



The
Lord himself will
give you a *sign*

TRINITY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
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The Rev. Dr. Christopher M. Rankin, Pastor

The Rev. Harry G. Royer, Pastor Emeritus

The Rev. Dr. Carolynne Call, Covenanted Minister of Mission

Mr. Michael Slechta, Director of Music/ Sounds of Trinity Choir Director

Mrs. Christine Oetama, Organist

Mrs. Carmen Richards, Pianist

Mrs. Carol Kratz, Administrative Assistant

Mr. Sean McKelvey, Preschool Director

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT
7:45 A.M. SERVICE

Today's Theme: Today Isaiah prophesies that a young woman will bear a son and name him Emmanuel. The gospel is Matthew's account of the annunciation and birth of the one named Emmanuel, God-with-us. During these final days of Advent we pray, "O come, O come, Emmanuel," a beloved hymn based on the O Antiphons, ancient prayers appointed for the seven days preceding Christmas. On this final Sunday of Advent we prepare to celebrate the birth of the one born to save us from the power of sin and death.

Welcome all visitors! We welcome all who worship with us. May the joy of Christ's presence and the power of the Holy Spirit fill you with peace and hope! We are honored by your presence and trust that you will join us in the praise and worship of God. Please sign our guest book in the narthex. If you are interested in church membership, please give your name and telephone number to Pastor Rankin.

Welcome to the Eucharist! All who seek to follow Jesus and who seek the gifts Jesus offers us are invited to share in this sacrament of Holy Communion. *Children are invited to receive communion at the discretion of their parents/guardians. If a child wants to receive a blessing, they are asked to fold their hands.*

Prayer As You Enter: *Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

(PLEASE STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE)

CALL TO WORSHIP

AFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM AND INVITATION TO THE TABLE

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Blessed is Bethlehem, from which shall come the ruler of Israel.

Blessed is Mary, who believed in the fulfillment of God's word.

Blessed is the One, who comes in the name of the Lord.

Blessed is God, who gives us the gift of peace.

Come now with joy to Emmanuel's table. Feast at the banquet of hope and love.

CONFESSION OF SINS

CALL TO CONFESSION

John the Baptist calls us to repent, to prepare for the coming of God's reign.

Let us heed John's call and confess our sins in silent prayer.

(SEATED OR KNEELING)

SILENT CONFESSION OF SINS

CONFESSION OF SIN

Let us confront our sins, and confess them to the one who is merciful and just.

God of new beginnings, we confess that we have not welcomed your holy reign. We have strayed from your paths. We prepare for war instead of peace. We dishonor one another and your creation. Purify us with your refining fire and set us again on your way of love, that we may bear fruit worthy of repentance, and welcome your coming among us. Amen.

KYRIE

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**
Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

(PLEASE STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE)

ACT OF PRAISE

O God, open my lips.

And my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Praise to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God:

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.

Amen.

(PLEASE BE SEATED)

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE/TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

God is making the final preparations for an amazing thing! Now is the Advent of the long-awaited Messiah, for the One who will bring us hope, peace, joy, and love!

We wait, we prepare, we make straight the way.

Today we light the candle of love. No other word so adequately captures the spirit and goal of our faith. No other word so completely describes what we know of our God.

For God so loved the world that a child was given. A savior was made in the form of Love Incarnate. And Love was allowed to live on.

We gather, then, in Christian Love;

We give thanks for a love that passes understanding, and we wait the dawning of God's pervasive and enduring love once more this Christmas season.

We celebrate the coming of Christ with the lighting of the Advent candles. Let us pray together.

Praise to you, O God, who lives with us, sharing our flesh and bones. As Mary waited and Joseph dreamed, so we wait and dream for you. Bless us and let your face shine upon us, more radiant than these candles, and more dear than all else we seek. Restore us when we fail to refuse the evil and choose the good, and banish all our fears. We pray in the name of Emmanuel, your promised child and our Savior. Amen.

THE WORD OF GOD

THE FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 7:10-16

An Israelite and Aramean military coalition presented a serious threat to King Ahaz of Judah. In response, Ahaz decided to secure his throne and kingdom by seeking Assyrian help. Isaiah reminds Ahaz that human attempts to establish security will fail. The prophet gives the sign that is the only source of true safety: Immanuel, God is with us!

