

Welcome to First Christian Reformed Church!
Pastor John Knoester
December 11, 2022 – Third Sunday in Advent

* Please stand in body or in spirit

*“My child, as prophet of the Lord,
you will prepare the way,”*

Prelude

Opening Song Video: *“O Come, All You Unfaithful”* – Sovereign Grace

Welcome/Announcements

* Call to Worship: (Based on Isaiah 40)

Leader: In the desert, prepare the way for the Lord.

**People: Make straight in the wilderness a highway
for our God.**

Leader: And the glory of the Lord will be revealed.

People: And all mankind will see it. Thanks be to God.

* Opening Hymn of Praise: LUYH #59 v.1-3

“Comfort, Comfort Now My People”

1. Comfort, comfort now my people;
speak of peace: so says our God.
Comfort those who sit in darkness,
mourning under sorrow’s load.
Cry out to Jerusalem
of the peace that waits for them;
tell her that her sins I cover
and her warfare now is over.
2. For the herald’s voice is crying
in the desert far and near,
calling all to true repentance,
since the kingdom now is here.
Oh, that warning cry obey!
Now prepare for God a way!
Let the valleys rise to meet him
and the hills bow down to greet him.

3. Then make straight what long was crooked;
make the rougher places plain.
Let your hearts be true and humble,
as befits his holy reign.
For the glory of the Lord
now on earth is shed abroad,
and all flesh shall see the token
that God's word is never broken.

ISAIAH 40:1-5: Words: Isaiah 40:1-5; vers. Johannes G. Olearius, 1671; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1863, alt., P.D.; Music: Louis Bourgeois (ca. 1510-1561), 1551; harm. Johann Crüger (1592-1662), 1658, P.D.

* God's Greeting

* We Greet Each Other

*(During the mutual greeting those lighting the Advent candle
are invited forward)*

*"To tell God's people they are saved
from sin's eternal sway."*

Advent Prayer of Confession

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Words of Assurance:

Leader: "Comfort, comfort my people," says your God.
"Your sins are pardoned. The penalty is paid."

People: "Thanks be to God."

Song of Response: LUYH #72 v. 1-2 *"Imagine"*

1. Who hears? Who hears the voice of the hungry,
the thirsty?
Who sees? Who sees the tears of the suffering ones?
2. Who knows? Who knows the hopes that lie hidden,
forgotten?
Who comes? Who comes to lead all the children home?

Refrain

*Imagine a King who would come through the darkness
and walk, where I walk, full of greatness,
and call me to his side, just like a father and child.*

Words: Keith and Kristyn Getty © 2003 Thankyou Music (PRS), admin. worldwide at EMICMGPublishing.com excluding Europe which is admin. by Kingswaysongs

Offering: General Fund

Offertory: *“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” - Franchesca Bill*

*(Following the offering the children are invited forward
for the Children’s Message)*

Children’s Message – Mrs. Marjo Rouw

*(Following the children’s message children ages 3-3rd grade are invited
to make their way to Children in Worship in the Fellowship Hall)*

* Hymn of Preparation: LUYH #70 v. 1-5

“On Jordan’s Banks the Baptist’s Cry”

1. On Jordan’s bank the Baptist’s cry
announces that the Lord is nigh.
Awake and harken, for he brings
glad tidings of the King of kings!
2. Then cleansed be every life from sin:
make straight the way for God within,
and let us all our hearts prepare
for Christ to come and enter there.
3. We hail you as our Savior, Lord,
our refuge and our great reward.
Without your grace we waste away
like flowers that wither and decay.
4. Stretch forth your hand, our health restore,
and make us rise to fall no more.
O let your face upon us shine
and fill the world with love divine.
5. All praise to you, eternal Son,
whose advent has our freedom won,
whom with the Father we adore,
and Holy Spirit, evermore.

Words: Charles Coffin, 1736; tr. composite, P.D. CCLI #678905

*“So have the prophets long declared
that with a mighty arm”*

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:57-80

Prayer of Illumination

Message: ***“Zechariah’s John Song – “The Rising Sunshine”***

Time of Prayer

*“God would turn back our enemies
and all who wish us harm.”*

* Hymn of Application: LUYH #67 v. 1-3

“Blessed Be the God of Israel”

1. Blessed be the God of Israel,
who comes to set us free
and raises up new hope for us:
a Branch from David’s tree.
So have the prophets long declared
that with a mighty arm
God would turn back our enemies
and all who wish us harm.
2. With promised mercy will God still
the covenant recall,
the oath once sworn to Abraham,
from foes to save us all,
that we might worship without fear
and offer lives of praise,
in holiness and righteousness
to serve God all our days.
3. My child, as prophet of the Lord,
you will prepare the way,
to tell God’s people they are saved
from sin’s eternal sway.
Then shall God’s mercy from on high
shine forth and never cease
to drive away the gloom of death
and lead us into peace.

