

WORSHIP SERVICE
December 3, 2023
First Sunday of Advent

WE GATHER FOR WORSHIP

Prelude

Welcome

* God's Greeting

* We Greet One Another

* Call to Worship (based on Isaiah 9:1-3)

In days to come, there will be no more gloom for those who were once in distress.

As He once walked the earth, so He will come again.

As He once brought the light to those who lived in darkness, so He will come again.

Our joy will rise like the dawn, as he brings peace on earth and goodwill to all humanity.

Come Lord Jesus, come soon!

* Opening Song: "Come Thou Long Expected Jesus" LUYH #56

Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.
Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King,
born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne.

"Imagine"

Lift Up Your Hearts #72

Who hears? Who hears the voice of the hungry, the thirsty?
Who sees? Who sees the tears of the suffering ones?
Imagine a King who would come through the darkness and walk,
where I walk, full of greatness,
and call me to his side, just like a father and child.
Who knows? Who knows the hopes that lie hidden, forgotten?
Who comes? Who comes to lead all the children home?

Imagine a King who would come through the darkness and walk,
where I walk, full of greatness,
and call me to his side, just like a father and child.

Lighting of the Advent Candles

Today we light this candle as a sign of the coming light of Christ-A
light which brings hope for the restoration of our world.

(Light candle)

Hope for ...

*The Lord says to his servant, "It is too light a thing that you should be
my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors
of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation
may reach to the end of the earth." Isaiah 49:6*

**Come, Emmanuel, our hope, our light and our salvation. Let us
walk in the light of the Lord.**

Song of Response: "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" vs 1 LUYH #61

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

WE ARE RECONCILED TO GOD

Prayer of Confession

**Mighty God and Prince of Peace, we confess that we become so
preoccupied with our own land that we often fail to consider your
care for your whole world. Lord, give us hearts that yearn for peace
throughout this earth, as when you created it, and as you will fully
restore someday. Give us wisdom and help us to be
peacemakers. "Revive us again, that we may rejoice in you. Show
us your unfailing love, Lord, and grant us your redemption". Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon (Psalm 85: 9-13)

*Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him, that his glory may
dwell in our land.*

*Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss
each other.*

*Faithfulness springs forth from the earth, and righteousness looks
down from heaven.*

The Lord will indeed give what is good, and our land will yield its harvest.

Righteousness goes before him and prepares the way for his steps.

Song of Entrusting: "Once In Royal David's City" vs 1, 2, 4, 5 LUYH #87

Once in royal David's city stood a lowly cattle shed, where a mother laid her baby in a manger for His bed: Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ, her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven who is God and Lord of all, and His shelter was a stable, and His cradle was a stall: with the poor, and meek, and lowly lived on earth our Savior holy.

And our eyes at last shall see Him, through His own redeeming love; for that child, so dear and gentle, is our Lord in heaven above, and He leads His children on to the place where He is gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable, with the oxen standing by, we shall see Him, but in heaven, set at God's right hand on high; there his children gather round, bright like stars, with glory crowned.

Children's Message

Congregational Prayer

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 9:5-7

⁵Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire. ⁶For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.⁷ Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

Message: Peace on Earth

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Prayer of Application

*Song of Response: "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" (vs 1,2,4)

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old, from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold: "Peace

on the earth, good will to men, from heaven's all-gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.
Still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings
unfurled, and still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary
world; above its sad and lowly plains, they bend on hovering
wing, and ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.
For lo! the days are hastening on, by prophet seen of old, when with
the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold When the new
heaven and earth shall own The Prince of Peace their King,
and the whole world send back the song which now the angels sing.

WE CELEBRATE GOD'S COVENANT WITH US

The Lord's Supper

Communion song: "What Feast Of Love" LUYH #96
(vs 1,2 sung passing of the bread, vs 3 passing of the wine)

What feast of love is offered here, what banquet come from
heaven? What food of everlasting life,
what gracious gift is given? This, this is Christ the King, the bread
come down from heaven. Oh, taste and see and sing! How sweet
the manna given!

What light of truth is offered here, What covenant from heaven?
What hope of everlasting life, what wondrous word is given? This,
this is Christ the King, the sun come down from heaven. Oh, see and
hear and sing! The Word of God is given!

What wine of love is offered here, what crimson drink from heaven?
What stream of everlasting life, what precious blood is given? This,
this is Christ the King, the sweetest wine of heaven. Oh, taste and
see and sing! The Son of God is given!

