The Candle of Love!

FOURTH SUNDAY OF Advent

DECEMBER 19, 2021
COMMUNITY CHRISTIAN CHURCH
(Disciples of Christ and United Church of Christ)

December 19, 2021

10:30 AM

The Reverend Steven Price
Pastor on Sabbatical
The Reverend Dr. Margo Markesteijn
Sabbatical Interim Minister
Mr. Ron Strong
Choir Director
Mr. Frankie Bones
Church Musician
Mr. Ryan Hubbell
Technical Support

Fourth Sunday of Advent ~ Love!
Whoever you are and wherever you are on life’s journey,
you are welcome here!

Words of Welcome
As we begin our service, just some notes of preparation:
1. For Communion: For those who might have forgotten, elements are available on the tables in the atrium.
2. Prayer requests – Please text your prayer requests to Beth Fulkerson at 585.755.6310 by the time we’re listening to Special Music/Anthem. State your name should your number not be in her contact list and your requests will be read during community prayer. ALSO, for those without cell phones, slips of paper/pencils can be found on pews by center aisle. Thank you.
3. In consideration of all, please wear a mask at all times while in the building.
4. Announcements ... For today, announcements will take place at the beginning of the service. Beth should have already received any requests as she will now read them as well as those printed in the bulletin.

GATHERING
Please take this time to center yourself as we listen to this morning’s prelude.

Prelude
Frankie Bones

Land Acknowledgment: Our physical space stands on unceded land originally stewarded by the Seneca people. Today let us acknowledge and honor the Seneca nation by walking paths that lead to equality for all and care for creation.

Call to Worship (Responsive) ~ From Barbara Brown-Taylor’s Homiletic Perspective of Psalm 80:1-7

One: Turn toward the light of Christ, holding the past in your heart!
Many: Let us give thanks for the whole long history in which the one Shepherd of the sheep has cared for the flock.
One: From Genesis to now, through absence and presence, with tears and laughter, in darkness and in light!
Many: Without ever failing to answer the prayers of the people, though always in God’s own good time.
ALL: Let us worship God together! Amen!
Advent Song

*When God Is A Child*

We will sing verse 4 only.

*Please remain seated.*

Love is a flame that burns in our heart.

Jesus has come and will never depart.

When God is a child there’s joy in our song.

The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong, and none shall be afraid.

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Lighting of the Candle of Love

*Gifts from God* by Ann Weems

Yvonne Thorneley & Kolton

Lucretia Ackley

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;

God’s mercies never come to an end.

They are new every morning!

The Lord God gave the people of the earth a garden,

and the people said, “That’s very nice, God, but that’s not enough!

We’d like a little knowledge, please.”

The Lord God gave them knowledge, and the people said, “Now that we have knowledge, we’d like things.”

The Lord God gave the people things,

but they always said, “That’s not quite enough.”

So the Lord God gave them gifts unequaled:

- the sun
- lightning and thunder
- rain and flowers
- animals and birds and fish
- trees and stars and the moon.

God gave them the rainbow.

God parted the Red Sea and gave them manna.

God gave them prophets

- and children
- and each other,

- but still the people said, “That’s not quite enough.”

God loved the people,

- and out of ultimate merciful goodness

God gave them the Gift of Gifts,

- a Christmas present never to be forgotten.

God gave them love

- In the form of God’s Son,
- even Christ Jesus.

There are some that don’t open their eyes or their ears or their hearts

- and they still say, that’s not quite enough.

They wander through stores looking for Christmas.

(continued)
But others open their whole being to the Lord,  
bending their knees to praise God,  
carrying Christmas with them every day,  
For these the whole world is a gift!

Today, we light the Candle of Love, to shine in the darkness light of Hope, Peace and Joy.  
God is LOVE!  
LOVE is God.  
Let God’s LOVE shine through us, in us and around us.

† Opening Hymn  
**God’s Love Made Visible**  
Chalice Hymnal, No. 171  

God’s love made visible! Incomprehensible!  
Christ is invincible! His love shall reign!  
From love so bountiful, blessings uncountable  
make death surmountable! His love shall reign!  
Joyfully pray for peace and good will! All of our yearning he will fulfill.  
Live in a loving way! Praise him for every day!  
Open your hearts and pray. His love shall reign!