Words: Carl P. Daw, Jr. (b. 1944) © 1989 Hope Publishing Company CCLI
#678905

* We Profess our Faith:

Leader: Jesus, in love you came to a stable in Bethlehem
to become one with us.

**People: In love you walked the plains and hills of Galilee
and Judea to teach us how to live.**

Leader: In love you were nailed on a cross on Calvary
to bear away our sin.

**People: In love you rose from a tomb in Joseph's garden
to defeat death's power over us.**

Leader: In love you ascended beyond the clouds
to be our reigning Lord.

**People: You came to love us so that we need never feel
unloved, deserted, alone, condemned.**

* God's Blessing

* Parting Hymn of Praise: *"Joy Has Dawned"* v. 1-4

1. Joy has dawned upon the world, promised from creation;
God's salvation now unfurled—hope for ev'ry nation.
Not with fanfares from above, not with scenes of glory,
but a humble gift of love: Jesus born of Mary.
2. Sounds of wonder fill the sky with the songs of angels,
as the mighty Prince of Life shelters in a stable.
Hands that set each star in place
shaped the earth in darkness,
cling now to a mother's breast—vulnerable and helpless.
3. Shepherds bow before the Lamb gazing at the glory.
Gifts of men from distant lands prophesy the story—
gold a King is born today; incense, God is with us;
myrrh, His death will make a way,
by His blood He'll win us.
4. Son of Adam, Son of Man, given as a ransom.
Reconciling God and man—Christ our mighty Champion!
What a Savior, what a Friend, what a glorious mystery!
Once a babe in Bethlehem—now the Lord of history.

Words & Music by Stuart Townend & Keith Getty,

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Postlude

Welcome! The psalmist prayed: “Restore us, O Lord God Almighty; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved” (Psalm 80:19). May all who have come to worship find restoration, inner peace and spiritual strength. After the morning service all are invited to the fellowship hall next to the sanctuary for a cup of coffee or juice and continued fellowship.

Dear Friends in Jesus Christ,

In Luke’s account of Christ’s coming to earth the story is filled with the sounds of various singers singing their songs of joy and wonder. A new day is dawning before their very eyes and they can’t help but to marvel at what God is doing in their midst. The songs Luke records are meant to awaken his readers and fill their own hearts with joy. That same God is still doing great things today!

Throughout the Advent season we are going to take a closer look at each of the songs in Luke’s Gospel. As we do so – may God unleash on us the same sense of excitement and energy of heaven that he unleashed two thousand years ago!

In His Grace, Pastor John

1. Nov. 27 - “Mary’s Song – ‘God is My Redeemer’” (Luke 1:39-56)
2. Dec. 4 – “Zechariah’s Jesus Song – ‘The Horn of Salvation’” (Luke 1:67-75)
3. Dec. 11 – “Zechariah’s John Song – ‘The Rising Sunshine’” (Luke 1:76-80)
4. Dec. 18 – “Simeon’s Song – ‘Light to the Gentiles’” (Luke 2:25-33)
5. Dec. 25 – “The Angel’s and Shepherd’s Song – ‘Peace on Earth’” (Luke 2:1-20)

Tech Team	Today 12/11	Next Week: 12/18 AM	Next Week: 12/18 PM
Sound:	Mardick S.	Henry VZ	Tim H.
Projection:	Tim H.	Hannah VH	Beth B.
Video:	Brandon S.	Dick G.	France K.
Offering:	General Fund	General Fund	

First CRC Bulletin

Announcements

December 11, 2022

OUR CHURCH FAMILY:



Christmas Caroling, tonight, Dec. 11 at 6:30 PM! Don't forget to bring a plateful of goodies to share after we carol! Hot cocoa will be provided.

Future Angel Tree Co-coordinators Needed! Every year we have the opportunity to provide approximately Christmas gifts to approximately 25-35 children in the valley whose parent is currently incarcerated. This ministry could not have happened without the leadership of Sylvia Van Zanten who has been the coordinator of it for many years. Sylvia has graciously agreed to help coordinate this ministry one more year, but she would like to have 1-2 other individuals to take the reins next year. If interested, please contact the church office, or Sylvia directly.



Angel Tree: Thank you to everyone who bought a gift for a child who has a loved one in prison. The open house will be held on December 19 where the families can come to pick up the gifts for the children and enjoy coffee, juice and cookies. We provided gifts for 32 children this year. Have a Blessed Christmas!

