



Urbandale
United
Church of
Christ
God is still speaking,

“No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey,
you are invited and welcome here.”

A Just Peace and Open and Affirming congregation

December 27, 2020

10:00 a.m.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

PRELUDE

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

- If you can have multiple tabs or windows open on your device, you can pull up the bulletin for this service by going to urbucc.org, words to The Prayer of Jesus and Closing Hymn will be on your screen as we go through the service.
- This morning we are going to remember the Moravian Love Feast as a part of our service. If you would like to join in on that, a small bit of pastry or bread and something to drink would be just the thing. This is not communion but carries a sense of community and reconciliation that is appropriate for this day.
- If you want to take a moment to set up your space for whatever helps you pray, meditate, or be mindful of God’s presence, please do that. A candle or cross or Bible or whatever helps you. Also, minimize distractions, like phones or alarms.
- We will be asking you to jot some things down, which you may be able to do on the device you are using or find a pad and pen/pencil.
- Later in the service we will read from the **Gospel of Luke, Chapter 2**, so if you have a Bible handy you might want to get it and turn to that passage. We will be reading from the Inclusive Bible, so you can compare it with your translation.

GREETING

“Christmas in Bethlehem. The ancient dream: a cold, clear night made brilliant by a glorious star, the smell of incense, shepherds and wise men falling to their knees in adoration of the sweet baby, the incarnation of perfect love.”

Lucinda Franks, Journalist and winner of the Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting

CALLING OUR ATTENTION TO THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Who keeps track of what you eat? A friend or family member? A nutritionist? Who keeps track of what feeds your spirit? Is that not just as important as what goes into your stomach? And if we eat in isolation, whether it is physical or spiritual food, do we not run the risk of binging on that which is not healthy? Do we not run the risk of starving ourselves of the things that are essential? Today we are invited to gather, even if virtually, with those who love us, who have our best interests and outcomes at heart. As we share life together, we also share what is food for our bodies and food for our souls. How has God brought what is most needed into our lives? Who has helped us to recognize it for what it is? How can we pay more attention to them in the year to come?

SONG OF PRAISE

“Peace Child”

Leah Gardner, Vocalist

Shirley Erena Murray

Amanda Husberg

MORAVIAN LOVE FEAST

BLESSING AND SHARING OF FOOD

Dr. Kevin Gannon, Grandview University

TAKING STOCK OF OUR BLESSINGS AND RESOURCES

“Donate” tab at urbucc.org, Christmas Fund also on web page

Return the pledge forms that are a part of this year’s Stewardship Campaign.

The United Church of Christ provides Disaster Relief funds to areas hard-hit by the storms, fires, and other natural and human-caused disasters. If you would like to know more, or contribute to the Disaster Relief fund, go to www.ucc.org.

Jot down what you have that you can share with others - sidewalk messages, a sign in a window or yard, a card or letter, phone call or e-mail to someone who is having a hard time. Allow the Spirit to guide your thoughts.

Think about how you might prepare for the future by sharing what you have today.

PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

God of Reconciliation and Community, we are grateful for the gift of relationships, even those that try our patience and challenge our cherished assumptions. If it is true that absence makes the heart grow fonder, then we should by now be bursting with love, but struggle to find ways to make it known. We cannot even break bread together or share a cup of kindness. Perhaps it will be enough, for now, to lament together. To give voice to our longings and our frustrations, for this too, is a reconciliation. If we share a burden, we cannot help but feel a deep bond and sympathy for one another. So we give thanks for the burdens of love. Carrying them makes us strong. Crying over them releases our anger. Sharing them strengthens our community. May all that we invest in relationships come back to us as resilience and hope, for the peace that passes understanding has its roots in our ability to love. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Luke 2:22-40 (The Inclusive Bible)

²²When the day came for them to be purified, as laid down by the law of Moses, the couple took Jesus up to Jerusalem and presented him to God. ²³For it's written in the Law of our God, "Every firstborn heir is to be consecrated to God." ²⁴They likewise came to offer in sacrifice "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons," in accord with the dictate of the Law of our God.

²⁵Now there lived in Jerusalem a man named Simeon. He was devout and just, anticipating the consolation of Israel, and he was filled with the Holy Spirit. ²⁶She had revealed to Simeon that he wouldn't see death until he had seen the Messiah of God.' ²⁷Prompted by her, Simeon came to the Temple; and when the parents brought in the child to perform the customary rituals of the Law, ²⁸he took the child in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹"Now, O God, you can dismiss your servant in peace, just as you promised;

³⁰because my eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared for all the peoples to see –

³¹a light of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel."

