

Welcome to the Community Church of Richmond

United Church of Christ

Our Church at Worship on the First Sunday of Advent

December 1, 2024

10:00 A.M.

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

Welcome, visitors!

Join us after worship for coffee and conversation in the lounge, the room
right next to the sanctuary.

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD

PRELUDE

Penny Kraft

WORDS OF WELCOME

Rev. Hope Molozaizy

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

GATHERING SONG “Waiting for You”

**We are waiting for You
knowing that You always abide.
We are waking to Your presence
and our hearts are open wide,
open wide.**

Words and Music: Christopher Grundy Copyright 2004
Administrator: Local Church Ministries, UCC

CALL TO WORSHIP

Ron Obara

One: In God’s house, we can be joyful.

All: We can be grateful.

We can be hopeful.

One: In God’s house, we can be weary.

All: We can be anxious.

We can be grieving.

One: In God’s house, we can be honest—

**All: inspired or tired,
delighted or doubtful,
connected or curious,
and everything in between.**

One: This is God’s house. You are welcome exactly as you are.

All: Let us worship our loving God.

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING – How does a weary world hope?

OPENING PRAYER

One: Loving God, the source of our joy,
as we turn our hearts toward your Word,
we ask that you would soften us.

**All: Soften the callouses on our hearts.
Weave yourself in between the cracks in our spirits.
And plant hope where there is room.**

One: And as you do, we will turn ourselves toward you,
eager to hear a Word so good that we cannot help but ask
ourselves,

All: “How can this be?”

One: With openness and gratitude we pray,

All: Amen.

HYMN

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

#116, vv. 1-3

TIME OF CONFESSION

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

One: Gracious God, we are weary.

For weary bodies that ache and cry out, we pray:

**All: Forgive us for pushing ourselves too hard.
Remind us that we deserve Sabbath rest.**

One: For weary minds that feel overwhelmed and saturated with
news, we pray:

**All: Forgive us for creating so many distractions.
Remind us that in the quiet, we can hear you.**

One: For weary hearts that long to feel the joy of this season, we
pray:

**All: Forgive us for being impatient with ourselves.
Remind us that healing takes time, and that joy and
grief can coexist.**

One: For the weary edges of our faith that struggle to hold onto
hope,

**All: Forgive us. Remind us of Zechariah and Elizabeth.
Remind us that your good news knows no bounds.
Amen.**

Words of Forgiveness

One: Family of faith,
no matter how many times we wear ourselves thin,
no matter how many times we lose ourselves to
distractions,
no matter how many times we ask ourselves, “How can this
be?”
God’s love keeps showing up for us.
So say this with me:
**All: We are loved. We are claimed. We are forgiven.
Thanks be to God. Amen.**

WE LISTEN TO THE WORD OF GOD

WORD FOR ALL AGES

*The children are invited to the front of the church at this time.
Afterward, they are dismissed to Sunday School for the remainder of
worship. They will return upstairs at the end of worship.*

Song Response “Wherever Love Is”

**Wherever love is, God is there too
God is in me, ‘cause I love you
Wherever love is, God is there too
God is wherever love is.**

Copyright Crosswind Music

SCRIPTURE READINGS

From Psalm 130:5-8, adapted by HEA Molozaiy

One: We wait for the Lord,
our souls wait, and in God’s word we hope.
Our souls wait for the Lord,
more than those who watch for sunrise,
More than those who watch for sunrise.
O people of God, hope in the Lord!
For the Lord overflows with steadfast love,
And God alone has the power to save us from all our sins.

All: We wait for the Lord, and in God’s word we hope.

The Gospel according to Luke 1:5-25

p. 53 in the New Testament

MESSAGE How Does a Weary World Rejoice?
We Acknowledge our Weariness

WE RESPOND TO THE CALL OF GOD

HYMN “Let Us Hope when Hope Seems Hopeless” #461

THE OFFERING

Invitation to Give

Prayer of Dedication (we say together)

**Creator, Redeemer, Holy Spirit,
who comes to us in ways both mysterious and ordinary,
Bless these gifts of hope, compassion, 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.**

THE SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

Invitation

Communion Prayer

Leader: God be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to God.

Leader: Let us give thanks to God Most High.

People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

the prayer continues...

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.**

Words of Remembrance

Sharing the Bread and the Cup

Each tray of bread also holds gluten free crackers; we serve grape juice rather than wine so that all people may share in this meal.

