

Congregational Church of Westminster West
A United Church of Christ
First Sunday in Advent
Thanksgiving
November 28, 2021

Welcome, Announcements, Acknowledgement of Place

Prelude: Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier BWV 731

*First Sunday of Advent:

One: I light one candle here for hope
and it is like a small lamp, lighting a bedside table with open book,
after a long day,
the glow of heart monitor in ICU,
a headlamp for a hiker on an unfamiliar trail,
or a miner down a shaft,
a toddler's paw-patrol nightlight,
or early-morning oven in a bakery.

**All: We light one candle so we will remember
to notice this week's ordinary lights of hope.**

One: For ordinary and available to all
is the hope of Advent.

**All: I will light Candles this Christmas,
Candles of joy despite all the sadness,
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch,
Candles of courage for fears ever present,
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days,
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens,
Candles of love to inspire all my living,
Candles that will burn all year long.** (Howard Thurman)

*Hymn 101: Comfort, Comfort O My People

*1. Comfort, comfort, O my people, tell of peace, thus says our God.
Comfort those whose hearts are shrouded, mourning under sorrow's load.
Speak unto Jerusalem of the peace that waits for them.
Tell them that their sins I cover, and their warfare now is over.*

*2. For the herald's voice is calling in the desert far and near,
bidding us to make repentance since the realm of God is here.
Oh, that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God a way.
Let the valleys rise in meeting and the hills bow down in greeting.*

*3. Straight shall be what long was crooked, and the rougher places plain.
Let your hearts be true and humble, for Messiah's holy reign.
For God's glory evermore shall be known o'er all the world.
And all flesh shall see the token that God's word is never broken.*

Prayer of Confession (seated) Based on thepastorsworkshop.com, Advent 1



One: Long-awaited Messiah

Lord of Hope

All: Have mercy on us who wait for TV, social media, politicians, or any others to whom we surrender authority to satisfy our demands for hope, measured in imminent immediate gratification and tangible rewards whenever we want a boost.

One: Long-awaited Messiah

Defender of Compassion

All: Have mercy on us when we disconnect moments of giving from a life of thanksgiving and compassion, where serving outweighs concerns of inconvenience, inability to be effective, or unwillingness to let God lead.

One: Long-awaited Messiah

Provider, Protector, Liberator

All: Have mercy when we rely on weapons and devices to serve our insecurity, ignoring that we ourselves are called to be your instruments of peace and justice, or when we believe we serve by anonymous nasty remarks left online for the masses to read.

One: Release us from

**All: the chains of this moment, born of imprisoned years
the distractions and false calls of those who cannot help,**

One: Release us from

**All: the blindness to our complicity, frailty, and poverty
the apathy keeping us from seeing, speaking, and caring,
choosing instead the unreasoned willingness to call lies truth and truth lies
believing that the endorphins of power we gain serve you, O Lord,
and will survive our graves**

One: Release us from

**All: the weight of needs stealing our courage to try
the slowness of change chipping away at our enduring**

One: Have mercy on us

Finish your good and generous work

**All: With us, through us, despite us -- not for what we individually will gain, but because
you so love the world and all of us with distinctions we wrongly deem so important.**

AMEN.

Assurance of Pardon

L: God, we are in awe of your patience, your pardon, and your presence among us—your
steadfastness without bounds. Fill us with hope and overflowing love.

P: Thanks be to God! Amen.

*Gloria No. 756 (sung as a round: once unison, twice in parts)

Gloria, gloria in excelsis deo

Gloria, gloria alleluia, alleluia!

Prayers of the People

L: May the Lord be with you.

P: And also with you.

L: Let us pray.

Joys and Concerns

Silence

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father/Mother/Creator, 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 let us not fall into
temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the
glory forever and ever. Amen.**

Scripture Lessons

Jeremiah 29: 1, 4-14

29 This is the text of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the surviving
elders among the exiles and to the priests, the prophets and all the other people Nebuchadnezzar
had carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon.

