



**First Christian Church**

Disciples of Christ

430 S. 16<sup>th</sup> St.    Lincoln, NE 68508    402.475.4289

## Weekly Worship

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

**Rev. Dr. Karen Moritz**, Pastor  
**Mark W. Miller**, Director of Music Ministries  
**Ethan Cai**, Administrative Assistant

[www.fcclincn.org](http://www.fcclincn.org)  
[info@fcclincn.org](mailto:info@fcclincn.org)

**Week of December 4th, 2022**



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.

During Sunday worship in the season of Advent we will be using material from our Advent devotional "Be Ready" page 14. It is our hope that as you light your own Advent Candles you will use the same material and feel connected with us as we do the same during Sunday worship.

### Call to Worship

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

### Community Prayer

O God of comfort and wilderness, we give thanks for the invitation to stand in the liminal spaces of life. We rejoice in the peace and harmony your reign brings. We also give thanks that you abide with us in the wildernesses of life. Help us wait and trust in you during this Advent season.

Strengthen us as we abide in uncomfortable spaces with one another. Empower us as we repent and prepare for your coming.

**AMEN**

**One:** We gather in this comfortable place, to prepare for a new day:

**Many:** a day when the wolf will live with the lamb.

**One:** So prepare your hearts for the day when peace will rule the earth:

**Many:** when the leopard will lie down with the kid.

**One:** Prepare the way, the way where old notions are overturned. Get ready! Prepare the way!

# Reflection

“Salvation and survival wait for us in the Wilderness”

## *Meditation for the 2nd Sunday of Advent*

One of my favorite personal Christmas decorations is a piece given to me by my mother several years ago. I suspect many people would see it as a bit schmaltzy, but I love it. It has a large male lion at its center with a small lamb beside it, a bird perched on top and a small baby nestled between the lion and the lamb. At the base it says “Celebrate the Millenium-Peace on Earth.” I guess that betrays its age. This image flashed to mind as I read the words of the prophet Isaiah which comes to us on this 2nd Sunday of Advent. As the prophet described the Messianic age I feel a sense of calm and tranquility. The notes in the NRSV study Bible indicate that “The current disorder of nature will be restored to its pristine harmony.” This text was obviously chosen by those compiling the lectionary as a description of the coming Messiah which we as Christians perceive to be Jesus the Christ. In the genealogy of Matthew, which is rarely read in Protestant churches but is quite interesting, we learn that Jesus was descended from the House of David. In our text from Isaiah we learn that the Messiah will come from the “stump of Jesse” i.e. King David’s father. As Christians we interpret the prophecy from Isaiah as evidence that Jesus, descended from Jesse and David, is the hoped for Messiah. This passage also fits with the overall theme for the 2nd Sunday of Advent which is peace.

With this peaceful prophecy about the coming Messiah ringing in our ears we come to the words from the Gospel of Matthew. What a stark contrast to the earlier passage. Now we have the strident John the Baptist running around in the crude garments of a prophet, living meagerly on the resources of the desert. John did not share the message of harmonic nature. He would have undoubtedly hurled my favorite Christmas decoration to the ground as he shouted “Repent and prepare the way of the Lord!”

Once again, we find ourselves in a liminal space astride the words of a peaceable kingdom and a screaming prophet telling us to repent and prepare. In her reflections for the Presbyterian Outlook editor Rev. Teri McDowell Ott began by asking a striking question: “What would make me leave my comfortable home and venture into the wilderness to hear a fiery prophet tell me to repent and prepare the way of the Lord?” As we enter the bitterly cold

days of winter this seems like a compelling question. Ott went on to ponder the motives of those who did enter the wilderness. She dug deeper into the text and concluded that the religious figures, the Pharisees and Sadducees, probably came out to where John was baptizing, not necessarily to be baptized themselves. She went on: “These religious leaders – who didn’t get along and were unlikely to work together – were united in their opposition to John. They did not venture into the wilderness receptive to his ministry, but to oppose a threat to their power and influence.”

