

# IMMANUEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Organist: Karen Cain  
January 2, 2022

Pastor: Rev. Dana Schindler  
Second Sunday after Christmas

“Extending God’s love with the work of our hands and hearts...”

## GATHERING MUSIC

### WELCOME

On this Second Sunday after Christmas, we welcome you to worship at Immanuel United Church of Christ in Hamel, IL, where our mission is “Extending God’s love with the work of our hands and hearts...” We are pleased that you are here to worship with us today!

For those who are worshipping online with us, please leave a comment to let us know you are here. Also note any joys and concerns you may have and feel free to greet each other in Christian love.

Today you will need communion elements.

Music used is covered under our CCLI livestreaming license # 4012842.

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### PRELUDE

*Karen Cain*

### POINT TO PONDER

“Love, whether newly born, or aroused from a deathlike slumber, must always create sunshine, filling the heart so full of radiance, this it overflows upon the outward world.”

— Nathaniel Hawthorne

### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Arise, shine, for your light has come!

**All: The glory of the Lord has risen upon us!**

One: Like sages from afar, come and behold your Christ!

**All: Let us lift our voices, praising his name! Amen!**

### OPENING HYMN

“Joy to the World”

# 132 NCH

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King;  
let ev’ry heart prepare him room  
and heav’n and nature sing,  
and heav’n and nature sing,  
and heav’n, and heav’n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!  
Let men their songs employ,  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains,

repeat the sounding joy,  
 repeat the sounding joy,  
 repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow  
 nor thorns infest the ground;  
 he comes to make his blessings flow  
 far as the curse is found,  
 far as the curse is found,  
 far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace  
 and makes the nations prove  
 the glories of his righteousness  
 and wonders of his love,  
 and wonders of his love,  
 and wonders, wonders of his love.

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION:** (unison)

Gracious God, even when our faith in Christ is strong, we struggle to love others as we have been loved. We find it hard to include everyone as you have taught and shown us. Despite your many gifts to us, we find it hard to share with others. Help us to see who we are meant to be, that we may show Christ's glory to all we meet. Amen.

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Friends, hear the Good News! Christ, the liberator has come to free us from all proud pretenses. He has come to show us the undeserved favor of God. Friends, believe the Good News! In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

**HYMN**

**“All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name”**

**# 304 NCH**

All hail the power of Jesus' name!  
 Let angels prostrate fall.  
 Bring forth the royal diadem,  
 and crown him Lord of all.  
 Bring forth the royal diadem,  
 and crown him Lord of all!

O seed of Israel's chosen race  
 now ransomed from the fall,  
 hail him who saves you by his grace,  
 and crown him Lord of all.

**Hail him who saves you by his grace,  
and crown him Lord of all!**

**Let every tongue and every tribe  
responsive to his call,  
to him all majesty ascribe,  
and crown him Lord of all.  
To him all majesty ascribe,  
and crown him Lord of all!**

**Oh, that with all the sacred throng  
we at his feet may fall!  
We'll join the everlasting song  
and crown him Lord of all.  
We'll join the everlasting song  
and crown him Lord of all.**

### **FOR THE YOUNG AT HEART**

What did you get for Christmas? Giving gifts at Christmas is something we do to show our love for each other. Some people like useful gifts, some like fun gifts, some like small gifts. I remember a gift my father got one Christmas when I was a teenager: it was a leather pig. As far as we could tell, it had no purpose. It wasn't cute: it was brown. It wasn't a bank: there was not slot for money. It wasn't heavy enough to be a paperweight. My dad didn't collect, or even like pigs other than as bacon, ham, or pork chops. So we did what you do with all useless gifts: we put it in the closet and pulled it out when the person who gave it to him was coming for a visit.

But some 2000 years ago, God gave us the best possible gift: Jesus. Jesus came as a baby so he could grow up just like we do in a world that has tough times for everyone. And he taught us how to depend on God, how to live with each other, and how to work together to make life better. So no matter what gifts any of us received this year, the best gift we have ever or will ever get is Jesus.

Prayer: Thank you God for the gift of Jesus, which is truly perfect. Amen.

### **SCRIPTURE READING      **Jeremiah 31:7–14****

For thus says the LORD: Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, "Save, O LORD, your people, the remnant of Israel." See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north, and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor, together; a great company, they shall return here. With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back, I will let them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble; for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. Hear the word of the LORD, O

nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd a flock." For the LORD has ransomed Jacob, and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him. They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall become like a watered garden, and they shall never languish again. Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy, I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow. I will give the priests their fill of fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty, says the LORD.

## **SERMON**

### **"The Year in Review"**

*Rev. Dana Schindler*

I'm not really one to make New Year's Resolutions. I find that I break or just forget them relatively quickly, so I figure "what's the point?" But I do like to think about the year that has just passed and think about how I would like a "do over."