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

THE PSALTER

Psalm 80

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock! You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh. Stir up your might, and come to save us!
Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved. Lord God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?

You have fed them with the bread of tears, and given them tears to drink in full measure.

You make us the scorn of our neighbors; our enemies laugh among themselves.

Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.
You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it.

You cleared the ground for it; it took deep root and filled the land. The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches; it sent out its branches to the sea, and its shoots to the River.
Why then have you broken down its walls, so that all who pass along the way pluck its fruit?

The boar from the forest ravages it, and all that move in the field feed on it.

Turn again, O God of hosts; look down from heaven, and see; have regard for this vine, the stock that your right hand planted.

They have burned it with fire, they have cut it down; may they perish at the rebuke of your countenance.

But let your hand be upon the one at your right hand, the one whom you made strong for yourself.

Then we will never turn back from you; give us life, and we will call on your name.

Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

THE SECOND LESSON

Romans 1:1-7

Most of the Christians in Rome do not know Paul. In this letter's opening he introduces himself as an apostle divinely appointed to spread God's gospel. The gospel's content is the promised coming of Christ, and Paul's mission is to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations, including his Roman audience.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God!

(PLEASE STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE)

THE HOLY GOSPEL

St. Matthew 1:18-25

Matthew's story of Jesus' birth focuses on the role of Joseph, who adopts the divinely-begotten child into the family of David and obediently gives him the name Jesus, which means "God saves."

Glory be to You, O Lord.

THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD

Praise be to You, O Christ.

(PLEASE BE SEATED)

SERMON

"Can You Trust in the Promise?"

Pastor Rankin

(PLEASE STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE)

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from

true God, begotten not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became fully human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, and has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PEOPLE'S OFFERING

OFFERING DEDICATION

Holy God, you blessed Mary by making her the mother of your only Son, Jesus Christ. You have blessed us, as well, with the gift of your Son, and indeed, with the gift of life itself. Out of all these blessings, we give back these offerings this day. Knowing that your promises will be fulfilled, we pledge with our lives to you in anticipation of the coming of the One who brings us peace. Amen.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord!

Let us give thanks to God Most High.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

It is very right and our bounden duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to you, Holy God, our loving Creator, close to us as breathing and distant as the farthest star. We thank you for your constant love and for all you have made. We thank you for all that sustains life, for all people of faith in every generation who have

given themselves to your will and especially for Jesus Christ, whom you have sent from your own being as our Savior. Born of your servant Mary, Jesus shared the joys and sorrows of life as we know it. As we now await the birth of the Christ child, we offer you our hymn of praise.

Holy, holy, holy God of love and majesty, the whole universe speaks of your glory, O God, Most High. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!

(PLEASE BE SEATED)

WORDS OF INSTITUTION AND PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

THE PRAYER OF OUR LORD

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, for ever. Amen.

COMMUNICATION

As this grain was once scattered in the fields, and has come together in one bread, so we, with different needs and hopes, come together as one, for we share one bread.

The Bread of Life, broken for us.

The cup which we share is the cup of the New Covenant written in our hearts and witnessed by Jesus.

The Cup of Blessing, poured out for us and for the many.

*(Those who wish to come forward will be invited by the pastor. The pastor will serve you the host, saying, "The Body of Christ." You reply, "Amen!" The assistant will present you with the cup, saying, "The Blood of Christ." You reply, "Amen!" Grape juice is in the chalice with the cross and wine is in the other chalice. If you need the pastor and assistant to come to you, please indicate that to someone near you or the pastor. If you do not wish to come forward, you are invited to use the packaged elements in the narthex and commune in your pew. The pastor will offer a blessing everyone has communed. **Children are invited to receive communion at the discretion of their parents/guardians. If a child wants to receive a blessing, they are asked to fold their hands.**)*

(PLEASE STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE)

POST COMMUNION PRAYERS

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

As we prepare for the fullness of Christ's presence, let us pray for a world that yearns for new hope.

