



**Welcome!**

*We are glad that you chose to join us for worship this morning. We hope that whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you will feel welcome here.*

**Guide to the bulletin:** *As you follow along in our worship service today, here are a few cues for using this bulletin. An asterisk (\*) indicates that those gathered are invited to rise in body and/or spirit. Text printed in **BOLD** in the bulletin indicates everyone says them together. **NCH** is the New Century Hymnal in the holder by your pew chair.*

**Children:** *Children are always welcome here. If you would like to have your younger children (ages 0-4) taken care of during the service, we have a nursery available at 9:30 a.m. To better serve members, friends, and visitors, as well as our staff, we ask that you use the [SignUpGenius link](#) in the eNews to sign-up your child(ren) each week. If no one is signed up for the nursery room on a particular Sunday, staff will not be present, but the room will still be available to families. If you prefer, your children are welcome to stay with you through the worship service, or they may attend our Sunday School.*

**You can read more about today's activities at Memorial UCC in the announcements on the last page of the bulletin.**

## GATHERING TOGETHER

Prelude

*Dove of Peace*

Harry Strack

Welcome and Announcements

Advent Candle Lighting<sup>1</sup>: PEACE

Introit

*Gather Us In*

Marty Haugen

\*Call to Confession<sup>2</sup>

\*Prayer of Confession

Patient God, you know just how often we make decisions from a place of fear rather than love. You know just how often we allow fear to take the place of logic, fanning unhealthy fires in our lives. You know just how often we tuck your words, “Do not be afraid” on dusty shelves and in the back of closets, stubbornly holding onto our own point of view.

Forgive us for giving fear the microphone. Silence the voices of scarcity, shame, and rejection, which spark and feed so much of our fear, to recenter us in love. With hope we pray, amen.

\*Words of Forgiveness

\*Hymn NCH #349

*I Come with Joy*

verses 1 & 4

I come with joy, a child of God, forgiven, loved, and free,  
The life of Jesus to recall, in love laid down for me,  
In love laid down for me.

And thus we meet, and better know the Presence, ever near,  
And join our hearts and sing with joy that Christ is risen here,  
That Christ is risen here.

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<sup>1</sup> Rev Sarah (Are) Speed, Sanctified Art LLC, Generation to Generation, 2022, sanctifiedart.org.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Rev Sarah (Are) Speed, Sanctified Art LLC, Generation to Generation, 2022, sanctifiedart.org.

## HEARING THE WORD

**First Bible Reading**

**Isaiah 11:1-10**

**Special Music**

*Bring Us Hope*

Ruth Elaine Schram

**The Good News**

**Matthew 3:1-12**

*During Advent, the weeks leading up to the birth of Jesus, we will be reading the Gospel from the First Nations Version: An Indigenous Translation of the New Testament. The translators have “follow(ed) our Native naming traditions and use the meaning of names for person and places in this Great Story...”<sup>3</sup>*

**Time with Children**

Rebecca Malke

**Reflection**

**God Meets Us in Our Fear**

Pastor Kris

## SHARING OUR LIVES

**Call to Prayer<sup>4</sup>**

*Hear My Cry*

**Prayers of the People**

*During our online worship service, we invite you to type your prayers in the comments section on your screen. Or you can text prayers to Pastor Kris at 608-571-5870. Pastor Kris will collect the petitions and read them during the service. Know that prayers shared this day are public. If you have prayer request you would like to remain private, you may email them to: [pastorkris@memorialucc.org](mailto:pastorkris@memorialucc.org)*

**Prayer of Jesus**

**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.**

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<sup>3</sup> *First Nations Version: An Indigenous Translation of the New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, an imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2021), xii-xiii.

<sup>4</sup> Copyright 2016 Local Church Ministries, Faith Formation Ministry Team, United Church of Christ, 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115-1100. Permission granted to reproduce or adapt this material for use in services of worship or church education. All publishing rights reserved.

