**Salem United Church of Christ Moorestown**

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

**Second Sunday of Advent**

**December 6, 2020**

**PRELUDE**

**WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH**

**Reader One:** Our lists are long, even in this challenging time that we are living in. And we want to do it right, we want to be safe, but we want to be able to enjoy the season. We’ve got work to do to put right what has gone wrong, to heal what is broken, to mend the relationships, and to prepare for the company that will come.

**Reader Two:** The prophet Isaiah reminded us that there is work to be done. “Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” When God comes in, then healing is to be found, but we need to make the way; we need to open the door into our lives.

**Reader One:** So, we light this candle as a sign of our faith that the God we worship is not far from us and that we can clear the way for God to come and dwell with us.

**“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” *(2nd verse)***

*O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here; disperse the*

*gloomy clouds of night, and death’s dark shadows put to flight. Rejoice! Rejoice!*

*Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: Long ago, a voice cried out in the wilderness  
**All: Prepare the way for the Lord; make straight the pathways.**One: Something new was about to happen.  
**All: God would visit God’s people in a new way!**One: Lord, open our hearts to receive this good news!  
**All: Prepare us to be people of great faith and compassion as we look forward to**

**this wondrous event you have proclaimed to us. Amen.**

**OPENING PRAYER**

**All: God of winter and starlight, you have promised us your presence: to live among us, to right all wrongs, to bring good things to all who wait for your new day. In these dark days, we look for signs of your coming: the sounds of children at play, the music that fills our hearts with anticipation, the company of family and friends in whatever way we can gather. Open our hearts and spirits to the glorious possibilities of hope and peace to come. Help us to prepare our lives to receive you. Amen.**

**HYMN #176** *“Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates” (verses 1 and 3)*

*Lift up your heads, O mighty gates; behold, the King of glory waits;   
 the King of kings is drawing near; the Savior of the world is here!*

*Redeemer, come, I open wide my heart to you, here, Lord abide let me your inner*

*presence feel; your grace and love in me reveal.*

**DRAMATIC READING** *“Comforting Words”* *(based on Isaiah 40:1–11)*

**A TIME OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE**

**All: December is upon us, Lord, and we are on the "fast track to Christmas". Time seems to get away from us and we get trapped in the buy-wrap-send syndrome. Lord, we confess that it is easy to get involved in all these opportunities and stresses that come our way. Forgive us when we put our faith on a back burner and focus instead on pressures in our lives. Help us to take time to see your beam of direction which shines in our path, leading us to peace and hope. Clear our spirits of the frustrations and anxieties of this season, so that the Light which you are sending into the world will truly shine in and through us to others. Hear now our silent confessions.**

*(silence is kept)*

One:God’s forgiving love has been poured upon each one of us. Hear the good news!

You are healed and forgiven!

**All: Thanks be to God. Amen.**

**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 1:1-8**

**CHILDREN’S MESSAGE**

**TODAY’S MESSAGE** *“Prepare Ye the Way” (Forgive Our Handicapped Hearts)*

*(an Advent story from “Yards of Purple” by Sarah M. Foulger)*

**SOLO** *“Thy Will”*  *Ed Taylor*

**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 offer our gifts, both tangible and spiritual. We offer ourselves, our minds, and our hearts to reveal your presence in our midst. May your glory be revealed to us and in us. Amen.

**JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**SONG** – *“Drawing Nearer”*

*(Words and Music by Christopher Grundy, used with permission of Convergence Music)*

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

**HYMN #162** *“Like a Child” (all verses)*

*Like a child love would send to reveal and to mend, like a child and a friend, Jesus comes. Like a child we may find, claiming heart, soul and mind, like a child strong and kind, Jesus comes.*

*Like a child we will meet, ragged clothes, dirty feet, like a child on the street, Jesus comes. Like a child we once knew coming back into view, like a child born anew, Jesus comes.*

*Like a child born to pray and to show us the way, like a child here to stay, Jesus comes. Like a child we receive all that love can conceive, like a child we believe, Jesus comes.*

**BENEDICTION**

Be people of peace,  
 Let peace live in your heart and share the peace of Christ with all you meet.  
 Share peace by acting out of compassion and not fear.  
 Share peace by listening to all sides of the story.  
 Share peace by praying for our world.  
 In this Advent season, we need to see, feel, and share peace.  
 As you go out into the wonder of God’s creations,

Share peace and hope with those you meet. Amen.

**THREE FOLD AMEN**

**POSTLUDE**

*\* Portions of this worship service were adapted from “season of the spirit”, “reworship”, ministry matters, “liturgylink”, “Yards of Purple” by Sarah M Foulger.*

**ACOLYTE: Katelynn Miller.**

**PRESENTED TO THE GLORY OF GOD: The FLOWERS by the Jay Gilbert Family. The MEMORIAL CANDLE is burning in memory of Loved Ones by Bill and Brenda Rinker.**

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

**per plant. Order deadline is TODAY. 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:** Since we are 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 2021 offering 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.