

Trinity United Church of Christ Worship Bulletin

Letting God's light shine since 1901

We worship God and seek to share His Word with everyone through faith in Jesus Christ

December 1, 2024

www.trinityuccwestville.org

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here at Trinity!

Gathering and Preparing to Worship

Gathering Music

Sounding of the Bells

[Throughout the centuries, bells have rung to call people to worship or bring them news. Throughout the Advent season, we will begin our services with the sounding of bells to remind us of the good news that is coming in Jesus Christ.]

Welcome

One: Welcome to worship today at Trinity United Church of Christ in Westville Illinois. If you are worshipping with us on line, you can download a bulletin from our church's website www.trinityuccwestville.org. They are located in the events section under today's date,

Opening with Prayer

By Nancy Townley

One: Let us pray...

Many: O Lord, our lives are so filled with chaos and tribulation. Help us be ready to receive your message and gift of love, that we might grow into faithful disciples, serving you by serving others with hope and compassion. In Christ's Name, we pray. Amen.

Announcements

Lighting the First Advent Candle

First Sunday of Advent

By the UMC Discipleship Ministries

One: The Psalmist writes in Psalm 122 verse 1

"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'"

We are glad. Whether we drove in or climbed up, whether we logged on or tuned in.

We are glad to be here in this community, with this faith family.

It is a place of joyful hope, and of radical welcome.

It is a place where, together, we can wait in wondrous anticipation of the kingdom to come.

We light this candle as a sign of our hope, our joyous hope that we can be restored – our faith restored, our strength restored, our confidence restored, our joy restored as we watch and wait with all God's people for the promise to be fulfilled.

Light the first candle on the Advent wreath. The candle of hope.

One: Let us pray...

Many: Christ, we sit in darkness, but you are our light. We long for your coming into our hearts, into our lives and into our world. You are the One for whom all the peoples of the earth wait.

Help us to be ready Lord. Let Your light to penetrate our darkness and radiate within us. Amen.

The Hanging of the Greens

Instructions about Today's Service

The Meaning of the Service

Today we mark the beginning of a new year in the Christian calendar as we prepare to enter the season of Advent. It is a time for both self-reflection and for joy, as we prepare ourselves to receive God's promised Messiah. As someone once said, "Advent makes innkeepers of us all." And when the knock comes, we want there to be room in our hearts for the Christ Child to be born in us anew.

Our service today will help us take a fresh look at some of our cherished traditions, so that we might see the deeper meaning behind them. We begin our service with candles, symbolizing the True Light that is even now coming into the world. The light shines not only for us within the walls of this sanctuary, but also shines out into the world beyond.

Call to Worship

One: In the days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hill; all the nations shall stream to it. Many peoples shall come and say:

Many: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the house of the God of Jacob; that God may teach us
God's ways and that we may walk in God's paths."

Hymn #245 Blue Hymnal "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

1 O come, o come, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the son of God appears
Rejoice! rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, o Israel.

2 O come, thou day-spring, come and cheer
Our spirits by thine advent here
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, o Israel.

3 Oh, come, our Wisdom from on high,
Who ordered all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And teach us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

4 Oh, come, Desire of nations, bind
In one the hearts of all mankind;
Oh, bid our sad divisions cease,
And be yourself our King of Peace.

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

The Colors of Advent

In the light of God's love for us, ordinary colors take on particular significance. One color associated with Advent is purple, which signifies the sacred and a season of reflection. Here at Trinity, you will see that color not only in the Advent wreath, but also in the cloths that cover the communion table and the front of the pulpit

Some other churches use blue instead, for hope and anticipation.

If you look closely, you may notice that there is one pick candle in the Advent wreath. It is always lit on the third Sunday of Advent—a Sunday known as Joy Sunday. It tells us that our time of waiting is nearing its end.

The Christ Candle—the large white candle in the center of the wreath—is white, the color of holiness and purity. Here at Trinity, we use this same candle on the communion table the rest of the year. However, while the Light of Christ always shines, we do not light the Christ Candle in Advent until the night we celebrate Christ's birth.

The Evergreens of Christmas

The color green reminds us of renewal, new life, freshness, and rebirth. Evergreens never change—they are always green, always living. In ancient Rome, evergreens were symbols of peace, joy and victory. Early Christians adopted their use, placing boughs in their windows as a symbol of Christ, a reminder of the everlasting life that is ours through him.

Here at Trinity, our wreaths are emblems of eternity as well, since the circle has no beginning and no end, like God's love for us and for all God's creation.

While the Christmas tree likely has its beginnings in a number of countries with traditions of decorating trees with fruit, flowers, or small ornaments, legend says that Martin Luther was the first to place lights on an evergreen. Walking home through the woods one evening, he was struck by the beauty of the forest with the stars shining in the sky above. So he cut an evergreen with snowy boughs and brought it home to his wife and children. They placed small candles on the branches to represent the heavens above. The custom gradually spread throughout Europe and then on to America.

One of our own traditions at Trinity is to adorn our tree not only with lights but also with red bows. The red symbolizes the sacrificial love of our Lord and Savior, which calls us into a community of faith and a family within the family of God.

