



First Christian Church

Disciples of Christ

430 S. 16th St. Lincoln, NE 68508 402.475.4289

Weekly Worship

love all • live spiritually • rejoice in hope • show hospitality

Rev. Dr. Karen Moritz, Pastor
Kelly Tyrrell, Church Administrator
Mark W. Miller, Director of Music Ministries

Sara Lugn, Stephen Ministry Leader
www.fcclincoln.org
info@fcclincoln.org

Week of December 5, 2021



Public Worship WILL be held at 10:30 am Sunday morning.
If you are not quite ready to join us for public worship, we invite you to follow along with this printed service.

Community Prayer

As we watch and wait for that moment in time when you come into our world with flesh and bones, Lord, we can't help but wonder if we are waiting well. Some of us are living with fear and anxiety because our world is such a mess. Things would be easier if you would just send us a message, a promise that you will come be by our sides. God, as we worship you this week, as we read the scriptures together, help us remember that you've been sending us messengers all throughout history. It's just up to see them, listen to them, and heed their words. Lord, we pray for the transformation of our souls to follow your messengers and wait for you wholeheartedly. Amen.

*Check out our weekly video at www.fcclincoln.org,
First Christian's Facebook page, or search for First
Christian Church, Lincoln, Nebraska on YouTube.*

www.fcclincoln.org/youtube

Call to Worship

Feel free to follow along with our Call to Worship from today's live-streamed worship service.

One: It is in the watching, and in the waiting

Many: That we hear the promises made so long ago.

One: It is in the questions, and in the hoping

Many: That we give thanks to hear the glad news.

One: It is in the coming, and in the going

Many: That we welcome the One who is our Delight, our Joy.

Even if you are worshipping from home, please continue your regular giving to the church in addition to your faith giving. The FCC office is accepting checks at 430 S. 16th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508. We can also mail you a debit authorization form to do automatic withdrawals. Finally, there is a "GIVE" button on the top right-hand side of the fcclincoln.org website to make an online donation via PayPal.

Scripture Reading

Malachi 3:1-4

¹ See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. ² But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; ³ he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness.

⁴ Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

Luke 3:1-6

¹ In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, ² during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³ He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴ as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

“Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

⁵ Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight,

and the rough ways made smooth; ⁶ and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

Reflection

Meditation for Advent Two: Peace “Warning: Transformation Required”

In his theological reflections for *Lectionary Homiletics*, Kenneth E. Kovacs from Baltimore, MD, offered our pithy title for today. He commented that the primary focus of our text from Malachi was the coming of God to the Temple of the ancient Israelites. The prophet Malachi, whose name means “My Messenger,” brought a message to the people to help them prepare for God’s coming, God’s advent. The whole point of the message was to prepare for an encounter with Holy One of Israel. But why were the people so eager to have this encounter with God? The ancient Israelites to whom Malachi spoke were anxious and fearful. They felt discouraged and hopeless; they were not at peace.

What was causing these experiences? They felt that the priests who represented them in Temple worship had become corrupt and lax in their duties. They presented imperfect offerings which demonstrated a sense of disrespect. The priests offered worship that was not reverent and heartfelt. They feared that this attitude reflected badly on them as a whole since the priests were called to represent all the people. The people yearned for transformation in the hearts of the priests that would lead to transformation for them all.

In his reflections on this text for *Lectionary Homiletics*, Charles L. Aaron from Farmersville, TX, commented on the author’s use of the metaphor of a refiner who refines or purifies precious metals. Malachi’s message shared the promise that God, as the ultimate refiner, would purify and refine worship. Aaron went on to say: “The sending of a messenger is the Lord’s affirmation of the inherent quality of the people. The priests do not need to be destroyed or replaced, but refined and purified. God will act to purify the people beginning with the priests.” In the midst of their anxiety and fear, God’s messenger brought words of hope that were meant to bring them peace of mind. Transformation was at hand for priests and people alike because God was in their midst.

At this point you may be asking “Pastor Karen, what does this have to do with the 2nd Sunday of Advent?” As we move into this 2nd week of Advent, we focus on John the Baptist, the messenger of God who prepared the way for the coming of Jesus. Through-

out Advent, we hear voices from both the Hebrew and Greek scriptures. The inclusion of all these voices is critical as we strive to deepen our experience of waiting. John did not appear out of nowhere; there was history and tradition which provided the foundation for his ministry. Undoubtedly, those who had heard of John or experienced his ministry thought of other “messengers” who came before.