4 This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from
Jerusalem to Babylon: 5 "Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce.

6 Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in
marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not

decrease. 7 Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.” 8 Yes, this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: “Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. 9 They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them,” declares the Lord.

10 This is what the Lord says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. 11 For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. 12 Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. 13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you,” declares the Lord, “and will bring you back from captivity.[a] I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you,” declares the Lord, “and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.”

John 14: 27

27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

* Hymn 110 : Now Bless the God of Israel

*1. Now bless the God of Israel who comes in love and power,
who raises from the royal house deliverance in this hour.
Through holy prophets God has sworn to free us from alarm,
to save us from the heavy hand of all who wish us harm.*

*2. Remembering the covenant, God rescues us from fear,
That we might serve in holiness and peace from year to year.
And you, my child, shall go before, to preach, to prophesy,
that all may know the tender love, the grace of God most high.*

*3. In tender mercy, God will send the dayspring from on high,
our rising sun, the light of life for those who sit and sigh.
God comes to guide our way to peace, that death shall reign no more.
Sing praises to the Holy One! O worship and adore.*

Sermon: A Listless Advent

Ending Prayer of Sermon in Unison: **God of Light, there can be overwhelming obscurity in this world. But you shine your light and increase joy and hope, and for your brilliance, we are grateful. Amen**

Offertory:

Music: Goldberg Variations’ Subject JSBach

*Doxology

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow!
Praise God, all creatures here below.
Praise God for all that Love has done.
Creator, Christ and Spirit, One.*

*Prayer of Dedication:

* Hymn 116: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

*1. O come, O come, Immanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.*

*Rejoice! Rejoice!
Immanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*2. O come, O come, O Wisdom from on high,
And order all things far and nigh.
To us the path of knowledge show,
And help us in that way to go.*

*Rejoice! Rejoice!
Immanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*3. O come, O come, O Adonai,
Who came to all on Sinai high.
And from its peak a single law
Proclaimed in majesty and awe.*

*Rejoice! Rejoice!
Immanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*4. O come, O Shoot of Jesse, free
your own from Satan's tyranny.
From depths of hell your people save,
And give them victory o'er the grave.*

*Rejoice! Rejoice!
Immanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*5. O come, O Key of David come
And open wide our heavenly home.
Make safe the way to endless day,*

To hell's destruction close the way.

*Rejoice! Rejoice!
Immanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*6. O come, thou 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!
Immanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*7. O come, Desire of Nations, bind
All peoples in one heart and mind.
Make envy, strife and quarrels cease,
Fill the world with heaven's peace.*

*Rejoice! Rejoice!
Immanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*Commissioning and Benediction:

Postlude: Heer, U bent mijn leven Evert-Jan van Laar

*indicates that all who are able shall stand

Church and Community Notes

***Our pastor, Rev. Susie Webster-Toleno, welcomes visits and calls, and is also happy to visit YOU in your home, workplace, hospital room or wherever. In this post-Covid-Isolation world, as we all assess what was and was not working prior to the shut-down, she is still figuring out the best way to make herself available. She sets Thursday afternoons aside for church work, for sure, and is available at other times by appointment. Susie can be reached at the church (802) 387-2334 if it is not an emergency, but the fastest ways to reach her are via cell (802) 579-8356 or email susiewt@gmail.com She reserves Mondays as her Sabbath day, holding that day aside as non-working time.

Worship Participants:

Preacher: David Mulholland Musician: Fred Gray

Deacon: Karen Blanchard Trustees: Guy Payne, chair

Minister to the Congregation: Susie Webster-Toleno

Ministers to the World: The Congregation

Upcoming services:

Dec. 5: Advent 2 Susie Webster-Toleno preaching / Fred Gray music

Dec. 12: Advent 3 Adrienne Major preaching / Fred Gray music

Dec. 19: Advent 4 Susie Webster-Toleno preaching / Eric Robinson music