God gave the Son to us to dwell as one of us –  
a blessing unto us! His love shall reign!  
To him all honor bring, heaven and earth will sing,  
praising our Lord and King! His love shall reign!  
Open all doors this day of his birth, all of good will inherit the earth.  
His star will always be guiding humanity throughout eternity! His love shall reign!

Sharing With Children  

Anthem  
“*Songs of Joy*”  
Van Denman Thompson

*Children are invited to Faith Formation activities following the choir’s anthem.*

**ENGAGING**

Scripture Reading  
Luke 1:39-50  
Pew Bible, NT page 57  
Lector: Jen Kann

Sermon  
The Reverend Dr. Margo Markesteijn

Music for Reflection  
Frankie Bones

**RESPONDING**

Offertory Sentence and Blessing
While no plates are passed during the offering, your gifts are still needed and appreciated for the continuation of our ministries. You are welcome to use the Tithe.ly app on our webpage, send a gift via U.S. mail, or through your bank.

* An offering plate is available in the narthex for those who would like to give after worship.

† Offertory Hymn

Doxology
Chalice Hymnal, No. 46

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, (God) all creatures here below;
Praise him (God) above, ye heavenly host:
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

THE LORD’S SUPPER

This table is open to all. Together we are the Body of Christ.
We will partake of the Bread and the Cup in unison following the Elder’s prayer.

Let us say together the prayer Jesus taught his disciples . . .

The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father (or Creator) which 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.

Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming
Chalice Hymnal, No. 160

Please remain seated.

Lo, how a rose e’er blooming
from tender stem hath sprung,
of Jesse’s lineage coming,
by faithful prophets sung;
It came, a flow’ret bright,
amid the cold of winter,
when half spent was the night.

Isaiah ‘twas foretold it,
the Rose I have in mind;
with Mary we behold it,
the virgin mother kind.
To show God’s love aright,
she bore to us a Savior,
when half spent was the night.
Prayers for Our Community and the World

Hear now our community prayers. After request... God in your goodness, grace or mercy... People: Hear our Prayer.

Silent Prayers

Musical Interlude “Go, Tell It On the Mountain” Frankie Bones

The Children’s Christmas Pageant

Weather permitting, the Congregation is invited to exit the church and stand in the parking lot facing the church entrance.

Our Reader This Morning – Sophie Wanck-Kann

The Story Begins Luke 2:1-3
The Birth of Jesus Luke 2: 4-7
Special Music “Infant Holy” The CCC Senior Choir
Congregational Hymn The First Noel

The First Noel, the Angels did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep
On a cold winter’s night that was so deep
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel. Born is the King of Israel!

The Angels Appear Luke 2: 8-14
The Shepherds Seek the Baby Luke 2:15-20
The Visit of the Wise Men Mathew 2: 1-11
Special Music “Away in a Manger” The CCC Children’s Choir
Benediction
Opportunity for Photos
Postlude ~ Congregational Hymn O Come, All Ye Faithful

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him, born the King of Angels:

(continued)
Refrain
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of Heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest:
Refrain

Child, for us sinners poor and in the manger,
We would embrace thee with love and awe;
Who would not love thee, loving us so dearly?
Refrain

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born for our salvation,
Jesus, to thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;
Refrain

Pageant Cast
Mary – Violet Wanck-Kann
Joseph – Landon Ayers

Angels
Delilah Bottoni
Riley Freedman

Wise Men
Sean Bottoni
Levi Wanck-Kann
Kolton Thorneley

Shepherds
Declan Cannon
Logan Freedman
AJ Puccia
Joey Puccia
William Schunk

† All who are able, please stand.

ASSISTING IN WORSHIP TODAY
Elders ........ Kathy Schaefer & Jeannie Strong
ZOOM Host................................. Barbara Coe
Deacons ....................... Judi Tellier, Laura Schunk
Greeters............. Kathleen Giesen, All God’s People!
Today, December 19th

Today is our annual Children's Christmas Pageant. As usual, this will take place as part of the regular church service. To allow the children to participate without masks, we will exit the church at the end of the service to watch the pageant - so bring your coats into the sanctuary for worship! The pageant will take place on the entry sidewalk. There will be music by the senior choir and children's choir as part of the event. In case of bad weather, the pageant will be moved indoors.

