

First Church of Christ in Mansfield (Congregational) United Church of Christ

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> Ministers: All the Members of the Church The Rev. Charles Ericson, Bridge Minister Erik Haeger, Organist Olivia Russell, Worship Circle Coordinator

December 15, 2024 — The Third Sunday of Advent

Welcome to Our Guests!

We're delighted you have joined us for worship; the members are the ministers of this church... if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask us!

Playing the Chimes

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude

Centering in the Spirit

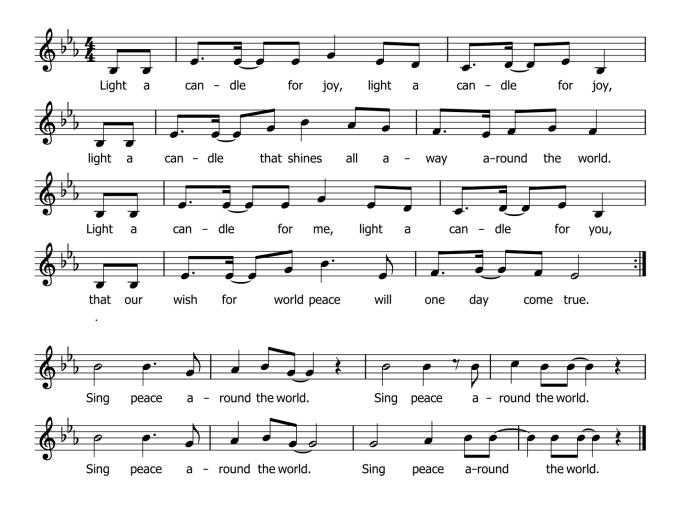
"Teacher," the crowd asked, "What should we do?" If you have two shirts, give one away. Hold onto hope. Live like we belong to one another. Speak the truth. Look for God. Do the good that is yours to do. It's all that easy, and it's all that hard. Let us worship our present and active God.

Procession of the Children

Light a Candle for Peace

by Shelley Murley (adapted)

Erik Haeger



Lighting of the Advent Candle: Joy

One: In a weary and worn world, how do we begin again? Where do we start? All: Let us start small. Let us begin with what is right in front of us. Let us do the good that is ours to do, and let us do it with joy! One: Yes, let us begin with joy. Today we light the candles of hope, peace, and joy. All: May these lights remind us of what could be. May these lights inspire action. May the warmth of these lights fill us with joy. One: May it be so! Amen.

*Opening Hymn

One Candle Is Lit

CH128

Prayer for Transformation

Liberating God, There are days when the world can feel like it's crumbling. There are days when we doubt that we can make a difference. We ask ourselves,

What could these two hands do?

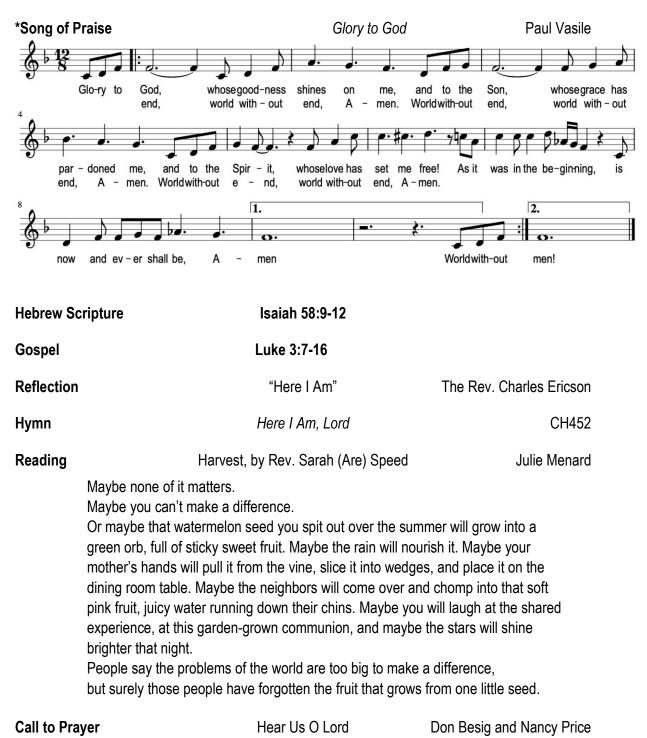
What could this one voice say?

Shake us free of our own paralysis and self-doubt. Remind us that we are not called to fix everything.We are simply called to do the good that is ours to do. With hope in our hearts and a fire in our bones, we pray. Amen.

Words of Grace

Friends, no matter how many times we lose momentum, doubt our own ability, or tell ourselves that the problems of the world are simply too big, God sees what we cannot. God calls us by name, surrounds us in grace, and invites us to begin again. Trusting in this good news, join me in proclaiming these words of forgiveness:

We are loved. We are forgiven. We are invited to do the good that is ours to do. Thanks be to God for this new beginning. Amen.





Prayers of the People and the Prayer of Jesus

Please pray the Prayer of Jesus in whatever language is comfortable for you. The following are offered as examples...

Our Father/Mother/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 debts/sins/trespasses, as we forgive our debtors/those who sin/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.

Invitation to Generosity

from Worship Ways

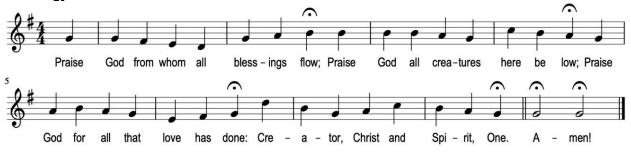
Embracing radical joy transforms our spirits, creating a gentle energy within us. We are renewed, and we sense God's call more clearly. In seeking God's message, we know how to joyfully share our talents, treasures, and time, bringing more peace and comfort into our world.

Musical Offering

Hark! The Glad Sound

Robert J. Powell





*Prayer of Dedication

from Worship Ways

God of Holy Darkness and Returning Light,

We give of our full hearts, knowing that you will bless this world with love. We give of our full minds, knowing that you will bless this world with peace. We give of our full souls, knowing that you will bless this world with hope. May the joy of your gifts encourage us to share the best we have, creating your Realm here on earth. Amen.

*Benediction

Now may God bless you and keep you;

- May God's face shine upon you and be gracious unto you;
- May God's countenance be lifted up upon you and give you peace. Amen.

*Passing the Peace

The peace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, is with you always. And also with you.

Let us share with one another a sign of that peace.

Postlude



Much of this morning's liturgy was written by the Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed for the Advent series "Words for the Beginning." Permission for use has been granted by A Sanctified Art LLC | <u>sanctifiedart.org</u>

About this week's icon:



DO THE GOOD THAT IS YOURS TO DO

We are each uniquely gifted, called, and equipped for the good that is ours to do in the world. In the center is the cross, symbolizing Christ's impact, and surrounding it are individuals reaching out and shining their particular light in the world.

The *Invitation to Generosity* and the *Prayer of Dedication* were written by the Rev. Michelle L. Torigian, senior pastor of St. Paul United Church of Christ, Belleville, Illinois, for Worship Ways on <u>www.ucc.org</u>

Coming up...

Today	5:00 p.m. PFLAG of Mansfield Tolland
Wednesday, December 18	1:00 p.m. Book Group
Thursday, December 19	9:30 a.m. Quilt Group 12:15 p.m. Mid-week Music Meditation 7:00 p.m. Choir
Sunday, December 22	10:15 a.m. Worship & Worship Circle – Fourth Sunday in Advent (poinsettias on display)
Tuesday, December 24	7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Worship – Paper Bag Pageant