prayer of Gratitude and Dedication

Even when it is scary, Holy One, we are grateful that we matter, even in the big picture. So use these gifts. Inhabit our moment-by-moment living. Let us always choose to work toward the fulfillment of your gracious dreams for your creation. Amen.
Celebrating the Sacrament of Holy Communion, including The Prayer Jesus Taught:

Our Father, who is in heaven: hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your 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 yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

* Song

"Canticle of the Turning"

1 My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the God of my heart is great, and my spirit sings of the wondrous things that you me, and your mercy will last from the depths of the past to the stone. Let the king beware for your justice tears every fast: God's mercy must deliver us from the bring to the ones who wait. You fixed your sight on your end of the age to be. Your very name puts the tyrant from his throne. The hungry poor shall conqueror's crushing grasp. This saving word that our servant's plight, and my weakness you did not spurn, so from proud to shame, and to those who would for you yearn, you will weep no more, for the food they can never earn; there are forebears heard is the promise which holds us bound, till the east to west shall my name be blest. Could the world be about to turn? show your might, put the strong to flight, for the world is about to turn. tables spread; every mouth be fed, for the world is about to turn. spear and rod can be crushed by God, who is turning the world around.

Refrain

My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice burn. Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is about to turn.

Announcements

Blessing
Welcome to Open Table United Church of Christ!

No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, YOU are welcome here.

Welcome to Open Table United Church of Christ. We are an open table where all are welcome. We celebrate diversity, nourish and serve others, work for justice, and grow together in faith through the teachings of Jesus Christ and the voice of the still-speaking God.

Open Table UCC firmly believes in science and is following directives from state and federal agencies. To keep people as safe as possible, those coming into the church building must wear a face mask and remain socially distant from staff and others present who are not from their household. We are now holding hybrid worship, meaning you are welcome to come to in person worship or join us through Zoom in the comfort of your home, with the exception of the last Sunday of the month which is a Zoom only offering.

Today, we will share the meal of Holy Communion. At Open Table UCC, we celebrate an open table where all are invited to eat the bread and drink the wine or juice as we remember the life and death and resurrection of Jesus and offer thanksgiving for God’s amazing love. Communion will be served in individual packets. Those at home are invited to gather some bread, crackers, water, juice or whatever you have at hand.

We hope you find our church family warm and welcoming, and that you experience worship as meaningful and spiritually uplifting. We are an Open and Affirming congregation, and we take seriously our commitment to create a worshipping community where ALL people feel welcome, affirmed, and valued. Please stay and join us after worship for an opportunity for fellowship. And please, when you are ready, share with us your contact information so that we can keep you up-to-date on all the exciting things happening at Open Table UCC!

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Today

10:00 a.m.  Hybrid Worship
11:00 a.m.  Fellowship Hour

12/21 - Tuesday

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  Pastor’s Office Hours
6:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.  Youth Outlook

12/22 - Wednesday

12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.  Pastor’s Office Hours
6:00 p.m.  Choir Rehearsal

12/23 - Thursday

7:00 p.m.  Hybrid Other People’s Poetry

12/24 - Friday

Office Closed - Merry Christmas
Our December Mission of the month is the Christmas Fund: caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years by providing extra monies for pensions, health insurance, emergency grants, and a Christmas “Thank You” gift to low-income retired UCC ministers. Emergency assistance to clergy and lay employees and their families is also available. When giving to this mission please write Christmas Fund in the memo section of your check, if giving online through our website; uccottawa.org ("Donate") or Open Table UCC Ottawa Facebook page ("Learn More"), make a note in the memo or notes section that the donation is for the Christmas Fund.

Christmas Eve ‘Time with Kids’ kits are available for pick-up following worship, or any time during office hours through Thursday. If you need to arrange a different time, or need to have a kit delivered, please contact the office asap. The kits will enhance kids’ Zoom participation in our 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service.

Please contact Wendy in the office by Monday, December 20 in order to have your loved one listed in the Christmas Eve service bulletin; 815-433-0771 or office@opentableottawa.org. You can sponsor one of the silk poinsettias in our worship space for $15 but a donation is not necessary to include your loved one in the Christmas Eve bulletin.

The office will be closed for Christmas on Friday, December 24 and Monday December 27. We will be closed for New Year's on Friday, December 31. Have a beautiful Christmas and Happy New Year!

Please note that next Sunday is the last Sunday of the month, worship will be Zoom only.

