



*"An inclusive community, celebrating God's unconditional love
through engaging worship and faithful service"*



December 11, 2022

3rd Sunday in Advent

"The Scandal of Grace"

People's Congregational & St. Peter's UCC



The Love of God Gathers Us

Gathering Music

*We greet those around us or sit quietly
as we settle into sacred time and space*

Ringling of the Bell

Prelude & Candle Lighting “Come Thou Long Expected Jesus”

Prichard

Eleanora Favilla, acolyte

The flame represents the light of Christ among us

Words of Welcome

Pastor Daniel Harrell

*****Opening Hymn** "Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn"

Verses 1-2

New Century Hymnal, #107

*****Advent Candle Lighting**

Eleanora Favilla & Kathy Iverson

One: Advent is a season of waiting and watching for God’s presence with us. Today we light the first candle of HOPE, the second candle of PEACE, and the third candle of JOY. As we seek to fulfill our congregation’s purpose; we wonder, long for, and expect the new life that God is bringing forth among us.

All: We welcome this new life that embraces all beings with hope, peace, joy, and love!

Let’s welcome one another!

Name tags are found in the Narthex (just inside the front doors)

Welcome forms in pews: request a prayer or name tag, update contact info, etc.

***Advent Candle Song “In the Darkness, Light a Light”

German carol
words by Judith Melander

In the dark - ness, light a light; Ad - vent can - dle, warm and bright; Fire of joy in
6
dark of night. Em - man - u - el! We wait for you, O Je - sus.

Acknowledging Our Humanness and God’s Grace

Prayer of Longing (*responsive*)

Holy Spirit, our very waiting in Advent is itself a confession:

If we are waiting for Emmanuel, we have not yet recognized your presence with us.

If we are waiting for a Savior, the proud are still powerful, the mighty are still exalted, the cries of the oppressed go unheard.

If we are waiting for your incarnation in human form, we confess that we have not known and loved you in our siblings, we have not served you in our neighbors.

In this time of great meaning, in the stillness of Advent joy and light, hear our deepest confession.

Heal us, and make us new through the good tidings of your presence in our lives. Amen.

prayerful silence

Musical Interlude ...as our own longings quietly emerge

Assurance of Grace

*****Passing the Peace**

*We share a sign of peace with those gathered now (in-person, virtually)
We extend the peace later by phone call, email, text message*

Pastor: The peace of Christ be with you! **All: And also with you!**

A Time With Children

Sung Invitation *We sing as our children come forward*

**This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine, oh let it shine.**

*In fall 2022, we gave a first annual gift to Walker|West in St. Paul, MN as a reparations payment for our use of this African American spiritual.
"Walker|West creates a music learning community rooted in the African-American cultural experience, where people of all ages and backgrounds can gather, explore, and grow through music."*

Singing "Happy Birthday"

*..Happy birthday dear **Michael** (Favilla), **Peter** (Favilla) & **Milan** (Horak)*

Wondering Together

Blessing One Another *Seated, we open our arms to the children*

Children : God be with you **All: And also with you**

Sung Affirmation *We sing as children follow leaders or return to families*

**Ev'rywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine.
Ev'rywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine.
Ev'rywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine, oh let it shine.**

We welcome the sounds and movements of children who stay in worship

*Lisa (Childcare Provider) also cares for infants and toddlers
9:15 - 10:45 in the Nursery downstairs*

*If needing space to move around, families are welcome to use
the Narthex (entry area) or Meditation Room (off front left exit from Sanctuary)*

Proclaiming God's Love

Scriptures

Fritz West

Isaiah 35: 1-10 ~ NRSV

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees.
Say to those who are of a fearful heart, 'Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you.'

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there.

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Matthew 3: 1-12 ~ NRSV

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?’ Jesus answered them, ‘Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me.’

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: ‘What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.”

Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Morning Message

“The Scandal of Grace”

Prayer Cards

If you voice a prayer for a loved one during Prayers of the People, we welcome you to start a card for us to sign during fellowship.

(prayer cards on the Information Table in the Fellowship Hall)

Responding To God's Love

Prayer Song

"God, Prepare Me to Be a Sanctuary"

All verses

Sing! Song and Praise #187

♩=60

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of four staves of music with lyrics underneath. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a tempo marking of quarter note = 60. The first measure has a D/A chord, the second Em/A, and the third D. The melody starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. A repeat sign follows. The second staff has chords G, Em7, D/A, A, and A7. The melody continues with a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note A4. The third staff has chords D and A. The melody continues with a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note A4. The fourth staff has chords G, Em7, A7, D, D/A, Em/A, and D. The melody continues with a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note A4. The score ends with a double bar line.