God our shepherd, let your spirit move with power throughout the church. Give discernment and wisdom to our pastors, elders, deacons, and lay leaders. Take away our fear, so that we serve and love, confident that you are guiding us. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God our source, awaken us to the beauty of the earth and the marvelous variety of life. Unite human kind in repairing and caring for your creation. Protect creatures and habitats in peril due to rising seas and warming temperatures. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God our vision, raise up leaders in every nation who dream of freedom and justice for all people. We pray for the work of international organizations that promote peace and human rights, especially Amnesty International. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God our helper, come to the aid of all who cry out to you. Shelter migrants, refugees, and those fleeing war and famine. Bring relief to individuals and families experiencing hunger, homelessness, or impoverishment. Comfort any who are isolated or lonely. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God our Emmanuel, you are with us in our life together. We give you thanks for gathering us in worship and fellowship, and we remember those who cannot be present. Watch over those who travel. Heal the sick and speed their recovery. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

SILENT PRAYER

Let us pray together.

Faithful God, in this meal you have remembered your mercy, bringing heaven to earth in the body and blood of Christ. As we wait for the day when all your promises will be fulfilled, sustain us and strengthen us by this holy mystery. Guide us toward your promised future, coming to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.

CLOSE OF WORSHIP

BENEDICTION



CATCH THE VISION & SHARE THE JOY



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chancel Flowers are given by Robert & Hedwig Hunsicker in honor of the Slechta family.

The Worship Aids are given by Cherie Cataldi loving memory of my father, Robert Price.

Money Counters: Nevin Cooley, John Bailey, Pat Sensenig, Cherie Cataldi

Building Trustee: Nevin Cooley Lector: Jeff Hackenberger

Altar Guild: Anita Rohrer, Charlene Cristy

Koinonia: Christian Ed. Committee

Attendance for Sun., Dec. 11	7:45–19	9:30–60	TOTAL –79
Sunday School Attendance	19		

Happy Birthday!

Today – Dottie Schadt, Thomas Goodhart

Monday – Sarah Paulukow

Tuesday – Marvin Lehman

Friday – Hedwig Hunsicker, Jerry Richards

Saturday – Penny Kilgore

This Week at Trinity Church

(Church Office Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m.-2 p.m.)

Monday	7:00 PM – SOT Choir/8:15 PM – Bells
Tuesday	1-3 PM – Prayer Shawl 7:00 PM – Consistory/Bds.
Saturday	2:30 PM – Christmas Eve Service w/Holy Communion 6:30 PM – Family Christmas Eve Service 7:00 PM – Alanon/8:00 PM - AA 10:30 PM - Christmas Eve Service w/Holy Communion
Sunday	10:00 AM - Service of Lessons & Carols

NEWS FROM THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Everyone is invited to a special Advent/Christmas celebration TODAY at 9 a.m. in Isenberg Hall! There will be singing, a special story, and a time for people to share their favorite Christmas Eve/Christmas Day memories. The celebration will end with a special koinonia! We hope to see you there!

Special note: Sunday School classes will not be held on December 25 and January 1.

THE DECEMBER PARISH POST is available on both floors of the church building. **The deadline for the January Parish Post is December 19!**

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY: The Prayer Shawl will meet Tuesday, December 20th in the Choir Room from 1:00-3:00 PM. They will continue to meet on the third Tuesday of each month! Come and bring a friend. Hope to see many of you there! Contact Betty Tyndall for more information.

CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTMAS CARD: Today is the last day to sign the congregational Christmas card on the table across from the church office. There is a box for you to put a monetary donation for Milagro House. **Thank you to Betty Tyndall for making the card again this year!**