The last two years have been really hard for everyone. None of us thought we'd still be dealing with the pandemic—or that it would even BE a pandemic. We all thought we'd stay home for a couple of weeks and that would be the end of it.

How naïve we were!

Now it's 2022, and here we are, still wearing masks, still trying not to expose ourselves to this ever-changing virus, still arguing about whose fault it is that we are in the mess we are in. We are still hoping that if we haven't gotten it that we won't or that if we do get it, we won't have a severe case or long-lasting effects or that at least we will survive. Some of us have lost friends and family and all of us have lost some part of our lives as we socially distance from friends and loved ones.

And then there are all the other things that happen to us in the course of daily life: marriage, divorce, birth, death, having enough, having more than enough, not knowing how we will find enough, getting a new job, losing an old job, getting a raise, getting a pay cut, and all of the other things that happen to us and our loved ones, just living life.

Jeremiah addressed the children of Israel, telling them that even though their lives have been changed by their exile to Babylon and the resulting oppression, that they are still covered by the covenant God has made with them. He tells them that God is still with them in the midst of the unpleasant changes in their lives.

God's promise to be with them and for them is still good.

Even when humans forget their promises to God and each other, God doesn't forget the promise to hold us and comfort us in our own distress.

How do you think the people who heard Jeremiah in that time and place felt? As he tells these folks who are grieving great losses that God is with them, are they comforted or do they feel more like slapping him for providing what may have been heard as empty platitudes? Remember, Jeremiah's ministry began when he was 9

years old. What does a 9 year old know about the disappointments and grief of life? I'm not so sure that some didn't feel like shooting the messenger. But the message did contain truth.

Had Jeremiah's listeners given up all hope? Had they begun to accept that they would always be oppressed by the Babylonians? Had they given up on the hope of ever seeing their homeland and being free?

Have we, in the time of pandemic, given up on the idea that our world can return to one without masks that includes hugging and shaking hands without worrying about viral spread? Have we given up on the idea of real vacations and being in crowded places without fear of widespread transmission?

Perhaps the words of the Serenity Prayer will be helpful:

***“God, grant me the Serenity  
To accept the things I cannot change...  
Courage to change the things I can,  
And Wisdom to know the difference.”***

In the time since the Babylonian Exile and our own time, God sent Jesus: “the Word became flesh and dwelled among us.” Christ came to show us how to live in the midst of whatever the world throws our way, to remind us that there is light in the darkest of times, that we are all in this life together, and that if we follow Christ's example and love one another, we can help to create the kingdom of hope, joy, love, and peace that God intended from the beginning.

So maybe instead of making New Year's resolutions, we need to remember God's covenant with us and our covenant with each other. When we became part of this family of God, we promised that we would work together to honor God and love each other. So let's evaluate how we've done with that in the past year. Let's look at our choices and decide whether they were good ones or bad ones and decide where we want to go from here.

What can WE do, each one of us, to make our lives better as individuals?

What can WE do, each one of us, to make the lives of others better?

What can WE do, each of us, to make our congregation better?

What can WE do, as a church, to make us more faithful?

What can WE do, as a church, to make our community better?

Those first two questions can only be answered by each person. But perhaps some deep conversation among us would be helpful as we move forward as a community of faith.

To make our congregation better than it is, and yes, there's always room for improvement, we will need to look critically at ourselves as individuals and as a group.

A congregation is a family, and every family works best when they work together. Every family works best when each member is willing to really listen to what the others say, be it good or bad. Every family works best members are willing to say the things the others may not want to hear, and to say it with love. And every family works best when the needs of every member are considered as important as those of every other member. Every family works best when there are agreed upon goals and each member works toward achieving those goals. And sometimes the goals have to change, but that, too, is agreed upon.

But for any of this to work, we have to trust God to help us and we have to trust each other enough to work together. My prayer for us in this new year is that we will remember God's covenant with us, our covenant with each other, and renew our efforts to work together, trusting that God can help us to make our vision of hope, love joy, and peace a reality here and now. Amen.

### **PASTORAL PRAYER**

For we ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray, saying: **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**

### **SERVICE OF GIVING AND SHARING**

In thanksgiving and praise for the wonderful gifts we have received, let us too, offer our gifts of time, talent, and treasure to God.

Offerings may be placed in the plates outside the sanctuary doors or mailed in to Immanuel United Church of Christ, 5838 Staunton Road, Edwardsville, IL 62025.

