

**Welcome to the Community Church of Richmond
United Church of Christ**

**Our Church at Worship on the Fourth Sunday of Advent
The Sunday of Love!**

December 19, 2021

10:00 A.M.

***Our Mission: To be an inviting, caring faith community
connecting with Christ.***

Welcome, visitors! Our greeters have welcome bags to share with you, so please make sure they know you're visiting.

This service is livestreamed to Facebook. While mostly only worship leaders appear on camera, occasionally members of the congregation are captured by our camera. If you have concerns about this, please speak with an usher or staff member.

Tune into Facebook at 10:00 on Sunday to share this time of worship.

You can access that video even if you don't have a Facebook account – just type in <https://www.facebook.com/CommunityChurchOfRichmond/>

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD

PRELUDE

Penny Kraft

WORDS OF WELCOME

Rev. Hope Molozaiy

GATHERING SONG "Light of the World"

Kim May

The world waits for a miracle
The heart longs for a little bit
of hope
Oh come, oh come, Emmanuel
A child prays for peace on
Earth
And she's calling out from a
sea of hurt
Oh come, oh come, Emmanuel

The drought breaks with the
tears of a mother
A baby's cry is the sound of
love
Come down, come down,
Emmanuel
He is the song for the suffering
He is Messiah, the Prince of
Peace has come
He has come, Emmanuel

And can you hear the angels
singing
Glory to the light of the world
Glory, the light of the world is
here

Written by: LAUREN DAIGLE, PAUL DUNCAN, PAUL
MABURY
Lyrics © ESSENTIAL MUSIC PUBLISHING
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One: We are seeking

All: deeper faith, a place to belong, the feeling that God is here in this room.

One: We are seeking

All: joy that overflows, the movement of the Spirit, a hand to hold when alone in the dark.

One: We are seeking

All: the freedom to be, the courage to love, the conviction to act in the face of injustice.

One: We are seeking, but here in this space,

All: we are found.

One: Take a deep breath. This is your sanctuary.

All: God is here. We are found. Amen.

One: Let us Pray:

Holy God,

We come to your Scripture today

Hoping that it will feel a bit like an open door,

Like Elizabeth welcoming Mary,

Like coming home.

We want to fall into it.

We want to find sanctuary here.

We want to breathe easier just hearing these words.

And we want to find ourselves laughing

Because this good news is just too good to keep inside.

So hover close to us now, we pray.

Open the door to our hearts

So that we might find sanctuary in your words.

Gratefully we pray,

Amen.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES

The Valsa Family

WORD FOR ALL AGES

HYMN “Of the Father’s Love Begotten” #72 (Red Hymnal)

WE LISTEN TO THE WORD OF GOD

SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 27 1-5, 13-14

The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?

When evildoers assail me
to devour my flesh—
my adversaries and foes—
they shall stumble and fall.

Though an army encamp against me,
my heart shall not fear;

though war rise up against me,
yet I will be confident.

One thing I asked of the Lord,
that will I seek after:

to live in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,

to behold the beauty of the Lord,
and to inquire in his temple.

For he will hide me in his shelter
in the day of trouble;

he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;
he will set me high on a rock.

I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord
in the land of the living.

Wait for the Lord;

be strong, and let your heart take courage;
wait for the Lord!

The Gospel according to John 1:1-18

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

Message: Seeking Sanctuary in Signs & Symbols

WE RESPOND TO THE CALL OF GOD

SONG RESPONSE "Drawing Nearer" by Christopher Grundy
Even in the midst of all of this,
Trouble on the news, no peace within,
Still there is a light in the distance
Drawing nearer
Drawing nearer.

So open up our eyes to see your light,
Open up our arms, they're clenched so tightly,
Come in like a thief and steal
Our hearts
Like a baby,
Like a baby.
Even in the midst of all of this.

TIME OF PRAYER
Pastoral Prayer
The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

THE OFFERING

Invitation to Give: We are so thankful for the continued financial support that we have continued to receive during this time!
You may always send your check directly to the church at PO Box 246, Richmond IL, 60071.

