

**Mifflin Avenue United Methodist Church**



**December 10, 2023**  
**2nd Sunday of Advent**

Pastor Russel contact information:

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Welcome Visitors: We are pleased you have chosen to worship with us today. If you have questions concerning the service, please feel free to ask an usher or a person sitting near you. If you do not have a permanent church home, please consider joining us. May God bless your experience in worship with us today. We are here to serve, so please let us know how we might better serve you.

## ORDER OF WORSHIP – 11:15 AM

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### CELEBRATION THROUGH CENTERING

PRELUDE                      ‘Variations on the Chorale: “Comfort, comfort, ye my people”                      Johann Krebs

GREETING, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER REQUESTS

CENTERING WORDS

In the waiting, God calls. May steadfast love and faithfulness rest in our souls. May justice, righteousness, and peace guide our steps and define our community of faith.

### CELEBRATION THROUGH ADORATION

OPENING HYMN AND BRINGING FORTH THE LIGHT

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

No. 211, vs. 1, 2 & 4

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: O come, O come, Emmanuel,

**People: and be light for our darkness.**

Pastor: Be comfort in our grief,

**People: be a friend for our loneliness,**

Pastor: an oasis for our searching.

**People: O come, O come, Emmanuel,**

**All: Restore our joy, heal our wounds, and bring us peace.**

OPENING PRAYER

**While we are waiting, come to us, O God. Reveal your presence in our time of worship. Guide our steps in our speaking and our doing. Flow through our lives, our church, and our world with your steadfast love, unending faithfulness, righteous justice, and mysterious peace. In patient anticipation we pray. Amen.**

INTROIT

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

No. 196

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY (The Candle of Peace)

Pastor: Hope is assertive, but peace is subversive. The psalmist reminds us in Psalm 34:14 that we must seek peace and pursue it.

**People: We must search for it like a treasure hidden in a field, like it is the most precious, fragile thing we can imagine.**

Pastor: But peace doesn’t live only in dreams. Peace whispers into our ear that there is always another way, another path from rage and hate and fear.

**People: Peace calls us to have patience, but to not give up.**

Pastor: Peace is not passive, but always lurking, just waiting for us to recognize we can grasp it. We light this candle as a reminder that peace is something we must pursue,

**People: for we follow the Prince of Peace.**

ADVENT HYMN AND LIGHTING THE CANDLE OF PEACE

(to the Tune "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel")

No. 211

**O come and bring your peace upon the earth  
That even now still longs for its rebirth  
We seek to live and move in your ways  
Guide us to peace and justice all our days  
Rejoice, rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to us  
And all things shall be well**

PRAYER

**God of Peace, our world is full of angry voices calling for vengeance, calling for retribution masked as justice, calling for destruction as a lie for peace. But we know the true peace that comes from You is available for us all, if we seek it. If we follow You. May peace light our way in this world that desperately needs it. Amen.**

CHILDREN'S MOMENTS

**CELEBRATION THROUGH THE WORD**

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Pastor: Prepare the way of the Lord.

**People: We listen for the word of God.**

CHORAL RESPONSE

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

No. 234 (refrain)

***"O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him,  
O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord"***

FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 40:1-11

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

\*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

"Angels We Have Heard on High"

No. 238 (refrain)

***"Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!"***

GOSPEL LESSON

The Lord be with you,

**And also with you.**

A reading from the Gospel of St. Mark.

**Glory to You, O Lord.**

\*THE GOSPEL IS READ

Mark 1:1-8

THE GOSPEL RESPONSE

The Gospel of the living Christ.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

\*GLORIA PATRI

No. 70

## CELEBRATION THROUGH PROCLAMATION

SERMON

“Our Christmas Traditions - - - God’s Traditions”

Pastor Russel Shuluga

## CELEBRATION THROUGH CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

CALL TO CONFESSION

GENERAL CONFESSION

**Forgiving God, in this season of Advent, we welcome the coming of your light in a world filled with darkness. We confess to you the ways in which we have added to that darkness rather than obeyed our call to live as children of the light. We ask your forgiveness: for times when we worship violence and belittle peace, for times when we fight amongst ourselves, for times when we forget that we are all children of God, for times when we do not stand up for the helpless among us. By your tender mercy, may the dawn from on high break upon us and give light to those of us that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. Amen.**

SILENT CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

By the mercy and grace of our Good God, we may live in peace with one another for we have been forgiven and Christ welcomes us as a parent welcomes home a long-lost child. Alleluia! Amen!