1. God pre - pare me to be a sanc - tu - ar - y, — pure and
- pow'r me to be a wit - ness for you, — act - ing

ho - ly, tried and true; — with thanks -
bold - ly, in your name; — seek - ing

-giv - ing, I'll be a liv - ing — sanc - tu -
jus - tice, where there is hurt - ing — off - 'ring

1. — ar - y for — you. 2. God em -
hope where there is — pain.

Prayers of the People

When sharing a joy or concern for yourself, another, or a part of the world; please project your voice to be heard. We'll add your prayer to our Prayer Corner.

Prayer of Jesus (*unison*)

**Our Father and Mother who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name.
Thy kin-dom 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 kin-dom, and the power, and the glory, forever.
Amen.**



Invitation to the Offering

*Greeters will pass offering plates at this time
We support our church with financial gifts as we have means to do so
Welcome Forms also go in the offering plate
(written prayer request, other updates, etc.)
We can also mail in a check or give electronically by scanning the QR code*

Offertory

“O How Joyfully”
... as offering plates circulate

Sicilian Melody

***Offertory Response “In the Bleak Midwinter”

**What can I offer, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.
If I were a wise one, I would do my part;
but what can I offer: all my heart.**

***Prayer of Dedication (*unison*)

Eternal God of time and space, we respond to you with joy. Your generous provision for our needs prompts us to be generous in return. Accomplish your purposes, we pray, through these gifts and in our lives. Amen.

Going Forth to Share God's Love

*****Closing Hymn** “Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn”
Vs. 3 & 4 *New Century Hymnal, #107*

*****Benediction**

*****Sung Response** ..as we form a circle
around the perimeter of the Sanctuary

“Let There Be Peace on Earth”

by Jill Jackson-Miller and Sy Miller

**Let there be peace on Earth, and let it begin with me
Let there be peace on Earth, the peace that was meant to be.
With God as creator, family all are we.
Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.**

**Let peace begin with me; let this be the moment now.
With ev'ry step I take, let this be my solemn vow;
To take each moment, and live each moment in peace eternally!
Let there be peace on Earth, and let it begin with me.**

We carry the light of Christ with us in all times and space

*****Postlude** “My Heart Sings Out with Joyful Praise” *Swedish Melody*

All are welcome to gather downstairs after worship

10:30 am Fellowship

11:00 am Faith Conversations:

“Stillwater Emergency Housing Project.”

PRAYER CORNER

Please hold these joys and concerns in your prayers:

For persons known to us...

*For our friend **Josh**, son of Laura Corless (Sam Gromoll's caregiver) as Josh is in the hospital battling depression.

*We give thanks that **Aidan Gromoll** (sister to Pastor Clare) has safely arrived home from Pakistan. We pray for the wellness of all the internally displaced persons who received medical care from Aidan.

*For Michele Stephan's mother, **Dorothy** who turned 101 years young on Saturday!

*For **Lynn Dale**, mother to Roberta Dale (former Office Manager of People's). Lynn suffered a hemorrhagic stroke in November. After being treated at Mayo she has now been transferred to Regions Capitol View Transitional Care.

*We celebrate birthdays of: **Michael Favilla, Peter Favilla & Milan Horak** (All on the 17th)!

And in the wider community...

*As the Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity prepares to have a joint workday on Dec. 17, may the crew's efforts be multiplied in building up houses as well as the community and, in so, promote dignity and hope through affordable housing.

*As we continue to hold the community of Club Q in Colorado Springs and the community at the University of Idaho in our prayers, may we also each find our own way to advocate for safer gun laws.

*For the people of Iran, resilience in their efforts to realize freedom.

*For all of our neighbors who are without stable housing. May we learn how to pursue being strong allies with them.

*During this winter holiday season, may we hold greater awareness for all who are lonely, grieving, and managing mental health challenges.



Eyeglasses and hearing aids recycling

Many of you might have noticed the Lions Club donation box in the Fellowship Hall. Since 1925, Lions International has been a champion in helping combat vision impairment and blindness. With this same conviction, Lions have also been a force in providing medical care and education to help prevent hearing loss.