PRAYER CONCERNS: The family of Marlin “Moe” Weaver (brother of Dottie Schadt/uncle of Cherie Cataldi), the family of Rev. John Smeltzer (seminary classmate of Rev. Bob Hunsicker), Rev. Frank Lantz, Jodi Keller, George DeLong, Dave Trostle, Summerlyn Burger (granddaughter of Marge Burger), Danielle Huggins Holbein, Janet Owens (sister-in-law of Scott & Jane Owens), Joann Peck, Mary Lou Shaab, Stan & Pat Seachrist, Rev. Dave & Mid Gockley, Hilma Slechta (mother of Mike Slechta), Donna Nesbitt (neighbor of John & Sarah Paulukow), Chad Zirkel (son of Donna Zirkel), Jane Portser, Tom Wolf (son of Donna Wolf), Judie Bistline, Jordan Sensenig (grandson of Pat & Joan Sensenig), Laura Jean Watson (sister of Carol Kratz), David and Brenda Haverstick (friends of Mike & Shelley Wagner), Jeannie & Bill Toy (sister & brother-in-law of Lainie Christensen) Carmen Richards, Donna Zirkel, Don & Pat Miller, Sam Minder III, Rev. Bob & Nancy Musser, Dick & Tillie King (friends of Stan & Pat Seachrist), Robin McComsey (neighbor of Himelwrights), Rylan Brent (relative of Chuck & Sue Husted), Hank Fox, Rev. Jere & Judy Chapman, Tom & Elaine Lichtenwalner (parents of Mike Lichtenwalner), Don Pfeifer (husband of Denise Pfeifer), Bob Kilgore, the Lehman family, Judy Barr (friend of Mike & Shelley Wagner), Joann Garvin, Rev. Phyllis Baum, Jake & Jean Otthofer (parents of Dan Otthofer), Rev. Paul Eyer (former pastor of St. Luke’s), Mary Witmer, the Martin family, Robert Richards (brother of Jerry Richards), Monica Williams (friend of Sandy DeLong), Ronald Himelwright (grandson of Brenda & Harry Himelwright), Barry Richards (son of Jerry & Carmen Richards), Tyler Miller (grandson of Iris DeMaio), Joan Kalbach (mother of Dr. Cathy Hoshauer), Nancy Patton, Mike & Judy Barr (friends of Mike & Shelley Wagner), Phyllis Zimmerman, Jim & Kathy Long (friends of Jerry & Carmen Richards), John Siebern (Bob Siever’s brother-in-law), Carl Roth (Gretchen Leinbach’s brother), Lainie Christensen, Sandra Englert (niece of Betty Tyndall), Charles & Betty Booraem, Betty Tyndall and family, Dorothy Fasnacht, Jo Jo Richards & family (Carmen & Jerry’s granddaughter-in-law), Bob & Marlyn Wible, Barry Moore (Donna & Ron Denlinger’s brother-in-law), Judy Wisniewski (sister of Chuck Husted), and the Bonilla-Rodriguez family (friends of Trinity Church)

ADVENT ENVELOPES: The Board of Deacons decided to give funds from the Advent offering envelope to the U.C.C. Christmas Fund for retired clergy, widows/widowers of U.C.C. clergy, and ministerial assistance. We will hear more about the U.C.C. Christmas Fund offering in December.

ADVENT DEVOTIONALS & CALENDARS: There are devotionals available for adults & children and Advent calendars for children on the table across from the church office.

THE CHRISTMAS TREE IN THE NORTH WINDOW is given in memory of Leon L. & Ethel Gruber by son Greg, daughter Sharon Armstrong, and granddaughter Jessica.

THE CHRISMON TREE: The Chrismons on the small tree in the stairwell were made by the late Edythe Geib. Several people have asked about the Chrismon tree. The term “Chrismon” comes from the Latin “Christi monnogramma” which simply means “monogram of Christ”. Therefore, a Chrismon is a Christian symbol that represents Christ. There is a descriptive list of the various Chrismons next to the tree.

THE ADVENT CANDLES AND CHRIST CANDLE are dedicated to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Grace M. Dodson (mother) and Dolores A. Dodson (aunt) of Donna Wolf, given by the family and friends. The candle stand and wreath are in memory of S. Leona Wolf, mother of the late John Wolf.

THE PEW CANDLE HOLDERS, made by John Barr, were given by John and Dolly Barr.

THE NATIVITY SCENE ON THE FRONT LAWN was made by Mike Wagner.

THE CRECHE ON THE LOWER LEVEL BY THE ELEVATOR was made by Mike Wagner.