Attention Church Officers – The 2021 written reports for the Annual Meeting must be submitted to the church office no later than Sunday, December 19 to be included in the Annual Meeting Booklet. Reports should be emailed to Sandy at Turkielegs@aol.com or hard copies may be dropped off in the office in the wooden mail slot marked “Annual Reports.” If you would like a copy of last year’s report dealing with your ministry, let Sandy know. Thanks!

***OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT***

On Sunday, January 9, 2022 directly following worship we will hold our Annual Congregational Meeting. This is a very important gathering in the life of our church. The proposed 2022 slate of officers and the proposed budget for 2022 will be presented for congregational approval. We need your presence and input. Please attend and participate!

HOPES and PRAYERS – Tuesdays at 10:00 AM.

Join Diane Ellis via ZOOM for a time of sharing those things heavy on your heart as well as lifting up the ways God has already blessed your life or answered your prayers. A ZOOM invitation will be sent Monday evening.

Intent to Give Envelopes are Available

For those that requested 2022 intent to give envelopes you can find them on the table in the main office. If you did not request envelopes but still want them please see Pat Cannon or Kate Bissinger or send an email to finsecty.ccc@gmail.com.
DON’T MISS IT! – “Welcome Back Steven” and “Thank You, Margo” BONFIRE
Tuesday, December 21st – 5:30 PM

We’ll stay nice and warm and toasty by the rip-roaring fire – small heaters available under the large canopy.
A chance to greet Pastor Steven & welcome him back before Christmas Eve.
A chance to express our sincere thanks to Margo for filling in so wonderfully.
A chance to be outside and not have to wear masks (unless you just want to keep warm!).

• Grilled Hot Dogs
• Light Sides
• Wraps

Snow Date – Thursday, December 23rd – 5:30 PM

A Note from Pastor Steven

Dear members and friends of Community Christian Church,

While we waited many months for a dancing sabbatical to begin, here we are at its conclusion!
From start to finish this sabbatical has been a gift and God has been so wonderfully present - especially during the challenges.
As an introvert it will take months for me to process this experience, so I ask for your patience as I learn how to meaningfully share what I’ve learned. I'm looking forward to hearing from and learning from you - what transpired over the last three months that we can use to improve our shared lives and ministry?
On Monday, December 20, I’ll be back to the routine and surprises that ministry brings. Monday will be “bulletin day” so I’ll start the return fairly quietly, but hope to see some of you Tuesday at Hopes and Prayers, around the bonfire that evening, and/or during worship Christmas Eve led by the marvelous Margo Markesteijn.

Peace and blessings from your grateful pastor,
Steven

Reminder... It’s not too late to donate to the monetary Christmas gift for Pastor Steven. You can donate up until the end of the year by putting your gift in the offering plate, mailing it to church to the attention of the Financial Secretary or giving it directly to Pat Cannon. We will present the gift to Pastor Steven on Epiphany Sunday, January 2nd.

Don’t Forget Our Annual Mitten Tree
Each year CCC gathers so many mittens, hats, gloves, and scarves that they make the branches of our little tree bend from all the warm and snuggly donations that wrap all the branches. Please consider giving one or more items to adorn our special tree.

MOJO is great at selecting a well-deserved agency to give all our donations to help those who need a little warmth this winter.
The Christmas Offering supports Disciple regional ministries. In 32 regions across the United States and Canada, ministers are nurtured and congregations are provided opportunities for work and worship. Often recognized for the ministries of camps and conferences, regions also play a critical role in the preparation and authorization of ministerial ordination. Both are key to church leadership and development. Regions partner with congregations to support the work required to call a new minister.

We believe the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) needs a strong witness and presence in a place like the Northeast. From big, bustling New York City to rural areas in upstate New York, from New Jersey to Massachusetts, Connecticut and Maine, we are the church of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel calls us to believe in a deeper Hope that moves beyond the “wrappings” of Christmas around us. We proclaim a Hope that brings Good News, Joy, and Compassion for ALL of God’s people.