HYMN OF ASSURANCE

‘O Little Town of Bethlehem’

No. 230 V. 4

## CELEBRATION THROUGH COMMITMENT

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

THE LORD’S OFFERING

OFFERTORY

‘Improvization on “Creator of the stars of night”

George Oldroyd

\*DOXOLOGY

To the Tune “What Child Is This”

***“Praise God, from whom all blessings flow. Praise God, all creatures here below.  
Praise God above, ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.  
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.”***

\*OFFERTORY PRAYER

Pastor: Holy One, this Advent season we wait in peace.

**People: And we give in peace.**

Pastor: Hope for your coming reign;

**People: Peace because of your presence with us even now.**

Pastor: Receive these generous offerings,

**People: And use them for your work of healing and peace in our world. Amen.**

## **CELEBRATION THROUGH THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY EUCHARIST**

### GREAT THANKSGIVING

Pastor: As we wait to celebrate Christ's birth, may the Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Pastor: As we await Christ's return, let us lift up our hearts.

**People: Our hearts are lifted to our God.**

Pastor: As we trust the one who comes to us, let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**People: Joy is in our hearts, and praise is on our lips.**

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

In the rich dark of winter, God makes an astounding promise:

"I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up." (Jeremiah 33:15)

In the wilderness, a voice cries out, longing for

the Refiner's fire, repair, and renewal,

the promised birth (and rebirth) of hope.

Called to bear the weight and fruit of promise,

Mary sings ancient trust—the song of generations—

that God comes to fill the hungry and lift the humble.

She sings that love and truth will meet, that justice and peace will kiss.

In the midst of uncertainty, Jesus assures his disciples:

Just as the tree blooms, so the signs are clear

that the kingdom of God is near.

In the deep of our own winter, we look for them:

bud of hope, branch of peace, sprig of joy, blossom of love.

While around us the snares of fear and conflict lie in wait of infant hope,

you, O Wisdom, O Endless Love, O Radiant Dawn, are there,

keeping vigil with us, in this season of expectation.

We gather at this table, praying that crooked ways be made straight,

that valley's peace be lifted up and mountain's might brought low

so that all God's people might rejoice together, singing:

### THE SANCTUS

Sung to the tune of "Hark the Herald Angels Sing"

***Holy, Holy, Holy Lord! God of Hosts, by all adored!  
Heaven and earth cannot contain all the glory of Your name!  
Hail, Hosanna, God Most High! Blest is He who now draws nigh.  
In the name of God the King! Hallelujahs glad we sing!  
Hail, Hosanna! Praises due be forever, Lord, to You!***

### MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION

We give thanks for the mystery and wonder revealed that first night,  
as humble people led by hope gathered in a quiet stable  
and were witness to your promise reborn.

We give thanks for the blessing and love Jesus shared  
with all whom he met, in food and story.

We remember that, on the night before he was handed over to die,  
Jesus broke bread with his friends, blessed it, gave thanks, and said,  
"Take, eat. This is my body, which I give for you. When you share it, remember me."

We remember that he took the cup and, giving thanks, said,  
“This cup is the new covenant in my blood. When you drink it, remember me.”  
Revealed in stable, cross, and empty tomb, we give thanks, O God, for your limitless love for all.  
With your people of all times and places, we await with hope the fulfillment of your vision for  
all creation.

Bless us, O God, and these your gifts.  
Encourage us to share your life and love,  
which make us, and the gifts we share, truly holy.  
Transform us, God, and your world, and bless your children:  
those who feel alone or afraid...  
those who whose souls and homes are broken by violence...  
those who will go hungry, thirsty, and cold tonight...  
those who long only to hear that they are loved...  
God made known in Jesus Christ,  
hear our prayer.  
We pray these things, trusting in God’s faithfulness revealed:  
Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.  
Together, then and now. We remember.

Sung to the refrain of “What child is This” (Greensleeves) No. 219

***O Christ has died, O Christ is risen  
Christ will come again. Yes, Christ has died!  
Yes, Christ is risen! The Christ will come again!***

#### THE CONSECRATION

Holy Spirit, come to us, and to these gifts of the bread and the cup. As you transform these everyday objects  
into sacramental grace, transform us from ordinary folk into the citizens of God’s Kingdom. Fill us with the Bread  
of heaven, so we would feed the hungriest of your children. Pour the cup of grace into us, so we might overflow  
with love. Make us a compassionate people, who have a passion for your justice.