DEVOTIONALS: The October-December edition of *These Days* are available on the table across from the church office or on the lower level by the portico entrance.

2023 CHANCEL FLOWERS AND WORSHIP AID SPONSORS:

Upcoming dates for chancel flowers are: January 15 & 22.

Upcoming dates for worship aids are: January 1, 8, 15 & 22.

The price for flowers is \$60. The price for worship aids is \$26.

Contact Carol and look for charts for 2023 dates.

NEW NURSERY COORDINATOR: Betty Fogle has agreed to serve as our nursery coordinator. If you are interested in providing nursery care for children during worship, please contact Betty.

Community Grab 'N Go Meal:
Tuesday, December 27 at First Reformed U.C.C.
(40 E. Orange St., Lancaster)

Trinity has another opportunity to feed the underserved on December 27. A few volunteers will be needed to pack and distribute 120 to-go dinner bags. The sign-up sheet for volunteers and food donations is on the table in across from the church office.

The food items needed for this meal are: fruit cups, hamburger rolls, water, individually wrapped desserts and baby carrots. Donations can be placed in the basket on the table.

Contact Kathy Cooley for more information! Thanks for your continuing support!

PASTOR'S CHRISTMAS GIFT: You will again find a pink envelope in your box of offering envelopes. This is a way for you to give a Christmas gift to Pastor Rankin. If you want the pastor to receive the full amount of your gift, then you should give it directly to him. This means that the money will not go through the church treasury and you will not receive a tax deduction for your gift. All checks should be made payable to the pastor if you choose to give it to him directly.

If you choose to make your check payable to Trinity UCC, you will receive credit on your 2022 contribution statement. A gift sent through the church treasury is considered taxable income for the pastor.

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Scott Owens, Church Treasurer

Holiday Wishes for Jordan Sensenig



Since Jordan is deployed overseas, this will be his third Christmas away from home. Christmas will be a difficult time for him, and we hope you will help to boost his spirits. Whether you share a note, a Christmas card, or a memory, we hope you will help by sending him words of encouragement.

You surprised him with your wonderful greetings last year, and we hope we can surprise him again. He couldn't believe how many greetings he received. You were great!

Jordan appreciates his Trinity family, and we hope this will be a great reminder of all the times he spent at Trinity. He's far from home, and this will help him feel all the caring that surrounds him.

With the issues surrounding mail delivery, we will collect your encouraging correspondences and will send all as a single mailing. We will send one mailing in early December, and then another a few weeks later.

Many Thanks!
Pat and Joan



CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE: We will then have a service of lessons and carols with Holy Communion on Sunday, December 25 at 10:00 a.m. There will be no Sunday School or koinonia on December 25!

WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS: We are looking for worship volunteers on Sunday mornings. Contact the church office to sign-up!

Greeters: To welcome worshippers at the door for the second service.

Ushers: We have returned to passing the offering plate during the second service. We especially need ushers because some people have stepped down!

Lectors: Assist with the worship service or to just read the scripture lessons at the 7:45 a.m. and/or 10:30 a.m. services.

Special Note: We are in need of ushers & greeters for Christmas Eve services and our Christmas Day Service (10 a.m.). We also need readers for Christmas Eve (6:30 p.m.) and the Christmas Day Service. Speak with Pastor Chris if interested.

MEN OF TRINITY BREAKFAST: The monthly breakfast will be held at the Family Fare Restaurant on January 14 at 8:00 a.m. Look for the sign-up sheet on the table across from the church office.

CROP WALK UPDATE Trinity has raised \$12,740 for the 2022 CROP Walk. The Lancaster CROP Walk has raised \$47,917 so far towards our goal of \$50,000!

There's still time to support our walkers by giving them money or going online at <https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2022/team/trinity-east-pete>

2023 OFFERING ENVELOPES are available on the table across from the church office. Please help us by delivering envelopes to some of our homebound members!

THE 2023 APPROVED BUDGET is available on the table across from the church office or in the information racks on both levels of the church building.

NEW MEMBERS: Are you interested in joining Trinity U.C.C.? Do you know of someone looking for a church home? Please speak to Pastor Chris about joining our congregation.