WE DEPART TO SERVE

* Blessing

* Closing Song: "Sent Forth By God's Blessing" LUYH #936

Sent forth by God's blessing, Our true faith confessing, The people of
God from his dwelling take leave. The supper is ended. Oh, now be
extended the fruits of this service in all who believe. The seed of
Christ's teaching, receptive souls reaching, shall blossom in action for
God and for all. Your grace shall incite us, your love shall unite us to
work for your kingdom and answer your call.

With praise and thanksgiving to God ever living, the tasks of our everyday life we will face- our faith ever sharing, in love ever caring embracing God's children, the whole human race. With your feast you feed us, with your light now lead us; unite us as one in this life that we share. Then may all the living with praise and thanksgiving give honor to Christ and his name we bear.

Postlude

*Please stand if you are able.

Children's Message: Deb Niehof

Message: Rev. Randy Raak

Musicians: Andrew Friend, Nancy Berns, Chloe Berns-Schweingruber, Elijah Hufford

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Communion: Today we celebrate the Lord's Supper. Congregation of Jesus Christ, the Lord has prepared his table for believers. If you are sorry for your sins and follow Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, you are invited to come to his table. Through this celebration, we remember that:

- a. The Lord's Supper is a thanksgiving to God.
- b. The Lord's Supper is a memorial of Christ.
- c. The Lord's Supper is a participation in the body and the blood of Christ.
- d. The Lord's Supper signifies the work of the Spirit.
- e. The Lord's Supper seals the present and coming kingdom of God.

This week's special offering is for **Areopagus**, a ministry to Iowa State University. Areopagus aims to reflect the relevance of the Gospel and a Reformed Christian worldview to the world of higher education, and in the lives of students and faculty. For more information, please talk with Lora Copley (Areopagus director), or visit <http://www.isu-areopagus.org/>

The outreach committee is having a toy for Salvation Army. Just bring a unwrapped toy from birth up to 12 years of age, the most need is for 6 years thru 12 years of age. The toy drive is thru Sunday December 17. Donations can be placed in the box in the church entryway.

If you have any questions feel to contact Mark Voss

The education committee invites the congregation, family and friends to our youth **Christmas Program, Dec 17th**, following the service. After the program we invite all to stay for a potluck meal of soup, sides and dessert!

Christmas Program has a “wish” list for the Christmas program-if able to lend an item or 2 we would greatly appreciate it! Please label items with your name so they can be returned after the program: *Computer floppy disk, *small traffic cones (3-preferred), *traffic/stop sign (hand-held), *straw/hay bales (2) (small), *Battery operated Christmas lights (any color) (3). If you have any questions please direct to Rachel De Bruin or Laura Hufford. We will need these items for our practices starting on Dec. 10.

You are invited to worship with us at our Blue Christmas Service on December 21st at 7PM, the longest night of the year. The holiday season is not always easy. Find a safe place to grieve whatever you are experiencing with scripture, traditional carols, candlelighting, and words of hope. We hope you will find God’s comfort and connection with us during this time.

The church fellowship hall will be used on Sunday evenings from 5 – 7 pm by Areopagus. They will be viewing “The Chosen” through November.

The next Pub Theology (or Beers & Bibles/Spirits & Spirit/Brews & Truths) night at the Mucky Duck will be Sunday evening (Jan 7th) at 6:30. Bring your thirst, sense of humor, and hunger for off-the-wall theology questions ;) We’ve got some good questions coming in already – keep ‘em coming! At this point we’re planning on the 4th Sunday evening of each month, but since the holiday is there, we moved it to the first Sunday in January, for our December meeting.

Ames Christian School has expressed an interest in discussing the possibility of holding middle school classes at TCRC, starting with the 2024-2025 academic year. This would be a temporary arrangement while they are planning, fundraising, and building an addition onto their current facility. Council agreed to continue this discussion with them if they remain interested.

Children and Worship - During our morning worship service, immediately following the children's message, children ages three through third grade are invited to attend Children and Worship, which meets in room 3, located to the south of the sanctuary. Children experience worship in the same order as in the sanctuary: we approach God in reverence, hear His Word proclaimed, respond in praise, and go forth in peace and love to serve in God's name. Visitors are welcome to attend. Please come pick up your child(ren) at the end of the service.

Adult Sunday School Class: (Dec. 3) we will visit Delphi and Corinth, key sites in Ancient Greece, and important for understanding Paul's ministry and our contemporary culture. Please read Acts 18 in preparation.

Please let Pam Whitney know if you would like to volunteer for Nursery or Greeters and are not already on the list. If you are on the list and would like to be removed, please let her know as well.