## SHARING A MEAL

*Come to God's Extravagant Table—wherever you are.*

- *For those who will be receiving the sacrament in church, the elements will be prepared for you.*
- *Those who are blessing and receiving the sacrament at home, please prepare a slice or small loaf of bread, corn tortilla, or rice cake to share and a cup or small cups of juice — perhaps grape or cranberry — or wine, with or without alcohol.*

### Invitation to the Table<sup>5 6</sup>

**\*Hymn NCH #349**

***I Come with Joy***

verse 3

**As Christ breaks bread, and bids us share,  
each proud division ends.**

**The love that made us, makes us one,  
and strangers now are friends, and strangers now are friends.**

**\*Communion**

***Advent Prayer***

Anthony Giamanco

*Please come forward. Those serving communion will place a piece of bread in your hand. You may eat the bread right away, or pick up one of the cups and eat the bread with juice or wine. The grape juice is white; the wine is red.*

*Allergy-free wafers are available. If you are worshipping at home, you may serve yourself. Or, if you are with others consider serving each other.*

***All are welcome at this meal.***

### Prayer of Thanksgiving<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Adapted from *A Wee Worship Book* (Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 2010), 95

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<sup>7</sup> "Stations of the Crèche Communion - December 4, 2022," Gifts in Open Hands, November 23, 2022, <https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/2022/11/23/stations-of-the-creche-communion-december-4-2022/>.

**Pastor Kris:** Fed and prepared by the Spirit to step out into our world which is hungry for Good News, let us give thanks...

**All:** Gracious God, we give thanks for your messages that feel like angels, care that is like a shepherd, and the joy to the world in gathering around this table in this season of waiting. Strengthened by this meal, may we notice and care for all those who are rejected, unhoused, fleeing for their lives from danger without and within. As we go forth, O Holy One, may it truly be by another way. amen.

### GOING OUT TO THE WORLD

**\*Song for Going Out NCH #121 *All Earth is Waiting*** verses 1, 2, & 3

All the earth is waiting to see the Promised One,  
And open furrows, the sowing of our God.  
All the world, bound and struggling, seeks true liberty;  
It cries out for justice and searches for the truth.

Thus says the prophet to those of Israel,  
“A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel”:  
One whose name is “God with us,” our Savior shall be,  
Through whom hope will blossom once more within our hearts.

Mountains and valleys will have to be made plain;  
Open new highways, new highways for our God,  
Who is now coming closer, so come all and see, a  
And open the doorways as wide as wide can be.

**\*Benediction**

**\*Postlude**

*Dove of Peace*

Harry Strack

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**Worship Leaders:** Jonathan Schroerlucke (Dir. of Music), Jeff Darwin (Pianist), Rebecca Malke (Dir. of Faith Development), and Pastor Kris Gorton

**Readers:** Marty Smith and Merry Spangler

**Ushers:** Roger Elver and Nancy Potter

**Lighting the Christ Candle:** Eowyn Schroerlucke

**Advent Candle Lighters:** Quincey Young, Wesley Young, Kaitlin Young, Nancy Baumgardner

**Communion Preparation:** Sarah Fritz  
**Media Room:** Jeffrey Lipford  
**Camera Tech:** TBD  
**Fellowship Hosts:** Volunteer Needed

Memorial UCC's ONE LICENSE for streaming: #A-711042

**Today After Worship: ZOOM CONVERSATIONS!** Pastor Kris will be hosting Fellowship with those who have been worship with us on Zoom. Feel free to log into the conversation, wherever you are! Bring your own coffee, milk and/or donuts! All you need to do is to stay "in" Zoom as the service ends (don't click "leave meeting").

**Refreshments and Conversation:** Today following worship, you are invited to stay for conversations and refreshments in the Fellowship Hall. Worship generally runs until around 10:30 a.m. or shortly after.

**Memorial's COVID Protocols:** With prayerful consideration of the health and wellness of the members and friends of the congregation our current **COVID protocols are:**

- **Wearing a mask in the building is optional.** Anyone may choose to wear a mask at any time. Please remember that some individuals wear a mask even if they are fully vaccinated. A face mask can be viewed as a sign of care and concern for oneself and others. Please respect people's choices and privacy.
- We have **KN95 masks available** by the church office for those who wish to wear one.
- **We will be singing during worship.**
- **Masks are optional for Sunday School youth and teachers.**
- **Masks are also optional in the nursery area.**

**Hearing Loop and Listening Devices:** For those who have hearing aids, Memorial UCC has a t-coil compatible hearing loop. Listening devices are also available for people who are hard-of-hearing. See an usher if you need assistance.