Now one might ask, what was the attraction for all the others who came? They must have felt a tremendous hunger to hear what John had to say even though it seems abrasive to us today. Ott went on: “To prepare the way for the Messiah, John preaches outside the city center, outside worldly power and privilege, where people would not normally go to get their needs met — spiritual or otherwise. John calls us to meet God off the beaten path and on the margins of our society, among the poor and powerless.” You could say that John invites us into that liminal space astride many realities at the same time. We are called to abide in both the world of comfort we know and the wilderness. Wilderness will undoubtedly mean different things to each of, but I bet we can identify it in our lives and in our world today. Then Ott threw out a line about our passage from Matthew that really resonated with me. She said: “Salvation and survival wait for us in the wilderness — especially in the One for whom John’s ministry proclaims: ““Prepare the way of the Lord;” “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near” (v. 3, v.2).” As we wait and prepare we stand in the liminal space of comfort and wilderness, of disharmony and peace, of struggle and joy. We stand in solidarity with all those who abide in that liminal space as well. The prophetic words of peace enable us to abide in the liminal spaces of life because we know we do not stand there alone. We stand with one another and God abides with us, filling our hearts with the promises of the coming Messiah who brings a new age of peace and harmony.

AMEN

# Scripture Reading

# Isaiah 11:1-10

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse,  
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.  
The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,  
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of counsel and might,  
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of  
the Lord.  
His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.  
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,  
or decide by what his ears hear;  
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,  
and decide with equity for the meek of the  
earth;  
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his  
mouth,  
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the  
wicked.  
Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,  
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.  
The wolf shall live with the lamb,  
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,  
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,  
and a little child shall lead them.  
The cow and the bear shall graze,  
their young shall lie down together;  
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.  
The nursing child shall play over the hole of the  
asp,  
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the  
adder's den.  
They will not hurt or destroy  
on all my holy mountain;  
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of  
the Lord  
as the waters cover the sea.

On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

# Matthew 3:1-12

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.’ This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, ‘The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”’

Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, ‘You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Do not presume to say to yourselves, “We have Abraham as our ancestor”; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

‘I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing-floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.’

# Prayers & Praises

## December 4th, 2022

### In Our Church

- Family:
- Marvin Thurber
  - William Deterding
  - Vic Burgess
  - Jessica Vocasek
  - Donna Baker
  - Polly Putney
  - Lois Frogge
  - Joan Dietrich
  - Mildred Brockemeyer

### Relatives:

- Friends and Family of Vic Burgess
- Roger Christianson, *with stage 4 cancer, father of Brady Christianson*
- Laurie Aufdemberge, *with breast cancer, sister of Kristi Bowker*

### Friends:

- Cedric Gibb, *healing prayers, friend of Cec Burkhart*
- Carson Mousel, *grandson of Bob and Eileen Kunz, from Mildred Brockemeyer*

### 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 (DoC) Nebraska

### Our Global Ministries Missionaries:

- Phyllis Byrd serving in Kenya

Find more information and stories about our Global Ministry partners at [www.globalministries.org](http://www.globalministries.org)



# Song of the Week

## O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lonely exile here  
until the Son of God appear.

### Refrain:

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Wisdom from on high,  
who orderest all things mightily:  
to us the path of knowledge show;  
and teach us in her ways to go.  
[Refrain]

O come, O come, thou Lord of might,  
who to thy tribes on Sinai's height  
in ancient times didst give the law  
in cloud and majesty and awe.  
[Refrain]

O come, thou Root of Jesse, free  
thine own from Satan's tyranny;  
from depths of hell thy people save  
and give them victory o'er the grave.  
[Refrain]

O come, thou Key of David, come,  
and open wide our heavenly home;  
make safe the way that leads on high,  
and close the path to misery.  
[Refrain]

O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer  
our spirits by thine advent here;  
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
and death's dark shadows put to flight.  
[Refrain]

O come, Desire of nations, bind  
all peoples in one heart and mind;  
bid envy, strife, and discord cease;  
fill the whole world with heaven's peace.  
[Refrain]