Pastor Randy will be on vacation December 26th through the 31st. Please reach out to your elders during this time.

Pam Whitney will be on vacation from November 29th through December 10th. Please have your announcements in as soon as possible for these two weeks.

The Church has an event happening the December 14th through the 16th. Please be sure if you come to the church, you do not interrupt the event.

There is a sign-up schedule outside the office if you want to go see Eleanor. We can group together to save cost of travel and make the trip a little less dull. Please sign up and let others know when you can go. If you have questions, please ask Judy Oltman or Pam Whitney know and we will see if we can find the answers.

Reminder as we come upon the winter season, please be sure to wipe your shoes before you come into the church to help with keeping our church home clean.

Small Groups, Committees, & Sunday School Updates

Sunday School Classes Dec 3, 10, 17 (Christmas Program), (no class 24 or the 31), Jan 7, 14, 21, 28, Feb 4, 11,18,25, March 3, (no class 10), 17, 24, (no class 31), April 7, 14, 21, 28, and May 5.

Breakfast Club meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at the Lincoln Center Hy-Vee at 8:30 AM.

UFO will meet the 3rd Monday of the month.

Women's Bible Study will be meeting Mon Dec 4th at 9 am in the Fellowship Hall. We will be discussing the Spiritual Discipline of "Rest".

Areopagus – Sunday night from 5 – 7 in the fellowship hall.

Next Council meeting is December 13th.

DENOMINATION ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thrive

Thrive Faith Formation Tip - Ponder this quote from Mother Teresa: "This Christmas when Christ comes, will he find a warm heart? Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving others with God's own concern." How might you and your family love and serve others during this season? Learn more at crcna.org/FaithPracticesProject

World Renew

God's Love at Christmas - As we begin the Advent season, share the warmth of God's love with a person living in poverty through your donation for World Renew's Gift Catalog. Give a life-changing gift to a family that is facing hardship and hunger in the year ahead. Donate today at worldrenew.net/gifts or call 800-552-7972.

ReFrame Ministries

Kids Corner: The Prophet's Message of Hope - Check out this week's kids' devotion at www.kidscorner.net. The devotion is all about how the prophet Isaiah talked about how light shining in the darkness gave people comfort. We know Isaiah 9:2 is about Jesus coming to earth and dying on the cross for our sins. How amazing is that! The hope we have is a person! Check out all the great content at kidscorner.net like the Bible story podcast "The Story of the Prophets."

Devotions for a Blue Christmas - In the midst of hard times, find strength and encouragement through God's word. A set of fourteen encouraging Today devotions reassure you that even during the darkest of Christmas seasons, you're not alone. Receive this free email series

and ebook when you subscribe to Today at
todaydevotional.com/bluechristmas

Groundwork: Jesus: Our Wonderful Counselor - The prophet Isaiah calls the coming Messiah a ‘Wonderful Counselor.’ Join Groundwork as we explore Isaiah 9:6, Proverbs 1:1-7, 1 Corinthians 1:18-24, and Colossians 1:15-19 to discover what this title communicates to us about Jesus and its connection to the biblical wisdom tradition. Listen now at GroundworkOnline.com and subscribe to Groundwork's weekly emails for future episodes.

Greeters

December 3	Oltman
December 10	Raak
December 17	Saldana
December 24	Whitney
December 31	Schweingruber/Berns
January 7	Sterenberg
January 14	t' Hoen

Nursery

December 3	Melody and Alisabeth
December 10	Mary and Jayden
December 17	Rachel and Mindy
December 24	Sue Fee and ????
December 31	Jessica and Alisabeth
January 7	Donna and Kathlyn
January 14	Elaine and Brianna

Children's Message

December 3	Deb Niehof
December 10	Lora Copley
December 17	Randy Raak
December 24	Jeff Kopaska
December 31	Deb Niehof
January 7	Stacy Hertz
January 14	Randy Raak

Congregational Prayer

December 3	Lora Copley
December 10	Randy Raak
December 17	Lora Copley

December 24 Randy Raak
December 31 Rex De Bruin
January 7 Mark Voss
January 14 Paul Kleinwolterink

Pastor Randy Raak: pastor@amestrinity.org or 928-699-9329

Lora Copley: director@isu-areopagus.org or 505-387-6861 (Areopagus
Campus Ministry)

Elders: A-G = Brian Sterenberg; H-K = Rex De Bruin; L-S = Tom Kuyper;
T-Z = Jeff Kopaska

Deacons: A-G = Joseph Yoder; H-K = Pam Niemeyer; L-S = Tom Whitney;
T-Z = Mark Irvin