OPOP Christmas Basket: Our friend Michael is being released on Tuesday, December 20. He will initially reside in West Seattle and recently we had the opportunity to help set up his new apartment. To celebrate his release we would love to provide him with a generous Christmas gift basket from our church to be delivered sometime between Dec. 21-24. Some suggested items to include would be as follows: Gift cards to Safeway (only 1 block from his apartment), Target, Chocolate, Clif Protein bars, coffee, cookies, Reign energy drinks, salami sticks, and noodles. We would also love to include short any short encouraging notes, Christmas cards, or pictures from children. Whatever you are able to give would be most helpful. We are hoping to put the basket shortly after the Dec. 18 Candlelight service and so that will be the last Sunday to bring things in. Thanks in advance for being

willing to partner with us in this ministry! - OPOP Core Team (Greg B., Linda G., Henry H., Darrel L., and Pastor John)

Jennaya's Eagle Eyes found a mistake in the new church directory: **Please change the mailbox for Luke and Bailey Visser to #196!** Also **Reinie and Jill Rouw** have a new email address: **jillrouw@gmail.com**

Worship Service YouTube Links: December 4: <https://youtu.be/xfZ9u36iHw0>

Save the date: Church potluck January 8!

Ministry Associate Position Update: In response to various advertisements the council recently received two applications for the ministry associate position. The current plan is to conduct zoom interviews on the evening of December 8 with the hope of potentially recommending one of them to the council and eventually to the congregation as a whole. Please continue to keep the interview team and the church council in your prayers throughout the weeks and months ahead. Thank you!



Pastor Michael Kooy will be retiring from ministry in January 2023. If you have stories, cards, or photos you would like to send as he takes this next step in life, you can email them to Pastor Kelsi Jones at kelsijoann@gmail.com or send them to Grace Community Church 10415 S Kedvale AveOak Lawn, IL 60453 by January 5.

First CRC offers the option to give your offerings online, including setting up automatic and reoccurring donations. For information on this and other ways to give please check the "Give" page on the church's website: https://firstcrcmv.com/?page_id=1509

CALENDAR:

Greeters: Hank & Sylvia VZ

Next Week, 12/18: Henry & Pam VZ

Coffee Hosts: Randy & Peggy B.

Next Week, 12/18: Dick & Linda G.

Children in Worship: Angela S., Emmalyn S.

Next Week, 12/18: Sheri L, Rhyson O.

Worship Team: Stan B., Julie, Adriana & Tessa S.

Next Week, 12/18AM: Eliot B., Heidi B., Kayla & Ella VH

12/18PM: Henry & Pam VZ, Sylvia VZ

Today:

**Choir Practice following the service
Tonight, 6:30pm – Christmas Caroling**

This Week:

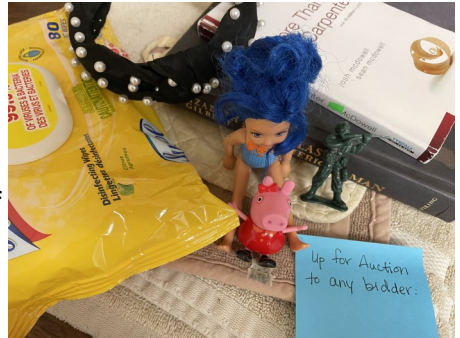
Cadets: Weds. at 6:30pm

Upcoming Dates to Note:

Tuesday – December 13 at 7:00am
Men's Bible Study at Shari's Restaurant
Dec. 18, 6:30pm - CandleLight Service
Christmas Day, 10:00am – Sunday
Service
Jan. 8: Church Potluck!

Adopt Me!

If you are interested in adopting any of these unclaimed items, please feel free to take them home and love them. If they remain longer than Dec. 18 they will be donated to Bargains Galore. Thank you!



CRC ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Family Fire - is an online community exploring Spirit-led family, marriage, parenting, in-laws, blended families, and intimacy. Find encouraging articles and devotions at familyfire.com. Subscribe for regular email updates and connect with our Family Fire community on Facebook.

Advent: God's Joy - Check out the kids' devotion at www.kidscorner.net. We know the words to the song well, "Joy to the World, the Lord has come..." But what exactly is the joy of Christmas all about? Listen now at kidscorner.net and check out all the new content.

Devotions for a Blue Christmas - In the midst of hard times, find strength and encouragement through God's word. A set of fourteen encouraging Today devotions reassure you that even during the darkest of Christmas seasons, you're not alone. Receive this free email series and ebook when you subscribe to Today at todaydevotional.com/bluechristmas

Groundwork: Mary: The Angel Gabriel Foretells Jesus' Birth - Our understanding of the virgin birth begins with the story of the angel Gabriel appearing to Mary. Join our Groundwork conversation as we study Luke 1:1-4, 26-56 to learn from Mary's strong example of faith, wholly trusting God and submitting to his will in our lives as we continue to prepare our hearts for Christmas. Listen now at GroundworkOnline.com and subscribe to Groundwork's weekly emails for future episodes.