Decorating the Tree

As music plays, you are invited to come forward and place a red bow on the tree. The side wreaths will also be hung.

Hymn

#793 Blue Hymnal

For the Beauty of the Earth Vs. 1 - 4

**1 For the beauty of the earth,
for the glory of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies.**

Refrain:

Christ, our Lord, to you we raise
this, our hymn of grateful praise.

2 For the wonder of each hour
of the day and of the night,
hill and vale and tree and flower,
sun and moon and stars of light, [Refrain]

3 For the joy of human love,
brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth, and friends above,
for all gentle thoughts and mild, [Refrain]

4 For yourself, best gift divine,
to the world so freely given,
agent of God's grand design:
peace on earth and joy in heaven. [Refrain]

A Time for the Young and Young at Heart

The Legend of the Poinsettia

Poinsettias will be added at the conclusion of the story.

The Nativity

The Nativity brings us to the side of that humble manger so long ago. With Mary and Joseph, with the shepherds and sages, we bend low to see this newborn King. Why God would choose to come to us in this Child born into humble circumstances is a mystery beyond our understanding. But this we know: in Jesus, God's love comes to each and every one of us, no matter our circumstances. We cannot buy it or sell it, steal it or earn it. It is God's unimaginable gift to us, this indescribable gift of love.

The Nativity figures are placed while we sing Away in a Manger.

Hymn

#124 Blue Hymnal

Away in a Manger

Prayer for Illumination

One: Let us pray...

Many: **Holy One, giver of all gifts, as your Word is read and proclaimed through song and action, let your light shine into our hearts and minds that, through the power of the Holy Spirit, our lives may reflect your glory. Amen.**

Scripture Reading Mark 13:24-37

²⁴ “But in those days, following that distress, “the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light; ²⁵ the stars will fall from the sky,
and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.”^[a]

²⁶ “At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. ²⁷ And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.

²⁸ “Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it^[b] is near,

right at the door. ³⁰ Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. ³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

The Day and Hour Unknown

³² “But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. ³⁴ It’s like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

³⁵ “Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back— whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. ³⁶ If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. ³⁷ What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’”

Footnotes

- a. [Mark 13:25](#) Isaiah 13:10; 34:4
- b. [Mark 13:29](#) Or *he*
- c. [Mark 13:33](#) Some manuscripts *alert and pray*

A Brief Reflection on our Scripture

Hymn

“Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus”

**1. Come, thou long expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.**

**2 Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.**

**3 Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a King,
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.**

**4 By thine own eternal spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all sufficient merit,
raise us to thy glorious throne.**

Prayers of the People

Please drop off any prayer requests in the basket located in the narthex.

Please only first names, and keep your prayers appropriate to our worship.

If you are worshipping via Facebook Livestream

Please type in and post in the comments section and share any prayer requests.

We will try and get to every prayer posted during worship.

If we don't get to your request, we will lift up your requests after worship.

After Pastor David reads the petition, he will say “Lord in Your mercy,”
and the congregation will respond with **“Hear our prayer...”**

The Prayer of Our Savior

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.
Amen

Giving Our Gifts

Gift-giving has been part of Christmas from the very start. God's gift to us is Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. When they heard about his birth, the shepherds gave of themselves, coming to see what the angels had told them about, and the wise men gave of their treasures as they fell down and worshipped him. In joy and gratitude for all God has done for us, let us also worship by giving of ourselves and our treasure.

Gifts will be placed under the tree as the offering is collected.

Offertory Our Morning Offering will now be Received

Hymn of Response

"Emmanuel"
Em-man-u-el, Em-man-u-el,
His name is called Em-man-u-el;
God with us, re-vealed in us;
His name is called Em-man-u-el;

Prayer of Dedication

One: Let us pray

Many: Thank you, God.

Thank you for the wake-up call, reminding us to be ready.
Thank you for not giving up on your vision of peace.
Thank you for the opportunity to gather each week in your house,
that we might encourage one another to stay on your path.
And thank you for the opportunity to give these gifts for your
ministry, that together we might help the world be ready to receive the
Prince of Peace, in whose name we pray. Amen

Hymn #258 Blue Hymnal Go Tell It on the Mountain

Refrain

Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere.
Go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.

1 While shepherds kept their watching
over silent flocks by night,
behold throughout the heavens,
there shone a holy light.

Refrain

2 The shepherds feared and trembled
when lo! above the earth

rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Saviour's birth.

Refrain

3 Down in a lowly manger
our humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation,
that blessed Christmas morn.

Refrain

Charge and Benediction

One: As you leave the house of the Lord, open your eyes to the signs of God's presence all around you.
Stay spiritually awake, aware, and be constantly ready to welcome the Prince of Peace.
So Thankfully, go out into the world peacefully, to prepare the way of the Lord.
Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, And with all your strength;
and love your neighbor as yourself.

Many: We go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

One: Go forth, knowing that the God who created you, the Christ who redeems you and the Spirit who empowers you is with you today and for ever more. Knowing this, may laughter and joy go with you every step of your journey.

Many: Amen!

Congregational Response

Sing "Amen!"

*Thank you for worshipping with us today! Remember, no matter who you are,
or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here at Trinity UCC!*