Please remember that if you would like to make a contribution to Open Table UCC for the 2021 tax year, the church must receive that contribution in 2021 prior to December 30 as December 31 is the Federal observance of New Year’s Day and the office will be closed. Donations/contributions received after December 30 will be credited toward the 2022 tax year. If mailing a check, please allow sufficient time for the donation to be delivered to the church before the 30.

2022 offering envelopes are available in the living room area of Fellowship Hall. You are welcome to pick up a set on Sunday or during office hours.

PFLAG Ottawa is taking a break during this Christmas Season and resumes January 23 at 2:30 p.m. PFLAG Ottawa meets the fourth Sunday of the month and provides confidential support, education and advocacy for LGBTQ people, their families and allies. For more information please speak with Ken Brown; 815-830-7682 or kendempsiebrown@gmail.com or visit PFLAG Ottawa’s Facebook page.
Coffee Fellowship resumes in January. We’ll follow the "active masking" protocol, i.e., remove your mask to sip or to take a bite, and replace your mask to chew, swallow, speak, and breathe. We continue to monitor covid case rates and adjust protocols accordingly, recognizing that we each have personal responsibility for what activities we will or will not engage in. A sign-up sheet for hosts is in the worship area (thank you, Dawn Haggard, for hosting on January 2!)

In May we began the Building the Future process in which we committed to gathering information from everyone in order to later present a plan, guiding our ministries and mission for the next five years. On Sunday, January 16, 2022 there will be a congregational update regarding the Strategic Plan, then on Sunday, February 6, 2022 there will be a semi-

The Christmas Fund
Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund

In 2020, gifts to the Christmas Fund enabled:

- Monthly pension supplementation for 276 retired clergy and lay employees ($1,180,187)
- Health benefit supplementation for 89 retired clergy and lay employees ($27,008)
- Emergency grants for 96 individuals and families ($214,649)
- Christmas “Thank You” gift checks to 504 retired clergy and lay employees ($252,000)
annual meeting to vote on that plan. Please save these dates and plan to be in attendance at the January meeting to share your thoughts and then attend in February to vote on the plan.

One of our goals for the New Year is YOU! We want to stay current with you. To help us stay in touch, please confirm or update your information with the office at your convenience. It is always good to verify an email, phone number and address in the event that we may have gotten something wrong or something has changed. You can contact the office at 815-433-0771 or office@opentableottawa.org.

The K of Cs (401 W. Main St.) is offering a free community dinner today from 12:00 - 3:00 p.m., if you know of someone who is need of a free meal please pass this information along. They will be serving prime rib, turkey, ham, all of the trimmings and beverages and desserts.

*From the Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ*

**The Movement toward Racial Justice** is a UCC initiative to ignite action and inspire generations after us in the work of racial justice in the UCC through the sharing of stories. Read the stories of good antiracism advocacy, activism and healing work around the nation, done by individuals, congregations, Associations and Conferences. Visit [https://jointhemovementucc.org/](https://jointhemovementucc.org/) for more information and to sign up for the newsletter, to encourage and inspire your commitment to work for racial justice.

The 2015 General Synod Resolution to support a Just Peace in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict calls upon members of the UCC to "boycott goods identified as being produced in or using the facilities of illegal settlements located in the occupied Palestinian territories." The UCC is encouraging a boycott of Pillsbury products (crescent rolls, biscuits, pie crusts, cookie dough, etc.). Much of this product comes from a General Mills factory in the Atarot Industrial Zone in occupied East Jerusalem. Aside from possible exploitation of labor, lax regulation, and environmental costs, international businesses in illegally occupied territories further erode the rights of Palestinians for a just peace. To learn more visit: [https://www.ucc.org/boycott-pillsbury-this-holiday-baking-season/](https://www.ucc.org/boycott-pillsbury-this-holiday-baking-season/).

Office Hours: Mon. and Fri. 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.  
Tues. - Thurs. 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
Phone: 815-433-0771  
Email: office@opentableottawa.org  
Address: 910 Columbus St., Ottawa, IL 61350  
OTUCC Website: [www.uccottawa.org](http://www.uccottawa.org)  
Facebook: Open Table UCC Ottawa  
Pastor's Office Hours:  
Tuesdays 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
Wednesdays 12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
[ pastor@opentableottawa.org](mailto:pastor@opentableottawa.org)
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 7 pm
910 Columbus St.
All are welcome!
Corner of Jackson and Columbus Streets
Enter on Jackson St.
815-433-0771
office@opentableottawa.org