³²As the child's mother and father stood there marveling at the things that were being said, ³⁴Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, the mother, "This child is destined to be the downfall and the rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that is rejected, ³⁵so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare And a sword will pierce your heart as well."

³⁶There was a woman named Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher, who was also a prophet. She had lived a long life, seven years with her husband, ³⁷and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the Temple, worshipping day and night, fasting and praying. ³⁸Coming up at that moment, she gave thanks to God and talked about the child to all who anticipated the deliverance of Jerusalem.

³⁹When the couple had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the Law of God, they returned to Galilee and their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰The child grew in size and strength. He was filled with wisdom, and the Grace of God was with him.

The ritual sacrifices after the birth of a child are described in Leviticus 12. The woman who had given birth is to be considered unclean (not to be understood as bad, immoral or sinful) for a short time, in this case seven days. On the eighth day, a male child would be circumcised and the mother would continue in a state of "blood purification," but the Hebrew expression is of uncertain meaning. After 33 days (66 days for a female child) the offering would be made, normally of a sheep a year old, unless the family could not afford it, then the substitution of two turtledoves or pigeons was allowed. Perhaps this detail is included to reinforce Luke's emphasis on the powerful being pulled down and the lowly lifted up. (Luke 1:46-55)

MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

PASTORAL PRAYER

Take a moment now to check your own prayer list. Add the names that need to go on it, review the names of those for whom you have been praying. Has an answer or resolution come? If so, make gratitude known to others.

LORD'S PRAYER

CLOSING HYMN

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

Hymnal 144

BLESSING

May the peace of Christ inoculate you against the tumult and striving of a violent world. May the love of God cast you headlong into the pain and suffering that is inflicted on those around you. And may the power of the Holy Spirit suffuse every moment of your life with the grace and trust you need to transform your corner of the world into a foreshadowing of God's eternal Realm! Amen.

POSTLUDE

THE PRAYER OF JESUS

Our *Abba 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, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

**Abba* is the ancient Aramaic word that Jesus preferred to refer to God. It is most often translated as "Father."

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

Hymnal 144

Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the Christchild bring;
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinner reconciled!”
Joyful, all you saints arise, join the triumph of the skies;
With the angel host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the Christchild bring!”

Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ the everlasting Lord!
Late in time the Savior comes, offspring of the Virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see; hail the incarnate Deity,
Pleased on earth with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the Christchild bring!”

Hail the Bearer of God’s peace! Hail the Sun of righteousness,
Light and life our Savior brings, risen with radiant, healing wings.
Mildly laying glory by, born that we no more may die,
Born to raise us all from earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the Christchild bring!”

This Week at UCC

Sunday, December 27

10:00 am Worship: Moravian Love Feast

10:30 am Fellowship Hour

Upcoming Sundays

Sunday, January 3

10:00 am Worship: Communion

10:30 am Fellowship Hour

Sunday, January 10

10:00 am Worship

10:30 am Fellowship Hour

11:30 am Sunday School PreK-5th Grade

Office will be closed Friday, January 1st in observance of New Year's.

Little Free Pantry

We need your help to restock the pantry. You are also invited to use it, and let people know about it. Please DO NOT leave donations of food or clothing outside the building when no one is present. Call or email the church office to arrange a drop off time.

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UCAN Clothing Closet

Donation Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 9am-1pm; Saturdays 9-11am

Drop off location: 75th St & Douglas Ave (old Palmers Deli)

Right now we are in need of new women's and men's underwear along with the children's clothes. (No boys underwear currently needed).

Thx for contributing!

The folks at UCAN

URBANDALE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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www.urbucc.org

www.facebook.com/UrbandaleUCC

“We welcome into this community of faith, and affirm the participation in all aspects of church life, persons of every age, race, gender identity and expression, nationality, ability, and sexual orientation. We will continue our efforts toward inclusiveness, and stand against all forms of discrimination. We will empower ourselves, our children, and one another to be fully present in the world, living in Christ’s image and striving for justice and peace.”

Staff

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For pastoral care, please contact Pastor Dave at 276-0625 (church office), 720-6389 (cell) or david.sickelka@urbucc.org. Pastor Dave is off on Mondays but will still respond to emergencies if you call or text.