Please join with others in the Northeastern Region as we support the special Christmas offering on December 19th. A large percentage of the offering will come back to our region for our new beginning. Donations may be made by writing a check to the church clearly marked “Christmas Offering” and dropping it in the offering plate or mailing it to the church.

“RECORDING OUR STORIES” PROJECT

WHAT: Recording stories from each church person (kids too!)
ABOUT: Who you are and someone who has been an important influence in your life (a “saint” for you!)
HOW: By ZOOM – done in groups of 2 (interviewing each other)
WHEN: Starting in November 2021 and occurring over the next several months
WHERE: At your home or at church (your preference)
COORDINATORS: Jeannie Strong and Carol Giblin; Ryan Hubbell as ZOOM master

This project is part of the Sabbatical funding that Steven Price received through the Lily Foundation grant. It will also be a part of the church’s 125th Anniversary which is coming up next year! Jeannie and Carol will be contacting everyone at some point to schedule their recording so be thinking ahead to who you would like to remember on your recording and also who you would like to have as your recording partner! All the information you need will be provided before you record; Jeannie and Carol will help you with any questions you may have!

Hungry for Some Inspiration?

Sign up now for the CCC Daily Dish - a heaping helping of inspiration! MOJO, in cooperation with our diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, is launching a new daily engagement platform. You can opt in by texting CCCDailyDish to 43506. Each day you’ll receive a short message to ponder, reflect on, and/or share with others. Questions? Ask Shawna (shawanalusk@gmail.com or 576-5159).

Best Wishes to Those Celebrating Birthdays This Week . . .

December 20 Bob Day
December 22 Ron Strong, Lee Staley, and Ben Gibson, Jr.
December 25 Keith Benjamin
**THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Today, December 19th</td>
<td>11:30 AM</td>
<td>Service continues with Children’s Pageant outdoors (weather permitting)</td>
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<td>12:00 PM</td>
<td><strong>Written Annual Reports Due</strong></td>
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<td>12:00 PM</td>
<td>SWEM Food Basket Distribution from St. Monica’s Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, December 21st</td>
<td>10:00 AM</td>
<td>Hopes and Prayers (ZOOM)</td>
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<td>12:00 PM</td>
<td>Deadline for bulletin announcements</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5:30 PM</td>
<td>Bon Fire and FOOD in honor of Steven and Margo</td>
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<td>Wednesday, December 22nd</td>
<td>7:00 PM</td>
<td>Sr. Choir Rehearsal</td>
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<td>Thursday, December 23rd</td>
<td>5:30 PM</td>
<td>Bon Fire “Snow Date”</td>
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<td>Friday, December 24th</td>
<td>7:00 PM</td>
<td>Christmas Eve Candlelight Service</td>
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<td>Saturday, December 25th</td>
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<td><strong>Merry Christmas! Christ is Born!</strong></td>
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<td>Sunday, December 26th</td>
<td>10:30 AM</td>
<td>Hybrid Worship – Please wear a mask.</td>
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<td>10:45 (ish)</td>
<td>Children leave for Faith Formation Activities</td>
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**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**

We invite you to join our family of faith as we gather together on Christmas Eve to welcome Jesus into our darkened lives. Amidst candlelight and music we will listen to the ageless story of love born among us. The prelude begins promptly at 7:00 PM and the service, including communion, starts immediately following the beautiful gathering music.

Christmas is a time for family and friends... gather with us as we join the angels singing alleluias to Christ our newborn King!
How to keep Christmas
Inspirational author Wilferd Peterson pondered ways to “best keep Christmas” and “defeat the little bit of Scrooge in all of us.” After reading his suggestions, add your own!

- By following the Star ... to stand again in awe and wonder before the Babe in the manger.
- By rediscovering the faith and simplicity of a little child.
- By being still and listening to the angels sing within our hearts.
- By quietly evaluating our lives according to the Master’s standards as set forth in the Sermon on the Mount.
- By resolving to give ourselves away to others.
- By using the light of Christmas to guide us through ... the coming year.