Please hold the bread and the juice until all are served so we all may partake together.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Bountiful God, we give thanks that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, to love and serve you in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*HYMN “It Came Upon the Midnight Clear” #131, vv. 1 & 3

NEWS OF THE CHURCH

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

Pastoral Benediction

Sending Song “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” refrain

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

Dedication from 2020 Offering Guide from The Christmas Fund of the United Church of Christ. All other printed liturgy by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org. Music shared under CCLI License #1908882

WORSHIP LEADERSHIP

	<u>TODAY</u>	<u>December 8</u>
Liturgist	Ron Obara	Kathy Karch
Video Director	Nicki Carter	
Usher	Dick Strahs	
Greeter	Dawn C. & Mike K.	Elise L. & George Z.
Fellowship Hosts	Dawn C. & Mike K.	
Sunday School	Gail C & Jean V	Gail C & Jean V

AT CHURCH THIS WEEK

- **Today**, after worship, decorate the sanctuary and set up some items downstairs.
- Choir Practice **Wednesday**, 7PM
- Advent Party and Soup Supper, **Thursday**, 5:30 – 7:30
- Set up nativity displays, **Friday**
- Richmond Hot Cocoa Walk, **Saturday**, 10a -3p
- Worship Downstairs & Poinsettia orders due, **Next Sunday**

CHURCH NEWS

ADVENT BEGINS!

Advent devotionals and Advent calendars for adults and children are in the lounge. Please take one home today!
Would you like your own Advent wreath at home? Let Pastor Hope know and we can supply you with the items, including either electric or wax candles to light throughout the season.

WORSHIP UPDATE

Next Sunday, Dec 8, worship will be held downstairs, so that our hard-working and beloved Sunday school children and pageant leaders can rehearse for the pageant in the sanctuary, where they will lead us in worship the following week.
Our downstairs worship will be cozy, snacky, and thoughtful and worshipful as always.

FOR SERVICE:

HOLIDAY GIFT CARD ORDER

The final gift card order for 2024 will be placed on December 16th so cards can be distributed before Christmas and money can be collected so that those payments are posted to our account before the end of the year!

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS are now available to order. Please complete an order form and return it with payment to the basket in the sanctuary. Order forms are due by **NEXT SUNDAY, Dec. 8.**

NATIVITY SETS WANTED & OTHER HOT COCOA WALK HELP

The church will again be a stop on the Richmond Hot Cocoa Walk, Saturday December 7th, from 10AM to 3PM. We'll offer beautiful nativity sets in the sanctuary and hot apple cider and a quiet place to be in the lounge. Last year nearly 200 people came through our doors during this event. Elise Livingston is our event coordinator and here's how we can help it be another great success.

Here's how you can help:

1. Loan us a nativity set (or several). Elise will set them up beautifully and carefully in the sanctuary for our neighbors to enjoy.
 - If we used your nativity set last year, we already have a description of it. If not, please provide a brief note of why this set is meaningful to you, where you got it, or other interesting details. Don't forget to leave us your name with your nativities!
 - Nativity sets can be placed in the small Sunday school across from the upstairs restroom any time between now and December 5th.
2. Help Elise set up the sanctuary on Friday, December 6. Talk to her for times.
3. Be a greeter during the Cocoa Walk. We need friendly church folks to welcome visitors and help them enjoy themselves while there here. We expect to be busier after noon than in the morning. Can you be here for an hour or two? Let Elise know.

You can contact Elise at 815-347-2807 or elise@eliselivingston.com.

You can also see the signup sheet in the lounge and decide where you can help out! Thank you!

FELLOWSHIP HOSTS are needed for December. Sign up in the lounge.

ALTAR FLOWERS

If you would like to sponsor altar flowers on a particular Sunday in honor of a birthday, anniversary or other special day, please talk to Jonathan Kaman, 815-347-5035. Jonathan can order something from the florist or you can provide your own arrangement.

Christmas Family: Our Church's Wider Mission 2024 Christmas Family from the Richmond-Spring Grove Community Food Pantry this year is a family of seven, Mom, Dad, Girl 4, Boy 10, Boy 11, Girl 16, Boy 18.

We will be using SignUp.com again this year. Below are the 3 easy steps instructions to get to our online site. If there is a * in front of a gift please see the notes.

Please wrap your gift and tag it with the following information.

