ST. ANDREW’S UNITED CHURCH

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Ministers The people of St. Andrew’s

Pastor Rev.Cheryl Bolton

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November 29, 2020 First Sunday in Advent

WE GATHER

**Welcome and Announcements**

So begins the journey again into Advent: a time of new beginnings, of hoped-for new experiences of God, of eye-opening looking for God all around us, of soul-stirring waiting for God to be born within us. We begin this time by gathering, by sharing in worship by bringing our hopes and fears. Come and let us worship God.

**Lighting of the Advent Candles**

**Reader One:** If ever there was a year we needed Advent, this is the year. We hardly know how to describe the year we have lived through. We hesitate to reflect on all the mess around us in 2020. All we know is that nothing seems right, nothing seems like it used to be, nothing. We need Advent!

**Reader Two:** The prophet Isaiah cried out for us, “O that you would tear open the heavens and come down … To make your name known … so that nations might tremble at your presence.” So tear through the mess, O Lord, and come down to us again. We long to be your people, a people of hope.

**Reader One:** We light this first candle as a sign of our hope. Hope that you can meet us, even in the mess of our world. Hope that you still see us, though we feel we are lost in the rubble. Let this light be the guide that brings us to Emmanuel once more.

**Gathering Hymn: O Come, O Come Emmanuel - Vs. 1**

**Prayer of Confession and Approach**

**Tiny Christ, alive in our hearts, alive in the world-hear our prayer!**

**May this moment be the moment that changes everything.**

**May this birth be the birth that turns our lives upside down, that calls us to hope, that baptizes us with love.**

**Holy child of Bethlehem, Holy child of St. Thomas this is our prayer! Amen**

**Words of Assurance**

Through a tiny child, God birthed new hope into this world.

Through a tiny child, God grew a model for faithful living.

Through a tiny child, God gave us a way, a truth, a holy life.

For us all this was given! Thanks be to God!

What love, what grace, what wondrous gift is given.

**WE LISTEN FOR GOD’S WORD**

**First Reading**: Isaiah 64: 1-9

**Gospel Reading**: Mark 13: 24-37

**Meditation**: Advent - A Season New Beginnings

**Hymn of Meditation: Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus**

**WE RESPOND TO GOD’S WORD**

**Prayers of the People**

Into our troubles and weaknesses,

Into the barren places of our souls, Come Lord Jesus,

Into the war torn and the refugee,

Into those who live in conflict, Come Lord Jesus,

Into the homeless and the unemployed,

Into those who feel abandoned, Come Lord Jesus,

Into the sick and the disabled,

Into those with Covid and with Cancer and other diseases,

Come, Lord Jesus.

Into the poor and the starving,

Into those who are oppressed or abused, Come Lord Jesus.

Into the lives of loved ones,

Into those from whom we are estranged, Come Lord Jesus.

Into our joys and celebrations,

Into our work and our achievements, Come, Lord Jesus.

O Christ we long for your coming. Hasten that day when those who seek you in every nation will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south and sit at table in Your Kingdom. Hasten the day when your Kingdom will come in all its glory and suffering and pain and sickness and oppression and death will be overcome forever. Hasten the day when we will be resurrected as a great multicultural family and live in peace, harmony, joy and love together in your kingdom.

Come, Lord Jesus

**Come down, come in, come among us and make us whole. Amen.**

**Final Hymn: Away in a Manger**

**Blessing and Commissioning**

As we enter into this cool season of waiting,

may we find the warmth of faith.

As we enter this season of hoping, may we find holy space.

As we enter this season of spending, may we find ways to offer

our spirits to the life of the world.

Go with the blessing of God, the hope of the Spirit and the anticipation of the child yet to be born, within and among us. Amen.