

The Presque Isle Congregational Church



United Church of Christ

December 3, 2023

First Sunday of Advent (Hope)

Prelude

Barbara Merryman

Welcoming Music

You Are Welcome Here

Words of Welcome

Introit

Hope Is a Star

Call to Worship

Leader: We watch and we wait for the glory to come.

All: We gather with hope, remembering your mercy

Leader: We watch and we wait for what's birthing ahead.

All: We gather with hope, remembering your justice.

Leader: We watch and we wait for your deeds to appear.

All: We gather with hope, remembering your handiwork.

Lighting of the Hope Candle

Raymond, Rachel, and Naomi Rice

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and set lights in the sky — sun and moon and stars. By these stars, our ancestors charted their journeys. By these stars, they knew God was with them. Today we light one candle to bring the fire of the stars down from heaven to earth, to nestle among the greens. We name this candle Hope. *The candle is lit*

Unison: Jesus, as we search for signs of hope this week, help us to become the signs of hope that others are searching for. As these candles are but a glimpse of the light of the heavens, help us to be a glimpse of heaven's hope. Amen.

Opening Hymn

O Day of God, Draw Near

vv. 1,2,3,5

Two-Minute Message

The Friendly Beasts

Jean Clark

Prayer of Confession (Unison)¹.

We confess that we are not ready. We call on you to rend the heavens and come down, and yet we aren't ready for you to rend our hearts and enter in. When it comes to meeting you face-to-face, we hesitate. We fear what you will find in us and among us. We are uncertain that we really want our lives to be turned upside down by the good news. We want the hope that comes with knowing you are coming to us, but we're not sure we're ready for the shock of that hope. Forgive us, we pray. Free us from our fear that we might joyfully live in the hope that shakes us up and turns us around to follow you.

Assurance of Pardon

Hear the good news: God is the Potter, and we are the clay. We are the work of God's hand. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

Scripture Reading

Excerpts from Isaiah 64

Common English Bible

If only you would tear open the heavens and come down! Mountains would quake before you like fire igniting brushwood or making water boil. If you would make your name known to your enemies, the nations would tremble in your presence.

¹ Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, June 2023.

When you accomplished wonders beyond all our expectations; when you came down, mountains quaked before you. From ancient times, no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any god but you who acts on behalf of those who wait for him!

You look after those who gladly do right; they will praise you for your ways. But you were angry when we sinned; you hid yourself when we did wrong. But now, Lord, you are our creator. We are the clay, and you are our potter. All of us are the work of your hand.

Choral Anthem *Pass the Advent Candle*

A Reflection of Hope Mary, Mother of Jesus Jennifer Gillis-White

Reflective Music Barbara Merryman

Dedication of Our Gifts

One: As recipients of the generous deeds of God, let us share our generosity with each other and the community.

Offering plate is brought forward

One: For the wondrous ways this offering with breathe hope into community

All: We dedicate these gifts.

One: For the ways it'll help us live out God's mission

All: We dedicate these gifts.

One: Let these gifts strengthen our call to carry out God's justice and mercy.

Generous God, we bring the gifts of ourselves and our abundance. Magnify and multiply these offerings to meet the needs before us. Continue to cultivate the spirit of generosity among us and make us good stewards as we allocate the use of these gifts in your name. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer and The Lord's Prayer

Our Creator*, 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. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen

**Please use whatever name is most familiar/comfortable when you pray to God.*

Closing Hymn *O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright*

Community News and Announcements

Benediction

Go forth with the gift of hope, Remembering God's deeds, Trusting God's presence, And Becoming God's handiwork. May God's face shine on us now and forever, Amen

Sung Response *God Be With You*

God be with you till we meet again; By good counsel guide, uphold you.
With a shepherd's care enfold you; God be with you till we meet again.