Family X, Gift #, Name (boy-girl-mom) and Age (see example below). No Bows Please, they just fall off. Please put gift receipt and gift cards in an envelope with this information Gift #, Family X, Name (boy-girl-mom-Dad) and Age and place it in the Box marked Mom. All Gifts need to be returned by **Sunday, December 15th**. *The December 17 date on the SignUp sheet is the date the site closes.*

REMEMBER: Gift Cards purchased through our Raise Rite Gift Card ongoing Fund-Raiser give helps the church at no cost to you. Gift Cards for shoes, boots, underwear are available from Penny or ask about getting connected on line to purchase all your gift cards for shopping this Christmas Season.

Please sign up for Family X 2024 Christmas Family!



Family: X

Gift # 11

*(If you are putting multiple gifts in one box,
please put all gift # on tag.)*

Name: Age *(listed below)*

*Mom, Dad, Girl: 4, Boy: 10, Boy: 11,
Girl: 16 and Boy: 18*

Here's how it works in 3 easy steps:

1. **Click this link** to go to our invitation page on SignUp: <https://signup.com/go/Xhmtptb>
2. **Enter your email address:** (You will NOT need to register an account on SignUp)
3. **Sign up!** Choose your spots - SignUp will send you an automated confirmation and reminders. Easy!

Note: SignUp does not share your email address with anyone. If you prefer not to use your email address, please contact me and I can sign you up manually.

If you have any questions, please contact Karen Wootton at 815-271-0056

FOR CONNECTION

ADVENT PARTY –THURSDAY, December 5, 5:30-7:30pm.

We start crafting at 5:30 in the basement classrooms, then around 6:30 we'll share a simple soup supper and wrap up by singing a few carols together.

Everyone of every age is welcome to join us for all or part of the evening. Please sign up TODAY if you plan to attend. We will provide soup and others are welcome to bring bread, crackers, or cookies to share, or just bring yourself.

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

In gratitude, we share that currently we have received 33 pledges for a current total of \$115,480 pledged to the church for 2025. This is an increase over what was pledged for 2024, brought about by many people making small updates to their giving. We are thankful to everyone who is able to pledge in any amount. If you would like to offer your pledge for 2025 before the end of the year, there are blank pledge cards on the table in the back of the room, or contact Financial Secretary Judy Jooss at jdjooss@gmail.com

ANNUAL MEETING

Save the date of Sunday, January 19, 2025, for the next annual meeting of The Community Church. Our meeting will overlap with worship time as we pass a budget for the coming year, elect new officers, and dream together about what might be in store for us next.

PRAYERS for the WEEK OF December 1, 2024

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

JOYS: Birthdays: MaryAnn Keil (12/3) and Rytas Kaman (12/6). And Happy Anniversary to Mike and Kathy Karch (12/2).

We are thankful for the opportunities we have this holiday season to reconnect with friends and family. We are especially grateful for the blessings of improved and good health.

Sympathies to Nicki Carter and her family on the passing of her cousin, Rocco.

PRAYERS FOR:

Carol Sligting's daughter and family
Jim Speaker
Bob Jooss
Theresa Kaman's mother, Janis Voge
Sheryl Vezina

Ongoing Prayers:

Betty Waspi's son-in-law, Wayne Japp
Robert Richardson
Rev. Ruth Costello
Mike Karch
Bill Haase
Henry Eickelberg
Louise Strah's niece, Amy Lenik
Melissa Jones

Our Congregational Prayer Partner this week is DeAnn Workmon.

In the Wider Church: We pray for our neighbors in Christ at Hope United Church of Christ in Aurora and their Pastor, the Rev. Wally Carlson.

Members and Friends who are Homebound: Betty Waspi



DECEMBER 2024

1 <i>Advent 1</i> Christmas Family Gift Collecting Begins	2	3	4 Choir Practice 7:00	5 Advent Party 5:30- 7:30	6	7 Cocoa Walk, 10:00am- 3:00pm
8 <i>Advent 2</i> Worship Downstairs Poinsettia Orders Due	9 Cabinet Meeting 6:30	10 Missions Mtg 1:30 Blood Drive 3:30-7:30	11 Choir Practice 7:00	12	13	14 Men's Club Pageant Rehearsal, TBD
15 <i>Advent 3</i> Pageant during worship	16	17	18 Choir Practice 7:00	19	20	21 Choir Practice
22 <i>Advent 4</i> Choir Celebration Sunday	23	24 Christmas Eve Worship 8:00pm	25	26	27	28
29 Pajama Sunday Men Sing	30 Pastor Out of Town thru 1/2	31				

WE WISH YOU A WEARY ADVENT?