Eyeglasses

Donate used glasses of any age, brand or model (this includes "cheaters").

Hearing aids

Donate used glasses of any age, brand or model.

Meet Daniel Harrell, PhD. Interim Minister, St. Peter's UCC



A North Carolinian by birth, Daniel moved to New England to attend seminary and stayed for 25 years and pastored churches in New Hampshire and Boston.

In 2010, he moved to Minnesota to serve a third congregation before departing to be editor in chief for a religious magazine. A widower and dad to a delightful teenager,

as well as an author, teacher, psychologist, avid cook and outdoor lover, Daniel currently serves as a hospice chaplain and St. Peter's UCC interim pastor.

New Members Sunday December 18th



Join with us on Sunday as we pledge our mutual support with new members of our congregation.

Heather Kennedy-Bordeaux

Heather is an Attorney Developer at Thomson Reuters. She is passionate about gardening, reading, anything involving animals and music.

The church has been incredibly welcoming and allows for a variety of faith interpretations, which is something I have been looking for, for a long time. I expect that People's Church will enhance my life through fellowship with the community and provide an outlet for working to improve the lives of others.



Frank Cole

Was an elementary School Principal, his passions are music and rail roading and he is looking forward to *growing in faith* with People's Church.



Twin Cities
Habitat
for Humanity®

Joint Church Workday: Saturday, December 17
Building an affordable home!

*10 Volunteers needed (between St. Peter's & People's) to do construction work
(8:30 am - 3:30 pm)

**** 8 spots remain. Kathleen and Pastor Clare welcome you to join them! ****

*1-2 Volunteers needed to bring coffee & treats for a crew morning break

*2-4 Volunteers needed to prepare and bring lunch to the construction crew

A note from Kathleen Dennison (of St. Peter's UCC)

"One of my retirement volunteer activities has been working to help build affordable homes with Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity (TCHFH). There are a number of reasons I do this.

I enjoy learning new things and meeting and working with interesting people. I believe strongly in Habitat's mission. I get a lot of satisfaction in seeing what I have accomplished. And it's really a lot of fun! When I learned that TCHFH was building a house in Bayport (shown above, as of mid-September), it seemed like a great opportunity for folks from St. Peter's and People's Congregational to join together to spend a day helping build an affordable home near us. We have been given Saturday, December 17 to bring a crew of 10 people to do what are likely to be finishing touches on this great home to make it available for a family to move into shortly after the first of the year. Please contact me with questions.

If you are ready to sign up, follow this link to do so:

<http://kathleen.tchabitat.volunteerhub.com/>

Kathleen (kadennison@msn.com, 651-303-4794)

Solstice, Christmas Eve, Christmas Morning

Light in the Darkness:

A Contemplative Christmas Solstice Service

Dec. 21, 7 pm | Light refreshments follow

*Acknowledging both difficult & nurturing darkness,
we honor what is and what may be... God with us in both.*

candlelight, readings, prayers, music

Early Christmas Eve | 4 pm

carols, candlelight, readings, special music

Late Christmas Eve | 9 pm

carols, candlelight, readings, choral music

Christmas Morning | 9:30 am

joyful carols & readings, light refreshments follow

People's Congregational Church | 309 N 3rd St. Bayport

651-439-5667 | office@peoplescongregational.org

Kimberly (Communications Coordinator) working primarily remotely

Kimberly will be working remotely: **Dec. 13-15, 20-22 & 27-29**

She will next be at church: **Jan. 3-5**

You can reach her every week (T, W, Th 9 am - 4 pm) at 651-439-5667
and at office@peoplescongregational.org

Need access to the church building? Want to visit with Pastor Clare or
Kimberly in person?

Please call (or email) ahead of time to avoid missing us.

Pastor Clare is on call at all times: 651-600-6409

Thank you to today's partners: Sharon Neuenfeldt (Worship Accompanist),
Michael Bjork (Choir Director), Eleanora Favilla (acolyte),
Sharon Binger & Bob Dickie (greeters), Kathy Iverson & Fritz West (liturgists),
Jill Greenhalgh & Rolf Dittmann (fellowship)
Carol Dusbabek & Claire Spilseth (Children's Activity), Paul, Bob & Mark (tech),
Jackie Savage (Sanctuary organizer, outdoor sign),
Lisa Culbertson (Childcare Provider)



People's Congregational Church

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