Through your Son, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy church, all honor and glory are yours, Great  
God, our Hope, our Peace, now and forever. Amen

#### LORD’S PRAYER

Sung to the tune “It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”

**Our Father, Lord on Heaven’s high throne, most holy be your Name. Your Kingdom, come. Your will be  
done—in heaven the same. Give us, this day, the food we need; forgiven may we be. Into temptation do  
not lead; from evil set us free. Yours is the kingdom, unto you in grateful love we bow; And yours is the  
power; Lord, let us view your mighty presence now. The glory yours, your praise be sung by angel hosts  
and men, In every land, by every tongue, forevermore! Amen.**

#### COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

#### THE THANKSGIVING

(Sung to the tune “Angels from the Realms of Glory”)

***Thank the Lord, his praises voicing for this promised faithfulness!  
All who seek the Lord, rejoicing, tell his love, his name confess,  
For He leads us, with thanksgiving in the paths of righteousness.  
At Your Word, Lord, let Your servant go in peace, for with my eyes,  
I have seen Your bright salvation, Israel’s Light, begin to rise,  
As the Glory of the nations leading us to Paradise.***

#### CELEBRATION THROUGH SENDING

**\*BENEDICTION**

Pastor: Take your encouragement from Christ, that your joy may be complete.

**People: We will share in the Spirit; we will find consolation in love.**

Pastor: Practice a ministry of humility and compassion for God is at work in you, empowering you

**People: We will welcome Christ into our hearts. We will lives worthy of the Gospel. We will go forth in hope and in peace.**

\*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

'The First Noel'

No. 245 (Refrain only)

\*RECESSIONAL HYMN

"Emmanuel, Emmanuel"

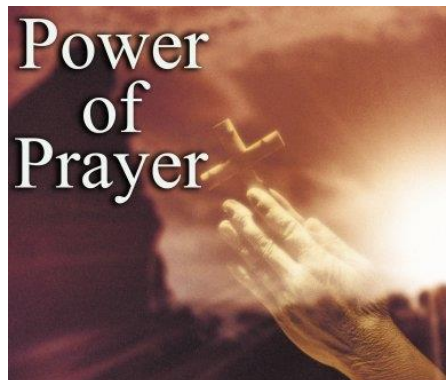
No. 204 (sing twice)

\*POSTLUDE

'Magnificat'

Jean-Francois Dandrieu

***WE TAKE THE LIGHT OF CHRIST INTO THE WORLD***



Dorothy Hawkins – Prayers  
Rosalynn Carter—passed away  
Maine mass shooting  
Middle East conflict  
Morris’s children  
Ginnie White - prayers for good health  
Those who need prayers and don’t ask for prayers  
People who are traveling  
People of Morocco - Earthquake  
John McQuade- recovery at home from multiple surgeries  
Those affected by fires and those still missing in Maui, Hawaii  
Those affected by explosions in Plum  
Roberta (Carolyn’s friend) - diagnosed with early dementia  
Those affected by COVID, RSV and the FLU  
Sharon S.—diabetes complications  
Scott (Paulette’s son) - cardiac Lyme disease  
Jean Winter—Prayers needed  
Lainee Rivers (Kim’s friend) – prayers needed  
Dave McEchern (Kim’s friend) – prayers needed  
Kristina Terrell (Kim’s friend) – prayers needed  
Virginia Atkinson  
Those affected by gun violence  
Seth (Robert Morris’s son) - accident  
President Carter—in hospice  
Jim White (Ginnie’s son) - recovery from rotator cuff surgery  
Steven Akers—health concerns  
Judy Spencer Baker - continued prayers  
Aubrie (Ginnie’s granddaughter) – diagnosed with breast cancer  
Joe (Ginnie & Sue’s cousin) - diagnosed with myeloma cancer  
Gary (Ginnie’s son) - continued good health  
Rev. Russel W. Shuluga  
Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi  
Rev. Paul Ritchey— Pittsburgh/Greensburg DS  
Peacemakers  
People of Ukraine  
Mifflin Avenue United Methodist Church  
United Methodist Church