**Salem United Church of Christ Moorestown**

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**Ministers of the Church – Every Member of Salem UCC**

**First Sunday of Advent**

**November 29, 2020**

**PRELUDE**

**WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH**

**Reader One:** If ever there was a year we needed Advent, this is the year. We hardly know how to describe the year we have lived through. We hesitate to reflect on all that has happened in 2020. All we know is that nothing seems right, nothing seems like it used to be, nothing. We need Advent!

**Reader Two:** The prophet Isaiah cried out for us, “O that you would tear open the heavens and come down … To make your name known … so that nations might tremble at your presence.” So tear through the chaos, O Lord, and come down to us again. We long to be your people, a people of hope.

(light first candle)

**Reader One:** We light this first candle as a sign of our hope. Hope that God can meet us, even in this challenging time. Hope that God still sees us, though we feel we are lost in the rubble. Let this light be the guide that brings us to Emmanuel once more.

**“Come, O Come, Emmanuel” *(1st verse)***

*O come, O come, Emmanuel, And ransom captive Israel, That mourns in lonely exile here,  
Until the Son of God appear. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel. Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: Come, people of faith, come join your hearts in worship.  
**All: We hear the invitation and hunger to join in the feast.**  
One: God is faithful and calls us into the loving presence of Jesus, who is the Christ.  
**All: We come to join with those who watch and wait and celebrate. Amen.**

**OPENING PRAYER**

**All: O Holy God, maker of every thought and thing, open our hearts this day,  
that we may know your presence in this time and place. Restore us now,  
so we may see the special gift and calling that you have for each of us.  
Mold us into the people you would have us be. Help us be ready for your promised return, when you will be among us and within us with new, creative, healing energy. Amen.**

**HYMN #153** *“Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus” (1st verse)*

*Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set Thy people free; from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee. Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art; Dear Desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.*

**DRAMATIC READING** “Isaiah’s Message to the People” *(based on Isaiah 64:1-9)*

**A TIME OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE**

**All: Holy God, you are the Potter and we are the clay. But we are aware that**

**today, and yesterday, and the day before that, we have lived as though it’s**

**only about us. We have lived as though we are the potters, not the clay.**

**Holy One,  hear now our thoughts, our regrets, our confessions for the times  
 when we have acted selfishly, as though only what we want, matters.**

*(silence is kept)*

One:O God, why did we think that we could be in charge and it would turn out okay?

We come longing for a change in our hearts, for healing, for new opportunities to get

the order of things right. With this confession, we remember that the right order is……

**All: You are the Potter, and we are the clay. You forgive us, shape us, mold us**

**and renew us. Thanks be to your Holy Name!**

**PASSING OF THE PEACE!**

Leader: Peace be with you.

**People: And also with you!**

Leader: Share the peace of Christ with one another using the comments on the Facebook

page.

**TODAY’S GOSPEL LESSON Mark 13:24-37**

**CHILDREN’S MESSAGE**

**TODAY’S MESSAGE**

**OFFERING** *(for those worshipping virtually)–*I invite you at this time to consider ways to express your thankfulness for all that God provides by giving of your time and talents in new ways in this time. I also ask you to consider how you will offer your tithes and offerings to support the ministry of our church at this time as well – some options are: on-line giving available through our website or your smartphone, mail check in weekly or set aside your offering each week and mail it in monthly. Thank you.

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION.**

One: Generous God, we ask your blessing on all the gifts of time, talent and money that will be offered in the coming week.We ask that you take our gifts and mold them, craft them and shape them into those things that bring your hope to all the world. Amen.

**JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**PASTORAL PRAYER & THE LORD’S PRAYER** (debts and debtors)

**COMMUNION SONG** *– “Table of Love”*

*(Words and Music by Josh Elson & Andra Moran/AMMO Music / Wet Cement Songs, copyright 1999, used with permission of Convergence Music)*

**CELEBRATION OF THE LORD”S SUPPER**

*(adapted from Communion Prayers by Katie Barrett Todd & Mason Todd)*

One: God of hope, we embark on this Advent journey with longing and anticipation of what

is to come. An excited electricity courses within us as we seek the hope that only you

can bring. Grant us the courage that flows from hope, the courage of expectation, the

courage of belief in a better way.

**All: Come, Jesus, come!**

One: God of peace, you ask us to live into the promise of being your covenant people. We

come to you this day with a peace which passes all understanding knowing that you

can do all things, and yet you choose to use us as your agents of peace. Grant us

strength and fortitude to be your peacemakers.

**All: Come, Jesus, come!**

One: God of joy, we too often overlook or dismiss the great joy in our lives, because we are

too busy planning the next best thing, yet in this Advent season, we ask that you slow

us down, move against the grain of the glitz and glamour and business of our days to

appreciate the fullness of life, the joyful existence you have given to us.

**All: Come, Jesus, come!**

One: God of love, in our brokenness you did not turn away from us, rather you came into

the world as one of us, to see and hear and feel all of our hopes and dreams for peace

and joy. You came to show us what love truly means. Grant us hearts that can be

changed to bear the love you have bestowed upon us.