### **\*RESPONSE OF PRAISE**

**“Doxology”**

**# 382 HFG**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow  
Praise God all creatures here below  
Praise God above ye heavenly hosts  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

### **\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION – Unison**

**God of great blessings, accept these gifts, given in love. Bless them and use them, we pray, to bless us as we give and others as they receive. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.**

**COMMUNION HYMN “Here, O My Lord, I See You Face to Face” # 336 NCH**

**Here, O my Lord, I see you face to face;  
here would I touch and handle things unseen;  
Here grasp with firmer hand the eternal grace,  
And all my weariness upon you lean.**

**Here would I feed upon the bread of God,  
here share the cup, the gracious gift of heaven;  
Here would I lay aside each earthly load,  
here taste afresh the calm of sin forgiven.**

**HOLY COMMUNION:**

**Invitation**

**Communion Litany**

**Leader:** May God be with you.

**People:** **And also with you.**

**Leader:** Lift up your hearts.

**People:** **We lift them up to God.**

**Leader:** Let us give thanks to the God we love.

**People:** **We freely give God thanks and praise.**

**Communion Prayer**

Eternal God, Creator of the heavens and the earth and all who dwell therein, we give you thanks for all that surrounds us. We thank you for the opportunity to come together and live in holy community. Remind us always of the ways that make peace in our community and our world. We are grateful for your mercy, forgiving our human pride and our blindness to the needs of others. We rejoice in the hope and salvation found in the person of Jesus Christ, who shared our earthly suffering and joy. We remember Christ's death, celebrate with joy Christ's resurrection, and seek to follow in Christ's way, serving those around us. In the steadfast comfort of the Holy Spirit, we offer ourselves to your service as we glorify you. 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 our God! Hosanna in the highest!

**Words of Institution**

At this table we recall the night when Jesus was at table with his friends. As they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it. He gave it to the disciples, saying, "Take, eat. This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same manner, Jesus also took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." By partaking at this table, we proclaim Christ's death, celebrate Christ's resurrection, and await Christ's return.

**Blessing of the Elements**

Gracious God, we ask you to bless this bread and cup. May we be strengthened through your Holy Spirit to be the body of Christ, your servant people, faithful in all things and humble in our service to you and your people. Amen.

**Receiving the Elements****Prayer of Thanksgiving**

**We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

**\*CLOSING HYMN****“Blest Be the Tie that Binds”****# 393 NCH vs 1 & 2**

**Blest be the tie that binds  
our hearts in Christian love;  
the fellowship of kindred minds  
is like to that above.**

**Before our Father's throne  
we pour our ardent prayers;  
our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,  
our comforts and our cares.**

**GOING FORTH TO SERVE** As we go forth to serve, please remember our opportunities this week. Join us for:

**CONFIRMATION** will meet Monday at 3:30 pm on Zoom.

**PRAYER GROUP** will meet Wednesday at 10 am. Please take time during the week to pray for our church, our members/family/friends, our leaders and our community.

CHURCH COUNCIL meets Wednesday, Jan 5<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm.

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED** We would like to resume having acolytes and liturgists each week. Anyone with a cell phone could be a liturgist since they could even record from home and send the video to Dave for upload during the service. This would be a good way to include those who cannot come to church for any reason.

**HELP NEEDED FOR LIVESTREAMING AND POWERPOINT** Folks who volunteered to be part of the Livestreaming Team are needed. Dave S. will be happy to set up a time to teach you what you need to know and Mark and Frank will be happy to mentor you through the process. Ruth will be happy to provide training for PowerPoint.

**BIRTHDAYS**

1--Barb B.

11--Matthew B.

1--Allen R.

13--Madelyn G.

3--Glen LeDuc

26--Jessica D.

7--Mary Ann C.

28--Alvin W.

**UPCOMING ACTIVITIES**

**BOOK CLUB** will meet at 11:30 am at Weezy's on Jan 10<sup>th</sup>. Our book is The Last Thing He Said by Laura Dave.

**ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING** will be held January 16<sup>th</sup>.

**VISION TEAM** will meet Jan. 18<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm on Zoom. All church members and friends are invited to attend..

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**THE BREAD OF LIFE FOOD PANTRY** in Hamel is open on Mondays and Saturdays from 9:00 am till 10:30am. All who need assistance are welcome.

Canned fruits	Pie Filling	Jelly
Evaporated Milk	Frosting	Coffee
Shampoo	Dish Detergent	Laundry detergent

Also need empty egg cartons and plastic bags

**CONCERNS**

Maria S.	Harry S.	Lillie H.
Kathie R.	Martha K.	Carole G.
Tomiko J.	Sherri R.	Donna
Rose O.	Roger W.	Kathleen L.
Michelle L.	Kristy K.	Dorothy D.
Jane B.	Mary Ann C.	Jake G.
Diane B.	Rich R.	Wayne S.
Roger W.	Karen's Mother	Our Church
Our Church Council	Hitz Home workers and residents	
Our country as we deal with pandemic		
Disaster Victims	Pastor Dana, as she leads	

**E-MAIL ADDRESSES**

Ruth:	<a href="mailto:officeiucc@gomadison.com">officeiucc@gomadison.com</a>
Pastor Dana:	<a href="mailto:pastoriucc@gomadison.com">pastoriucc@gomadison.com</a>

**BENEDICTION**

And now, until we meet again, may each one be held safely in the palm of God's hand. Amen.

**POSTLUDE**