

**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 20, 2020 10:00 A.M.**

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

Tune into Facebook at 10:00 on Sunday to share this time of worship. If you can't join promptly at 10:00, the video will be available later as well.

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

As you come to worship, we encourage you to light the candle we shared with you in October – or another candle in your home – and to have on-hand the prayer square we handed out last week.

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD

GATHERING SONG

“Everlasting God”

Penny Kraft & Kim May

Verse: **Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord,
we will wait upon the Lord, we will wait upon the Lord.
Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord,
we will wait upon the Lord, we will wait upon the Lord.**

Bridge: **Our God, You reign forever. Our hope, our strong Deliv'rer.**

Chorus: **You are the everlasting God, the everlasting God,
You do not faint, You won't grow weary.
You're the defender of the weak, You comfort those in need;
You lift us up on wings like eagles.**

Repeat from beginning

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WORDS OF WELCOME

Rev. Hope Molozaiy

CALL TO WORSHIP from Isaiah 40:3-5 (Common English Bible)

ONE: A voice is crying out: “Prepare the Lord’s way in the desert!
Make a level highway in the wilderness for our God!
Every valley will be raised up, and every mountain and hill will be flattened.
Uneven ground will become level,
and rough terrain a valley plain.
The Lord’s glory will appear, and all humanity will see it together;
the Lord’s mouth has commanded it.”

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES

The Jooss Family – Bob and Judy

One: Into our tumultuous times, the Love of God breaks in.

Many: Into our fearful times, the glory of God is revealed.

One: Sometimes it announces itself;

Many: sometimes we must look high and low.

One: Sometimes we recognize it;

Many: sometimes we walk right past it, lost in ourselves.

One: Love's in need of willing hearts.

Many: Love's in need of the smallest opening.

One: Greetings, favored ones! God's Love is with you.

Many: Here? Now? How can that be?

One: Be not afraid. With God, nothing is impossible.

Many: Love is knocking at the door.

One: Be not afraid. The Mighty One will do great things.

Many: Who can say what awesome thing God is up to now?

One: Arise and shine, beloved ones. God's Love wants to be born in you.

Many: Here we are, servants of the Lord. Let it be so.

The first two purple candles and the pink candle are lit.

All: For such a time as this, kindle our hope, fill us with your peace, and make our joy full.

The fourth candle is lit.

All: For such a time as this, may Your Love be born in us.

OPENING PRAYER (we say together)

Lord of Love, From the fear that keeps us from answering your call, free us.

From our attachment to the way things have always been, deliver us.

From our despair that is unable to see a new thing breaking forth, save us.

For every time we've said 'no' to Love,

forgive us and open our hearts wide to receive you anew. Amen.

HYMN "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel", verses 1, 6, & 7

led by Ode Keil

Verse 1:

O come, O come, Emmanuel,

and ransom captive Israel,

That mourns in lonely exile here,

until the child of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!

song continues on next page

Verse 6:

**O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by your advent here;
Love stir within the womb of night,
and death's own shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!**

Verse 7:

**O come, Desire of nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind;
Make envy, strife, and quarrels cease;
Fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!**

Tune Veni Emmanuel L.M with refrain | Melody from 15th Century French Processional
Arr. Thomas Helmore, 1854 Music CCLI License No. 1908882

ADVENT PRAYER FROM THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

WORD FOR ALL AGES – Today we're just going to talk about some things that we LOVE about Christmastime. Take a few minutes to think about some of your favorite Christmastime things – What's your favorite carol? What do you love about it? What's your favorite detail in the Christmas story? (Don't say 'all of it' – what one part that you love this year?) Even though it might be sad to think about, what's one Christmas tradition that you love that you aren't getting to take part in this year? Take a few minutes to give thanks to God for all the opportunities you've had to enjoy these things you love.

SCRIPTURE READING

The Gospel according to Luke 1:57-68 (NRSV)

Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.

On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. But his mother said, "No; he is to be called John." They said to her, "None of your relatives has this name." Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And all of them were amazed. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. All who heard them pondered them and said, "What then will this child become?" For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him.

Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy:

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,

for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.

He has raised up a mighty savior for us

in the house of his servant David,

as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,

that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.

Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,
and has remembered his holy covenant,
the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,
to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,
might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness
before him all our days.
And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
to give knowledge of salvation to his people
by the forgiveness of their sins.
By the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”
The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared
publicly to Israel.

MESSAGE For Such a Time as This: Growing into Love

SPECIAL MUSIC “Noel” Kim May and Penny Kraft
Words and Music by Matt Redman, Chris Tomlin and Ed Cash

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.