**All: Come, Jesus, come!**

**All: We celebrate the gift of Christ in the bread and fruit of the vine. May they be**

**for us a visible sign of the invisible grace showed on the cross and showered**

**on us daily. May they strengthen us for the task of being Christ’s hands and**

**feet, displaying hope, peace, joy, and love to the world. Amen.**

***Words of Institution***

One: We remember that on the night of betrayal and desertion, while among friends, as

they shared a meal, Jesus took bread, and after giving thanks, he broke the bread,

and gave it to the disciples, saying: "This is my body which is broken for you. Do this

in remembrance of me." In the same way, Jesus also took the cup, after supper,

saying; "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it,

in remembrance of me".

***The Blessing***

One: Holy God, bless now, by your Word and Spirit, both us and these gifts of bread and

wine, that are gathered in each of our worship settings this day, that in receiving them

at this time, and offering here our faith and praise, we may be united with Christ and

one another, and remain faithful to the tasks he sets before us.

**All: As we share this bread and cup, strengthen our hope in the promises of this**

**season, and give us the courage to live in the way of Christ. Amen.**

One: He whose table was open to all is now present in this bread.

He whose word welcomed friend and stranger offers friendship through this cup.

These are the gifts of God for the people of God.

Come, for all things are now ready.

***Distribution of the Elements***

The Bread of Life, given for you.

The Cup of Blessing poured out for you.

***Prayer of Thanksgiving***

One: Let us pray

**All: Generous God, you have fed us at your table of love.**

**Set us on fire with your Spirit that when Christ comes again**

**we may shine like lights before his face; lights that brought hope, peace, joy and love into the world. Amen**

**HYMN #163** *“All Earth is Hopeful” (verses 1-3)*

*All earth is hopeful, the Savior comes at last! Furrows lie open for God's creative task:  
this, the labor of people who struggle to see how God's truth and justice set everybody free.*

*People of Israel, you heard the prophet tell: “A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel”, she conceived him “God with us, “our brother, whose birth restores hope and courage to children of this earth.*

*Mountains and valleys will have to be prepared; new highways opened new protocols declared. Almost here! God is nearing, in beauty and grace! All clear every gateway, in haste, come out in haste!*

**BENEDICTION**

One: Stay Awake! Be alert! Christ comes when you least expect it.

     In the beggar on the street,

In the loved one at our table,

In the stranger in our midst,

     In the refugee on our shores,

Christ comes. Be alert!

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

The love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,

      Be with you now and always. Amen!

**THREE FOLD AMEN**

**POSTLUDE**

*\* Portions of this worship service were adapted from “season of the spirit” , “reworship”, ministry matters, “thepastorsworkshop.com”*

**ACOLYTE: Katelynn Miller.**

**PRESENTED TO THE GLORY OF GOD: The FLOWERS in memory of Loved Ones by Sandra Bauder. The CANDLE in memory of my friend, Jeanie by Sandra Bauder.**

**THE ALTAR GUILD is offering red or white poinsettia plants for Christmas. The cost is $10.00**

**per plant. Order deadline is Sunday, December 6. Order forms are available in your December Newsletter. THE ALTAR GUILD HAS THE YELLOW GARBAGE BAGS TO SELL, THE COST IS $10,00/ROLL.** If you are interested, please speak to Donna Schlegel or call the church office at 610-759-1652.

**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE: Our Christmas Eve Service will be virtual only. You will find this service on Facebook or our website anytime you wish on Christmas Eve. We hope you will enjoy this service with your family. HAVE A SAFE, HEALTHY AND MERRY CHRISTMAS.**

**COVID CHRISTMAS CAROLING.** Join us the 4th Sunday in Advent, December 20th at 2 PM (weather permitting) for an outdoor time of fellowship, storytelling, singing Christmas carols and decorating the Christmas tree in the courtyard with bird friendly ornaments. Please make or purchase a bird friendly ornament and bring it with you to decorate the tree. We will gather outside in the front of the red sanctuary doors and in the courtyard. Social distancing and masks covering your mouth and nose will be required. Hope you can join us for this “in person” gathering. Remember to dress for the weather. The gathering

will last approximately ½ hour. If standing for ½ hour is difficult for you, please bring your own chair.

**MAKE YOUR OWN ADVENT WREATH:** Today is the first Sunday in Advent. Since we will be gathering this Advent season virtually, or you will be using the home worship mailer, Pastor Kaye invites you to create your own Advent wreath to use on Sunday mornings during the virtual worship services. All you really need are 5 candles one for each Sunday in Advent and one for Christmas Eve. You can arrange 4 candles in a circle and place one in the center of the circle for the Christ candle. This might be a nice family project. See your December Newsletter for further information.

**2021 OFFERING ENVELOPES:** If you won’t be at the Covid Christmas Caroling to pick up your envelopes, please call the church office to schedule a time to pick them up. 610-759-1652.

**We are looking for people who would like to help with recording the service or virtual worship. Please speak to Ed Taylor or Vicki Troxell, if you are interested.**

**SEARCHING FOR A TREASURER:** We are still looking for someone to be treasurer of Salem. Please speak to Vicki or any Consistory member, if you are interested in the position or if you have questions about the position.