Advent At-home Faith Formation Tip - During Advent, we light the candle of Joy. Joy is not a fleeting happiness, but an attitude of the heart that springs from gratitude. What brings you joy? How might you spread joy to others? Wonder and talk about that this week. (Tip from Faith Formation; bit.ly/CRCFaithFormation)

Deep Christmas Joy - God gave us his Best Gift at Christmas, and Jesus tells us to give as we have so abundantly received. Your donation to the World Renew Gift Catalog will bring real joy to someone who is struggling to survive each day. Donate today at worldrenew.net/gifts or call 800-552-7972.



Candlelight Service Volunteer Opportunities:

For this year's Candlelight service we are looking for the following:

1. **3 Narrators**
2. **16 Scripture Readers**
(9 to read up front, 7 to read from the balcony)
3. **2-4 Candle Lighters** (If you are a teenager who has always wanted to walk around with FIRE, let Beth know.)

Please call Beth at 360-336-2405 or email her at secretary@firstcrcmv.com to be a part of this very meaningful Christmas service.



How can
we
PRAY
for you?

People to be remembered with prayers, cards, letters & words of encouragement.

Email the office at secretary@firstcrmv.com or call the church office at (336-2405) by 9:00 am Thursday of each week with your prayer items.

NEW REQUESTS:

Please keep **Alice De Vries** in your prayers. She recently suffered a mini-stroke and also developed a blood clot in her carotid artery. She is currently recovering at Island Hospital in Anacortes, but is still very weak and tired. The hope is that she will be able to return home early next week. In the meantime, please pray for renewed strength and for full healing in the days and weeks ahead. Thank you!

CONTINUING REQUESTS:

Bailey Ackermann had a significant infection. Please continue to pray for a speedy physical recovery and for full healing in the days and weeks to come.

Please pray for **Terry's mom, Jeanne Beezhold**, as she has been recently diagnosed with a form of lung cancer. Remember her especially on Wednesdays when she has her chemotherapy treatments at the Skagit Regional Health Cancer Care Center in Mount Vernon.

Continue to pray for **Maxine Greidanus, Shirley Boonstra** and **Adelaida Vega** as they continue to fight their cancer.

SHUT INS: **Nell Annema** and **Marion Ekkelkamp** at Birchview Memory Care in Sedro-Woolley; **Marcella DeVries** at Bethany Lutheran in Everett, **Marjean DeGroot** at Mountain Glen in Mount Vernon; **Mary Koopmans** at Where the Heart is in Burlington; **Hans & Aileen Meishke** at Kenmore Living in Kenmore, WA, **Adrianna Swanson**, and **Clarence Vander Griend** at Home Place in Burlington; **Sally Reehoorn** at Creekside in Burlington; **Bev Van Slageren** at family in Grandview, WA.

OTHER REQUESTS: (CRC Communications)

Monday December 5 - *Disability Concerns: Togetherness*

As we enter the season in which we reflect on the incarnate Christ, pray that we his followers will make space for him and for people of all sizes and shapes and abilities in our lives, homes, and churches.

Tuesday December 6 - *Resonate: Philippines*

Resonate missionaries Charles and Hensel Oh, who serve in the Philippines, ask you to pray for people living in poverty. With two major earthquakes and two major typhoons in the Philippines in the past few months, “many people have lost their homes and are struggling to put their lives back together,” said the Ohs.

Wednesday December 7 - *World Renew: Staffing*

We praise God for the many ways our ministry continues to grow, creating more opportunities to serve across the organization. These blessings also bring some challenges. For example, despite months of seeking, staff in Mozambique are still in need of a new program advisor. Pray that the right person with both the talent and the heart for God's work will step forward to serve in this role.

Thursday December 8 - *ReFrame: Indonesia*

Pray for Johan and Tika, two pastors in Indonesia who have been using video programs from our Indonesian ministry partners as a Bible study for their congregation. After a lesson on Jacob and Laban (Gen. 29), they shared, “We are learning a lot from Jacob, who was able to make the best of his situation, even though it was difficult. Thank you!”

Friday December 9 - *Faith Formation: Drawing near*

Many people who might not regularly attend church come for worship services in the Advent/Christmas season. Pray that churches extend a warm welcome and hospitality as the Spirit stirs people's hearts. As we worship Immanuel together, may visitors and church members find a shared sense of belonging and be filled with wonder that God is near.

Saturday December 10 - *Resonate: Chicago*

Pray for Grace in Garfield, a Resonate-partner church plant in Chicago. Ask the Holy Spirit to continue working in and through this church to transform their local community for God's kingdom.

Sunday December 11 - *Chaplaincy and Care: Prisons*

Pray for our chaplains serving in prisons and for the men and women they serve. Ask the Holy Spirit to continue working through these chaplains as they provide transformative ministry in the prison system.