Prayer of Dedication

Good and gracious God,
We give these gifts for the seekers and for those who need sanctuary.
We give these gifts for those who have lost sanctuary,
and for those who find sanctuary all over the place.
We give these gifts for those who build sanctuaries.
Use these gifts to bring us closer to home.
With joy and hope in our hearts we pray, amen.

NEWS OF THE CHURCH

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

Pastoral Benediction

Sending Song “When the Lord is in You”

**When the Lord's in you, and the Lord's in me,
there's a bridge between our spirits,
wherever we may be.
Til we meet again
let us hold the Mystery of the Lord in you and me.**

(Bryan Sirchio Used with permission. Crosswinds Music, Madison WI)

*POSTLUDE

Call to Worship, Candle Lighting, and Opening Prayer by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.CCLI License No. 1908882

CHURCH NEWS

BIBLE STUDY meets on Zoom each Tuesday at 1:30pm.

Our Meeting ID is 896 5130 1635 and the passcode is 003204. No special knowledge is needed!

This Tuesday, we'll be studying Luke 2.

FINANCIAL PLEDGES

We need to know your pledges for 2022. If you haven't yet, please let Ruth Zehr know as soon as possible what you plan to give in the coming year. Cabinet meets tomorrow and it will help our discussion of the budget if we have as complete a picture as possible of the financial expectations for next year. You can reach Ruth at rkzher@aol.com or 847-971-7589.

GIVE TO THE CHRISTMAS FUND of the United Church of Christ is a tangible expression of God's love and light in the world. This fund provides annuity supplements, health insurance supplements, emergency grants, and Christmas gift checks to individuals who have long served the church, such as pastors, widows of pastors, and pastors in transition between churches. You can contribute through the end of the year; just mark "UCC Christmas Fund" on your giving envelope or check memo line.

DECEMBER EVENTS

- Live Community Church Advent Calendar. Watch for videos daily on Facebook and YouTube
- Longest Night Service: Online, Tuesday Dec 21, at 7:30 pm
- Christmas Eve Worship: In-person and online, 8:00 PM, Dec. 24th.
- Pajama Sunday – December 26 – with worship ONLINE ONLY

May you engage with these opportunities to the fullest as we prepare to greet the Holy One among us. See the back page for more details on our late December plans.

PRAYERS for the Week of December 19, 2021

If you have prayer updates or announcements to share, Please send them to BOTH Pastor Hope (pastorhope@richmonducc.org) AND our office manager, Brandi Pletcher (office@richmonducc.org). THANKS!
We will leave a person on our list for four weeks, unless asked to leave them on longer.

JOYS: Birthdays: Ralph Runnfeldt (Dec 20), Dawn Conley (Dec 24), Cheryl Heber (Dec 24)

PRAYERS FOR:

Debbie Franzone
The Blanton family
Deann Workmon
Linda Swenson
Sheryl Vezina
Dawn Conley's daughter, Kelly DeSalvo
Bob Howe
Marti Swanson's friend, Mary

Ongoing Prayers:

Lydia Blanton's friend, Natalie, and Natalie's family
Julie Leighninger
Marti Swanson's brother, John Baldwin
Ella Watts, Melissa Jones's mother
Louise Strah's niece, Amy Lenik

Members and Friends who are Homebound or in Nursing Facilities:

Mercedes Ahlgrim (New Mexico), Sharon Mensing (Sterling), Bob Krueger, Betty Waspi

UPDATES ON COVID AND CHRISTMAS

“All I want for Christmas is safe and healthy friends and family!” As COVID cases rise in our area and Christmas approaches, it seems a good time for some updates and reminders.

COVID cases have increased dramatically in McHenry County in the past couple weeks. That increase isn't because of the omicron variant; it had started well before omicron was detected in Illinois. It's simply because the virus is more persistent than our efforts to keep it away. So, because I love you, I remind and encourage us all to be persistent about our prevention and care. Wear your mask. Sanitize. Vaccinate and boost as you best can. If you are feeling at all unwell, stay home – from church and whatever else you can stay home from.

Here in worship, we continue to take reasonable precautions. Everyone has done a great job of being persistent at wearing your masks throughout Sunday morning. We continue to have about half our pew seating blocked off to help us keep safe distance from each other, and we've usually had 20-30 people attending in our sanctuary that can hold a little over 100. Some of you recently asked me to clarify what our guidelines are for singing together right now: We continue to choose gathering songs to feature just Kim and Penny, but you are welcome to sing along with both hymns in our service. Again, we keep our masks on and our distance, and most of us sing quite quietly, all of which reduce the risks of singing together.