**Bathrooms:** There are two bathrooms near the main entrance of the church. A third, Gender Neutral and Accessible bathroom is in the hallway

by the nursery. If you need assistance finding the restrooms, an usher will be happy to help you!



**Giving Options—Ever-Widening Opportunities:**

Checks can be mailed directly to the church or dropped off during our morning office hours. Indicate in the memo line whether the giving is to Memorial operating costs or help to our community wide nonprofit partners. Memorial UCC also offers an opportunity for you to give via PayPal! You can give securely via charge card, debit card, and direct withdrawal donations. Giving online through PayPal is fast and secure, and you do not even need to have a PayPal account to use the service to make one-time or recurring donations. Visit [memorialucc.org](http://memorialucc.org) and click on the "donate" button in the lower, right-hand corner to make your gift. You can also simply scan the QR code here to be directed to our PayPal donations page.

Thank you to those who regularly give electronically. Checks can be mailed directly to the church. Indicate in the memo line whether the giving is to Memorial operating costs or help to our community wide nonprofit partners. If you are interested in our monthly automatic withdrawal system, please email Cathy Halpin at [halpincjo@gmail.com](mailto:halpincjo@gmail.com) and she will get you signed up.

**Want to Know More About Us?** Pastor Kris would be happy to set up a time to chat further. Feel free to contact her at [pastorkris@memorialucc.org](mailto:pastorkris@memorialucc.org). You don't need to be a formal member to get involved here. There is a lot of information on our website at [www.memorialucc.org](http://www.memorialucc.org). You can also follow us on Facebook (@FitchburgMemorialUCC), Twitter (@MemUCC), or join our Facebook group Memorial UCC: Ever-Widening Circles.

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**SAVE THE DATE!**

The Annual Craft and Cookie Event will be **Saturday, December 10, 9:00-12:00**. This will be the 18th year of selling crafts and cookies to support a full-year scholarship to a student at Dar Al Kalima University of Arts and Culture, in Bethlehem. We sell hand-made crafts made by the congregation, and Christmas cookies by the pound. too! Sign-up sheets and more information are in the niche in the narthex. You can contact

Nancy Baumgardner regarding cookies and Lynn Hilgers regarding crafts.

### **ADVENT & CHRISTMAS 2022**

The stories, scriptures, and traditions of the Christmas season have been passed down to us throughout the generations. Many of us enter this season with a swell of memories and emotions as vast as the cultural and religious rituals this holiday holds. Like a tapestry woven throughout time, the Christmas story weaves us in—to remember how God has shown up in the past, to continue the work of collective liberation, to behold the presence of God in flesh and bone.

Our Advent theme is also a call to action: what are we being called to generate or bring forth? What have your ancestors and those who have come before you passed on for you to continue? Considering the many ways we embody, remember, and tell the story of Christ's birth, which rituals hold the most meaning for you? What about this season will you pass on to the next generation?

*From Generation to Generation...* reminds us of the ways our lives, histories, actions, and stories are interconnected and woven together. The work of God is always unfolding—in and through us. This Advent, may you remember that you belong—to a story etched into the wrinkles of time, to generations that have come before and will come after, to a love that won't let you go.[1]

#### **SAVE the DATES!**

**The Christmas Stories**, adult Advent series with John Dominic Crossan, Wed evenings (Dec. 7th and Dec. 14th.) @ 6:30-8:30 pm

**Nifty Gifty Workshop**, Sunday, Dec 18 @ 9:30 am

**Craft & Cookie Sale**, Saturday, Dec 10 @ 9 am

**Multifaith Longest Night service**, Dec 21 @ 7 pm

**Christmas Eve, Dec. 24 @ 5 pm** – Family service

**Christmas Eve, Dec 24 @ 7 pm** – Candles, Communion, & Carols

**Christmas Morning**, Dec 25 @ 9:30 am – Hot Chocolate and Carols

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[1] "From Generation to Generation... Advent Bundle," A Sanctified Art, accessed October 31, 2022, <https://sanctifiedart.org/from-generation-to-generation-advent-bundle>.