Like Malachi, John came on the scene when people were fearful and anxious. The Roman Empire had a strong and oppressive grip on the people of Palestine. Those who led worship in the Temple on their behalf were often seen as corrupt and lax in their duties. Worship often felt restrictive and, I suspect, many felt that those leading worship were not reverent and did not approach their duties with passion or love. Perhaps they, like the ancient Israelites, feared that such practices reflected badly on the people they were called to represent. So, once again, God sent a messenger. John came proclaiming a message of transformation, for priests and people alike. “The Day of the Lord” would look different, but the promise of God was the same. God promised to be present with the people in a new way, through the coming of the Messiah.

Just as Sandhya Rani Jha reminds us throughout our Advent devotional *Travelling with our Ancestors*, our journey of Advent can be deepened as we listen to the voices of our ancestors. Just as the experiences of those who followed John were deepened by the awareness of ancestors like Malachi, so our experiences can be deepened as we hear the many voices of our ancestors. Throughout Advent, we will hear the voices of those from the Hebrew and Greek scriptures. We must listen to the original messages with integrity, hearing and respecting their message to their original audiences. Once we do that we can more faithfully hear the voices of those who followed, like John. The messages are unique and special, but they share some common threads; those who heard Malachi and those who followed John all yearned to know that God was in their midst. No matter what corruption was present, the Refiner would bring purity. God did the same for those who heard John and God will do the same for us today.

AMEN

Prayers & Praises December 5, 2021

- In Our Church Family:**
- Vic Burgess
 - Arlene Heimer
 - Marvin Thurber
 - William Deterding
 - Harold & Donna Baker
 - Polly Putney
 - Jessica Vocasek

Relatives:

- Friends and Family of *Vic Burgess*
- Greg Ogren, *prayers for healing, still ill after surgeries and treatments, son of LaVonne Ogren*
- Mark Carpenter, *with colon cancer, brother of Jill Carpenter and Dick & Roxie Pickel*
- Lorie Chrastel, *Mark Carpenter's fiancée, prayers for recovery from a stroke*
- Roger Christianson, *with stage 4 cancer, father of Brady Christianson*
- Mother of John Swanson, *prayers for health as she is ill with COVID-19*
- Emily Carpenter, *aunt of Carpenters & Pickels is in hospice due to Covid in May*
- Gerald Deterding, *prayers for healing from cancer and pneumonia, father of William Deterding*

Friends:

- Tallu Schuyler Quinn, *prayers for diagnosis of glioblastoma, friend of Kaleo and D'Arcy Blosser*
- Cedric Gibb, *healing prayers, friend of Cec Burkhart*
- Jim Bottolfsen, *for stage 3 lung cancer, friend of the Vocaseks*
- Carson Mousel, *13-year-old grandson of Bob and Eileen Kunz, from Mildred Brockemeyer*
- Jamin and Hailey, *for the safe delivery of their baby girl, from Tony Flack*
- Kristen Moore, *daughter-in-law of Ken & Susan Moore, wife of James, prayers for healing from liver transplant*
- Our sympathy to the family of Rev. Gordon Scott, *founder of Crestwood Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), upon his recent passing*

Our Timothys:

- Bruce Frogge *at Cypress Creek CC in Spring, TX*
- Glenda Dietrich Moore, *Creative Arts Ministry in Lincoln, NE*

In the Nebraska Region:

- All Ministries in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Nebraska

Our Global Ministries Missionaries:

- Anne Gregory serving in Thailand

Find more information and stories about our Global Ministry partners at www.globalministries.org



Song of the Week

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

Words: Charles Wesley, 1744

Music: Rowland Hugh Pritchard, 1830

Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set they people free;
from our fears and sins release us;
let us find our rest in thee.

Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.

Save The Dates

A Festival of Lessons & Carols

Sunday, December 19th 10:30 am
Sanctuary

Christmas Eve Worship

Friday, December 24th
6:00 pm Sanctuary

Christmas Hymn Sing

Sunday, December 26th
10:30 am Sanctuary