KOINONIA: We have resumed koinonia (community fellowship) every Sunday at 10 a.m. in Isenberg Hall. Volunteers are asked to provide light refreshments and drinks/coffee. The sign-up sheet is on the kitchen coordinator. If you have any questions, contact Paula Dennes.

U.C.C. MISSION MOMENT

December 18, 2022
Fourth Sunday of Advent
Matthew 1:18-25
God With Us

According to the dictionary, the term incarnation means “a person who embodies in the flesh a deity, spirit, or abstract quality.” In Jesus, the Holy came to earth to live like us, to laugh like us, to mourn like us, and to love like us. In the simplest terms, the incarnation is the Divine coming to earth as a child, the infant Jesus, for the purpose of embodying concretely the abstract quality of love for one another.

Although only Jesus is the Incarnation with a capital I, Christ’s followers can continue to embody in the flesh and make real the abstract quality of love. It is one thing for us to say that they love one another. Demonstrating that love through acts of service and compassion truly incarnates the love that Christ came to demonstrate.

One way we as the United Church of Christ incarnate Christ’s love at this time of year is by contributing to the Christmas Fund (formerly called the Veterans of the Cross).

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ 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.


United Church of Christ congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need.

This testimonial from a Christmas Fund recipient was shared last year, a reminder that the fruits of loving incarnation will always be gratitude, joy, and connection. “The grant is enough to allow me a little breathing room at the end of each month. Thank you for that gift. But equally important to me personally is this grant symbolizes a wonderful connection to the church I love. I have been blessed in so many ways.”


For more information visit: <https://www.ucc.org/giving/ways-to-give/our-churchs-wider-mission/christmas-fund/>

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

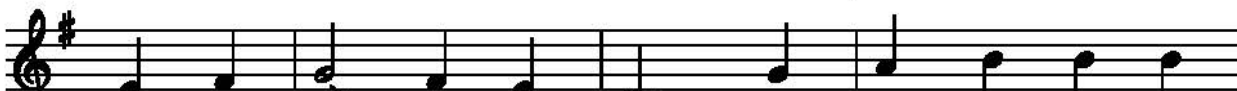
Verses



1. O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, And
 2. O come, Thou Wis - dom from on high, Who
 3. O come, O come, Thou Lord of might, Who
 4. O come, Thou Rod of Jes - se's stem, From
 5. O come, Thou Key of Da - vid, come, And
 6. O come, Thou Day-spring from on high And
 7. O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind In




1. ran - som cap - tive Is - ra - el, That mourns in
 2. or - d' rest all things might - i - ly; To us the
 3. to thy tribes on Si - nai's height In an - cient
 4. ev - 'ry foe de - liv - er them That trust thy
 5. o - pen wide our heav - 'nly home; Make safe the
 6. cheer us by thy draw - ing nigh; Dis - perse the
 7. one the hearts of all hu - man - kind; Bid thou our




1. lone - ly ex - ile here Un - til the Son of
 2. path of knowl - edge show, And teach us in her
 3. times didst give the law, In cloud and maj - es -
 4. might - y pow'r to save, And give them vic - t'ry
 5. way that leads on high, And close the path to
 6. gloom - y clouds of night, And death's dark shad - ow
 7. sad di - vi - sions cease, And be thy - self our

Refrain



1. God ap - pear. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u -
 2. ways to go.
 3. ty and awe.
 4. o'er the grave.
 5. mis - er - y.
 6. put to flight.
 7. Prince of Peace.



el Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" Text: LM with refrain; 'O' Antiphons, Latin, 9th cent.; Verses 1, 3-6, para. in Psalterium Cantionum Catholicarum, Cologne, 1710; tr. by John Mason Neale, 1818-1866; Verses 2, 7 tr. fr. The Hymnal 1940, alt. Music: Chant, Mode I; Processionale, French, 15th cent.; adapt. by Thomas Helmore, 1811-1890. All rights reserved. Reprinted under One License #A-711879

DECEMBER 18, 2022

(A)

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

FIRST LESSON. Isaiah 7:10-16

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test. Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

SECOND LESSON. Romans 1:1-7

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

GOSPEL. Matthew 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.