“How Does a Weary World Rejoice?” is the theme we’ll be resting in during this Advent season, using resources from A Sanctified Art. This theme recognizes that joy is often a companion to many other emotions. Here’s how the planners of this series reflect on the theme:

“We can feel joy in addition to feeling many other things at once: grief, anticipation, anxiety, excitement, disappointment, exhaustion. Perhaps many of us live with the myth that joy is not something we deserve – or that it is wholly out of reach. But our joy is rooted in the truth that we belong to God. Can you tether yourself to that deep truth? You deserve to feel joy – fully. The world needs your joy, even if you are weary. Our joy is better when it is shared. This theme of course alludes to a line in the familiar Christmas hymn, “O Holy Night,” which has an interesting history. The song was originally written by a French poet who was atheist, and the music was supplied by a Jewish composer. The hymn was later translated into English by an American Unitarian minister. In the 1800s, it became a popular hymn for Christian abolitionists due to its justice-focused language in verse 3. (“Truly He taught us to love one another; His law is love and His gospel is peace. Chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother, and in His name all oppression shall cease.”) Like Mary’s song, the hymn reminds us that justice and joy belong together. Sometimes our joy is an act of resistance. And so, this Advent, we will hold space for our weariness and our joy. We will seek a “thrill of hope” in our hurting world. We will welcome joy— even and especially if, like the prophet Isaiah, we cry out for comfort (Isaiah 40:1). In this weary world, may we find many ways to rejoice.”

May we bring our weary selves before God this Advent, before one another, before the manger, and together expect that still there will be hope, peace, love, and, yes, joy. Amen.

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

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>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.
<i>(Refrain)</i></p> | <p>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.
<i>(Refrain)</i></p> |
|--|---|

NURTURE

461 Let Us Hope when Hope Seems Hopeless

Ps. 126:5-6; Rom. 4:18; 1 Cor. 13

David Beebe, 1989

1 Let us hope when hope seems hope - less, when the
 2 Faith and hope in love's com - pas - sion will sur -
 3 Like a child out - grow - ing child - hood, set - ting

dreams we dreamed have died. When the morn - ing
 vive though knowl - edge cease, though the tongues of
 child - hood things a - way, we will learn to

breaks in bright - ness, hun - ger shall be sat - is - fied.
 joy fall si - lent, dull the words of proph - e - cies.
 live in free - dom, in the life of God's new day.

Emma Lou Diemer, organist since the age of thirteen, studied composition at Yale University and Eastman School of Music, and has published orchestra, chamber, choral, and organ works. David Beebe wrote this text while teaching a course on creative writing. A minister of the United Church of Christ, Beebe has served on the staff of the denomination's Stewardship Council.

Tune: LET US HOPE 8.7.8.7.D.
 Emma Lou Diemer, 1994
 Alternate tune: HYFRYDOL

One who sows the fields with weep - ing shall re - trace the
 Faith shall see and trust its ob - ject; hope shall set its
 Now we see as in a mir - ror. Then we shall see

sor - row - ing way and re - joi ce in har - vest
 an - chor sure; love shall bloom in Love e -
 face to face, un - der - stand how love's com -

boun - ty at the break - ing of the day.
 ter - nal. Faith and hope and love en - dure.
 pas - sion blos - soms through a - maz - ing Grace.

It Came upon the Midnight Clear

Luke 2:8-14

Edmund H. Sears, 1849; alt.

1 It came up-on the mid - night clear, that glo - rious song of old,
 2 Still through the clo - ven skies they come, with peace-ful wings un - furled,
 3 And you, be - neath life's crush - ing load, whose forms are bend - ing low,
 4 For lo, the days are hasten - ing on, by proph - et bards fore - told,

from an - gels bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of gold;
 and still their heav - en - ly mu - sic floats o'er all the wea - ry world;
 who toil a - long the climb - ing way, with pain - ful steps and slow,
 when with the ev - er - cir - cling years comes round the age of gold;

"Peace on the earth, good will to all, great news of joy we bring."
 A - bove its sad and low - ly plains they bend on hover - ing wing,
 Look now, for glad and gold - en hours come swift - ly on the wing;
 When peace shall o - ver all the earth its an - cient splen - dors fling,

The world in sol - emn still - ness lay to hear the an - gels sing.
 and ev - er o'er its Ba - bel sounds the bless - ed an - gels sing.
 O rest be - side the wea - ry road, and hear the an - gels sing!
 and all the world send back the song which now the an - gels sing.

Edmund Sears, a Unitarian minister who served a number of congregations in the Boston area, wrote this Christmas hymn emphasizing the social implications of the Gospel for his congregation at Wayland, Massachusetts.

Tune: CAROL C.M.D.
 Richard S. Willis, 1850