



THE PROMISE OF ADVENT

St. John United Church of Christ - Bellevue KY

November 29, 2020

“Set free our captive hearts.”

-Psalm 126.4

Welcome to St. John

Keith M. Haithcock

Preparation Music

Mark Behnken, organ

“People Look East” -Traditional French melody, arr. Dr. Mark H. Behnken

Centering Prayer

Keith M. Haithcock

Shine your light upon us, O God, as we seek to be enlightened.

By your Spirit, open our eyes, our minds, and our hearts
as we prepare for the coming of your Child. Amen.

Opening Song (sung twice)

Theo Baldwin, vocalist; Steve Milloy, piano

“Waiting for You” -Christopher Grundy

We are waiting for you, knowing that you always abide,
we are waking to your presence and our hearts are open wide,
open wide, open wide.

Prayer of Confession

Keith M. Haithcock

Holy One, we acknowledge that we often fail to see the thousands of ways you reveal yourself to us every day. We have not called on you, and we have not listened for your call to us. We have become tiny islands of self-concern. We long to be transformed by your grace and to come home.

Assurance of God’s Grace

Be assured children of God, that God’s grace overflows for you and the whole world!
Amen.

The Candles of Advent - Hope

Sue Jelinek

Today is the beginning of Advent – the preparation time for celebrating Christ’s birth. We are here because the Holy One’s promises to our ancestors came true when Jesus was born. This promise is kept each Sunday when we worship because Christ is in our midst. The Holy One will keep the promise to come again in glory.

We light the candles to proclaim the coming of the Holy Light into the world. With the coming of this Light there is hope. Because of Christ we not only have hope, but we believe that good is stronger than evil. The Holy One wants us to work for good in this world.

Advent Hymn

Theo Baldwin, vocalist

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Child of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!

O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by your advent here;
Love stir within the womb of night, and death's own shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!

O come, Desire of Nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;
Make envy, strife and quarrels cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!

Prayers of the People

Sue Jelinek

One: Watching and waiting for the coming of Christ, we pray for the promise of a new creation, saying: Come quickly, Promised One;

All: our hope is in you.

One: With expectation, we pray for the church . . . Let your reign of love shape us, as a master potter skillfully forms a vessel, that we may reveal your beauty to the world. Come quickly, Promised One;

All: our hope is in you.

One: With expectation, we pray for the world . . . Draw near to those who wait for you. Break into their circumstances with blessing. Heal the earth that awaits your restoration. Come quickly, Promised One;

All: our hope is in you.

One: With expectation, we pray for this community . . . Transform the places in which we live. Grant that the gifts you have given all of us may be used for the common good. Come quickly, Promised One;

All: our hope is in you.

One: With expectation, we pray for loved ones . . . (name out loud) Comfort all who suffer and despair. Assure them of your presence and care. Let your face shine and save us. Come quickly, Promised One;

All: our hope is in you.

One: Source of our hope, as the promised day approaches, fill us with the hope of your Spirit and strengthen us to serve you faithfully through Christ.

All: Amen.

An Offering of Music and our Gifts St. John / Christ Church combined Ensembles
"Every Valley" -Victor C. Johnson

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Thank you for your financial support to the mission and ministry of the Church!
US mail: 520 Fairfield Ave., Bellevue, KY 41073; Online: StJohnChurch.net

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Psalm 80.1-7, 17-19

Richard Robbins

Shepherd of Israel, listen!

You, the one who leads Joseph as if he were a sheep. You, who are enthroned upon the winged heavenly creatures. Show yourself before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh! Wake up your power! Come to save us! Make your face shine so that we can be saved!

Lord God of heavenly forces, how long will you fume against your people's prayer? You've fed them bread made of tears: you've given them tears to drink three times over! You've put us at odds with our neighbors; our enemies make fun of us. Restore us, God of heavenly forces! Make your face shine so that we can be saved!

Let your hand be with the one on your right side – with the one whom you secured as your own – then we will not turn away from you! Revive us so that we can call on your name. Restore us, Lord God of heavenly forces! Make your face shine so that we can be saved! (CEB)

One: Here ends the reading inspired by God.

May God grant to us wisdom and courage for interpretation.

All: Amen.

Children's Couch Church

Sarah, Anthony, Adeline and Eliza Palm

Sermon

Keith M. Haithcock

"RESTORE"

Song of Response (sung twice)

Theo Baldwin, vocalist; Steve Milloy, piano

"There Is Peace" -*Maureen Jenci Shelton and Jill Hendrix*

There is peace, there is hope, and it's not so far away.

There is peace, there is hope, and it's not so far away.

Focus your light within us. Focus your peace through us. Focus your love.

Shine, shine, shine, shine, shine.

Send Out

Keith M. Haithcock

Going Forth

Steve Milloy, vocals & piano

"Revive Us Again" -*John J. Husband/arr. Steve Milloy*

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