HYMN “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling” verses 1 & 3

Verse 1:

**Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven, on earth be found,
Fix in us a humble dwelling, all your faithful mercies crown;
Jesus, you are all compassion; pure, unbounded love impart,
Visit us with your salvation, enter every trembling heart.**

Verse 3:

**Come, almighty, to deliver, let us all your life receive;
Suddenly return, and never, never more your temples leave.
You we would be always blessing, love you as your angels love,
Pray and praise for your unfailing, wounded arms out-stretched above.**

Tune BEECHER 8.7.8.7.D. | Alternate tune: HYFRYDOL
Charles Wesley, 1747 alt. 1751 Music CCLI License No. 1908882

OFFERING Invitation to Give – We are so thankful for the continued financial support that we have continued to receive during this time! Though we rarely see each other in person these days, our church is still: providing worship; providing Sunday school for our church kids; connecting members with each other; supporting neighbors in need, locally and further away. We believe those things are parts of God’s calling for us in this place and we can do them because of steady financial support. You may always send your check directly to the church at PO Box 246, Richmond IL, 60071.

Prayer of Dedication – You might pray as you write your check and address your envelope to the church... Creator, Redeemer, Holy Spirit, bless these gifts of hope compassion, faithfulness and gratitude. For all that your love has already done, thank you. For all you will yet do, through these gifts and by your Spirit, we praise you. Amen.

NEWS OF THE CHURCH

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

Pastoral Benediction

Sending Song “When the Lord’s 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.**

(Used with permission. Crosswinds Music, Madison WI)

POSTLUDE

Call to Worship, adapted by H. Molozaiy; Advent candle lighting, opening prayer, and Prayer of Dedication, from 2020 Offering Guide from The Christmas Fund of the United Church of Christ. Music copyright, CCLI 1779535.

NEW NEWS

PAN PICK-UP Today, after worship, at the church, come by and pick up your orders from That's My Pan. If you can't stop by today, contact Kim May to arrange an alternate time (kimbuh74@gmail.com).

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP 7 PM, Thursday night!

We invite you to Christmas Eve worship led by many of your church community. This service will be at 7:00PM on Thursday evening on our Facebook page. (It also will be available that evening on our lately-under-used YouTube page.) The order of worship will be emailed out to you as usual before the service. We hope that wherever you are this Christmas, you can join in this unique worship opportunity.

ANNUAL MEETING The Cabinet has scheduled the Annual Meeting of the congregation for Sunday, January 24, 2021. We'll convene the meeting at 11:15 AM following that morning's worship. This meeting will be held over Zoom with the main business items being to approve the 2021 budget and elect the 2021 officers as well as discuss our hoped-for visions for 2021 church life. If you have not been a part of a Zoom gathering yet, please let Pastor Hope know so that one of our church helpers can help you get connected to this meeting. You can connect either through a computer/laptop/smart phone/tablet or if none of those work for you, you can call in from a traditional phone and be a part of the discussions as you would be on a phone call.

ONGOING NEWS AND OPPORTUNITIES

ADVENT GREETING VIDEO CHALLENGE Send in a photo or a brief video of yourself or your family for Pastor Hope to share with the congregation. We'd love to see you with your church Advent wreath, with your Christmas tree, or however you are managing this month! A brief video to wish the congregation merry Christmas would be fine too. Email those to pastorhope@richmonducc.org TODAY!

THE CHRISTMAS FUND OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST One of our annual offerings for the wider United Church of Christ. The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the UCC for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees. Over the past nine months, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the emergency financial needs of many who serve the church have increased dramatically. In such a time as this, the need for the Christmas Fund is more urgent than ever. You may make a contribution to the Christmas Fund by marking your check or envelope accordingly. Thank you!

ZOOM BIBLE STUDY is on break until the new year.

SUNDAY SCHOOL BUT ON A SATURDAY is on break until the new year.

PRAYERS FOR DECEMBER 20, 2020

Names are added to our prayer list when shared with Pastor Hope or by contacting the church office (office@richmonducc.org). We will leave a person on our list for four weeks, unless asked to leave them on longer. 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!

JOYS: Birthdays: Caz Szydlo (12/16), Ralph Runnfeldt (12/20), Cheryl Heber (12/24), Dawn Conley (12/24)

CONCERNS

Molozaiy family friend, Lee, who has lost both his daughter and wife to COVID-19 in recent weeks

Marti Swanson's friend, Sandy, and Sandy's family

Those awaiting test results

Carol Sligting's great-grandson, Aiden

Deann Workmon

Ongoing Prayers:

Sarah Richardson, Rob and Carol's daughter-in-law, pregnant with twins

School teachers, staff, and administrators; school children and their parents, including college students

Those whose household relationships are strained

Those whose employment has been lost or put in jeopardy due to the pandemic

Healthcare workers, especially Cheryl Kazimier's niece and Rob Rummel's daughter-in-law

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:

Ruthann Walters (Indiana)

Mercedes Ahlgrim (New Mexico)

Sharon Mensing (Sterling)

June Whitney (at home)