Looking ahead to Christmas Eve, we hope and plan to hold worship in-person, and to livestream that service as usual. We'll keep all to the same precautions described above and keep that service just a little bit shorter than traditional. We do plan to sing carols as a part of that service, though probably a few less than usual, and letting Kim lead us in a couple of them. We also plan to light our individual Christmas candles as we traditionally do at the end of that service. We plan to provide small 'snuffers' to extinguish those candles instead of blowing them out.

Sunday comes again on December 26. At this time, we plan to offer worship online only on the 26th. I'll have more details about that plan soon, but for now, know that you can spend our traditional “Pajama Sunday” at home in your pajamas!

Your church leaders and I continue to try our best to make these decisions wisely and faithfully. If you have questions or concerns about our practices for worship and gathering, please let me know; I'm happy to listen and talk.

- Pastor Hope

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Isa. 11:1-12; Exod. 19-20:17

Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum, 1710
 Based on ancient antiphons from *Advent Vespers*
 Transl. John Mason Neale, 1851, and others; alt.
 St. 2, 7, transl. Henry Sloane Coffin, 1916; alt.

Unison

1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and
 2 O come, O Wis - dom from on high, and
 3 O come, O come, O A - do - nai, who
 4 O come, O shoot of Jes - se, free your
 5 O come, O Key of Da - vid, come, and

ran - som cap - tive Is - ra - el That mourns in lone - ly
 or - der all things far and nigh; To us the path of
 came to all on Si - nai high, And from its peak a
 own from Sa - tan's tyr - an - ny, From depths of hell your
 o - pen wide your heaven - ly home; Make safe the path to

ex - ile here, un - til the Child of God ap - pear.
knowl - edge show, and help us in that way to go.
sin - gle law pro - claimed in maj - es - ty and awe,
peo - ple save, and give them vic - tory o'er the grave.
end - less day, to hell's de - struc - tion close the way.

In the medieval Western church, seven "Great O" antiphons, the basis for this hymn, were sung consecutively on the seven days before Christmas, ending with what appears above as the first stanza.

Tune: VENI EMMANUEL L.M. with refrain
 Melody from a 15th-century French "Processional"
 Arr. Thomas Helmore, 1854

Refrain

Re-joice! Re-joice! Em-man-u-el shall come to you, O Is-ra-el!

6 O come, O Day-spring, come and cheer
our spir-its by your ad-vent here;
Love stir with-in the womb of night,
and death's own shad-ows put to flight.
(Refrain)

7 O come, De-sire of Na-tions, bind
all peo-ples in one heart and mind;
Make en-vy, strife, and quar-rels cease;
fill the whole world with heav-en's peace.
(Refrain)

*Of the Father's Love Begotten

Col. 1:15-17

Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, 348-c.410

Tr. John M. Neale, 1854, St. 1, alt.

Tr. Henry W. Baker, 1859, Sta. 2, 3

DIVINUM MYSTERIUM 8.7.8.7.8.7.7.

13th century Plainsong

Harm. by C. Winfred Douglas, 1940

Unison

1. Of the Fa-ther's love be-got-ten, Ere the worlds be-gan to be,
 2. O ye heights of heav'n, a-dore him; An-gel hosts, his prais-es sing;
 3. Christ, to thee with God the Fa-ther, And, O Ho-ly Ghost, to thee,

He is Al-pha and O-me-ga, He the source, the end-ing he;
 Powers, do-min-ions, bow-be-fore him, And ex-tol our God and King;
 Hymn and chant and high thanks-giv-ing, And un-wea-ried prais-es be:

Of the things that are, that have been, And that
 Let no tongue on earth be si-lent, Ev-ery
 Hon-or, glo-ry, and do-min-ion, And e-

fu-ture years shall see, Ev-er-more and ev-er-more!
 voice in con-cert ring, Ev-er-more and ev-er-more!
 ser-nal vic-to-ry, Ev-er-more and ev-er-more! A-men.