November 29, 2020
GUIDE FOR WORSHIP

First Sunday of Advent

“I believe in the Sun: Hope for tomorrow”

Prelude

Welcome

The Call
This Advent, we are looking to hear words of comfort, of inspiration and of good news. The prophet Isaiah was writing in a time when people needed desperately to hear all of these as well. This first week, Isaiah reassures the people that good news is beginning and yet he says, “Make yourself ready! Raise your voices, change your hearts, get ready to be transformed, because now is the time.” Let us embrace hope that we can do what needs to be done to bring light into the world.

“I Believe”

Mark Miller

Gathering Prayer

Holy One, we thank you for the glimpses we catch of your gift of untiring hope. Even in the midst of fear, of challenge, of struggle— even when our view is obscured by clouds of doubt, ignite the flame of hope within us, … that we might glow with its brilliance from the inside out.

Help us face this bleak night of the soul and embrace it as a womb of rebirth.

Amen.

Lighting of the Advent Candle of Hope

Marilyn and Bob Tibbles

Gathering Song

“Come, O Long-expected Jesus”

Page 4

Children’s Time with Ms. Kim

Scripture Reading

Isaiah 40:1-5 (The Voice)

Comfort, comfort My people,” says your God. “With gentle words, tender and kind, Assure Jerusalem, this chosen city from long ago, that her battles are over.
The terror, the bloodshed, the horror of My punishing work is done. 
This place has paid for its guilt; iniquity is pardoned; 
its term of incarceration is complete. 
It has endured double the punishment it was due.”
A voice is wailing, “In the wilderness, get it ready! Prepare the way; 
make it a straight shot. The Eternal would have it so. 
Straighten the way in the wandering desert 
  to make the crooked road wide and straight for our God. 
Where there are steep valleys, treacherous descents, 
  raise the highway; lift it up; 
  bring down the dizzying heights. 
Fill in the potholes and gullies, the rough places. 
  Iron out the shoulders flat and wide. 
The Lord will be, really be, among us. 
The radiant glory of the Lord will be revealed. 
All flesh together will take it in. Believe it. 
   None other than God, the Eternal, has spoken.”

Music for Reflection

Message  
Even when the sun is not shining

Prayers of the People/Lord’s Prayer

Song of Response  
“Stillness”  
Mark Miller
Amelia Lloyd, vocalist

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Invitation to Communion  
Betsy

Communion Blessing

And the table will be wide. 
   And the welcome will be wide. 
   And the arms will open wide to gather us in. 
   And our hearts will open wide to receive. 
And we will come as children who trust there is enough. 
   And we will come unhindered and free. 
   And our aching will be met with bread. 
   And our sorrow will be met with the cup. 
   And we will open our hands to the feast without shame. 
   And we will turn toward each other without fear. 
And we will give up our appetite for despair. 
   And we will taste and know of delight. 
   And we will become bread for a hungering world. 
   And we will become drink for those who thirst. 
   And the blessed will become the blessing. 
   And everywhere will be the feast.

“Stillness” reprise

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Words of Institution

Prayer of Thanksgiving

God in this season
suspended between hope and fulfillment,
let us not forget what you have done, and continue to do.

May we be overwhelmed by your mercy,
which presents itself throughout each day.
May we be honest about the darkness within us,
and the abundance of light around us.
May we make straight the path for your goodness,
that together we may see your glory revealed.
   Amen.

Breaths of God

Blessing and Commissioning

We wait for justice
but we do not wait to work for change;

We wait for restored health
but we do not wait to work to heal;

We wait for wholeness
but we do not wait to work at binding brokenness;

We wait for peace
but we do not wait to work to eliminate hatred.

Like bells ringing out the news
that the sun still shines even on cloudy days,
fill the night left by sadness with messages of hope.
Go into your lives humming the tunes that keep that hope alive in you
and that spur you on in your work of justice and reconciliation.
Raise your voices and repeat after me…
   “do not be afraid!”
   “do not be afraid!”
   Amen!

Sending Forth Song

“I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day” vv 1, 3, 4, 5
(using inclusive language: “God” for He, “all” for men)

Sources:

Communion Blessing written by Jan Richardson: “And the Table Will Be Wide,” © Jan Richardson. janrichardson.com.
Come, O Long-expected Jesus

1. Come, O long-expected Jesus, born to set your people free.
   From our fears and sins release us; Christ, in whom our rest shall be.
   You, our strength and consolation, come salvation to impart;
   dear desire of many a nation, joy of many a long-ing heart.

2. Born your people to deliver, born a child, and yet a king.
   born to reign in us for-ever, born your gracious realm to bring.
   By your own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone.
   by your all-sufficient merit raise us to your glorious throne.

WORDS: Charles Wesley, 1744
MUSIC: Rowland H. Prichard, 1830; harm. The English Hymnal, 1906
I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day 187

And He will be their peace, Micah 5:5 (NIV)

1. I heard the bells on Christmas day Their old familiar carols play, And wild and sweet the words repeat Of peace on earth, good will to men.

2. I thought how, as the day had come, The bells were tolling on the dead, nor doth He sleep; The broken song Of peace on earth, good will to men.

3. And in despair I bowed my head: "There is no peace on earth," I said, "For hate is strong, and mocks the song Of peace on earth, good will to men."

4. Then pealed the bells more loud and deep: "God is not right pre-vail, With peace on earth, good will to men."

5. Till, ringing, singing on its way, The world received the chant sublime, Of peace on earth, good will to men.

WORDS: Henry W. Longfellow
MUSIC: John Calkin

WALTHAM
8.8.8.8.(L.M.)
Kirkwood United Church of Christ
Advent and Christmas Activities for 2020

This Advent and Christmas,  
we'll fill the world with music and light  
and affirm and act on the reasons why  
we can still “believe, even when” we feel  
discouraged, anxious, sad, exhausted...  
Let us walk with hope toward love, joy and light.

All activities will be held on Zoom.

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>Nov 29</td>
<td>9:30 am  Worship: Advent Candle of Hope</td>
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<td>“I believe in the sun: hope for tomorrow”</td>
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<td>with communion</td>
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<td>Wed</td>
<td>Dec 2</td>
<td>9:00 pm  Evening Prayer Service</td>
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<td>Sun</td>
<td>Dec 6</td>
<td>9:30 am  Worship: Advent Candle of Love</td>
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<td>“I believe in love: daring right relationship”</td>
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<td>Wed</td>
<td>Dec 9</td>
<td>11:30 am Women’s Fellowship Lunch, Fun and Advent Devotional</td>
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<td>9:00 pm  Evening Prayer Service</td>
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<td>Sun</td>
<td>Dec 13</td>
<td>9:30 am   Worship: Advent Candle of Joy</td>
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<td>Christmas play: “God is With Us Everywhere”</td>
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<td>Blessing of the Christmas gifts</td>
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<td>Wed</td>
<td>Dec 16</td>
<td>9:00 pm  Evening Prayer Service</td>
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<td>Sun</td>
<td>Dec 20</td>
<td>9:30 am    Worship: Advent Candle of Peace</td>
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<td>“I believe in the light: illuminating peace”</td>
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<td>Thurs</td>
<td>Dec 24</td>
<td>9:45 pm   Gathering music</td>
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<td>10:00 pm  Candlelight Service of readings, prayer, beautiful music and communion</td>
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<td>“We believe, even now.”</td>
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<td>Sun</td>
<td>Dec 27</td>
<td>9:30 am  Worship: “Believe this: the time has come.”</td>
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