

Welcome to First Christian Reformed Church!
Pastor John Knoester
December 3, 2023 – First Sunday in Advent

* Please stand in body or in spirit

“O Come, O Bright and Morning Star,”

Prelude

Sung Call to Worship: LUYH #61 v. 1-7 *“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”*

Soloist

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

Soloist

2. O come, O Wisdom from on high,
who ordered all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show
and teach us in its ways to go.

Soloist

3. O come, O come, great Lord of might,
who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times did give the law
and in cloud and majesty and awe.

Soloist

4. O come, thou branch of Jesse's stem,
unto thine own and rescue them!
From depths of hell your people save,
and give them victory o'er the grave.
5. O come, O Key of David, come
and open wide our heavenly home.
Make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery.

6. O come, O Bright and Morning Star,
and bring us comfort from afar!
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
and death's dark shadows put to flight.
7. O come, desire of nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind.
Bid all our sad divisions cease,
and be thyself our King of peace.

Refrain

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

Words: Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum, Köln, 1710; tr. Composite, P.D.;
Music: French processional, 15th c. P.D.; arr. Evangelical Lutheran Worship ©2006
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CCLI#678905

* Welcome

* Call to Worship: (Based on Matthew 1:22-23 and Luke 1:78-79)

Leader: I invite you to join with me in the call to worship
from the gospel of Matthew and the book
of Revelation:

All this . . .

All the things we talked about in Advents
and Christmases past, and all the things
we will talk about in the weeks ahead,
“All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken
by the Lord through the prophet [Isaiah]:
‘Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,’ which means,

People: ‘God is with us.’”

Leader: Zechariah the prophet spoke of “the rising sun
[that] will come to us from heaven

**People: to shine on those living in darkness
and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the path of peace.”**

Leader: And this same Jesus declared in Revelation,

**People: “I am the Root and Offspring of David,
and the bright Morning Star,”**

Leader: and he promised, “Yes, I am coming soon.”
And so we have hope.

People: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

—based on Matthew 1:22–23 (NRSVA); Luke 1:78–79 (NIV);
Revelation 22:16, 20 (NIV)

* Opening Hymn of Praise: 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

* God's Greeting

* We Greet Each Other

*(During the mutual greeting those lighting the Advent candle
are invited to make their way forward)*

"And bring us comfort from afar!

Announcements

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Advent Prayer of Confession

Sung Prayer: LUYH #63 v. 1-2 *"My Soul in Stillness Waits"*

Refrain

*For you, O Lord, my soul in stillness waits;
truly my hope is in you.*

1. O Lord of Light, our only hope of glory,
your radiance shines in all who look to you.
Come, light the hearts of all in dark and shadow.

Refrain

2. O Spring of Joy, rain down upon our spirits;
our thirsty hearts are yearning for your Word.
Come, make us whole; be comfort to our hearts.

Refrain

Lighting of the Advent Candle

(The first candle is lit)

Words of Assurance:

The true light that gives light to everyone
was coming into the world.

To all who have received him,

to those who believe in his name,

he gave the right to become children of God.

- John 1:9, 12

Hymn of Response: LUYH #63 v. 3-4

"My Soul in Stillness Waits"

3. O Root of Life, implant your seed within us,
and in your advent draw us all to you,
our hope reborn in dying and in rising.

Refrain

*For you, O Lord, my soul in stillness waits;
truly my hope is in you.*

4. O Key of Knowledge, guide us in our pilgrimage;
we ever seek, yet unfulfilled remain.
Open to us the pathway of your peace.

Refrain

Words and Music: Marty Haugen (b. 1950), based on Psalm 62:5 and "O"
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*(Following the singing of the last verse 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)*

Offering: General Fund

Offertory: "O Come, Emmanuel" – Elaine Hagenburg

"Dispel the gloomy clouds of night"

Scripture Readings: Malachi 4:1-3, Luke 1:67-80,
Revelation 22:12-16

Introduction to our Advent Sermon Series

Prayer of Illumination

Message: ***"O Come, Sun of Righteousness,
Dayspring, and Bright and Morning Star"***

Time of Prayer

“And death’s dark shadows put to flight.”

* Hymn of Application: LUYH #667 v. 1-3

“Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies”

1. Christ, whose glory fills the skies,
Christ, the true and only Light,
Sun of Righteousness, arise,
triumph o’er the shade of night;
Dayspring from on high, be near;
Daystar, in my heart appear.
2. Dark and cheerless is the morn
unaccompanied by thee
joyless is the day’s return
till thy mercy’s beams I see,
till they inward light impart
glad my eyes and warm my heart.
3. Visit, then, this soul of mine,
pierce the gloom of sin and grief;
fill me, Radiancy divine,
scatter all my unbelief;
more and more thyself display,
shining to the perfect day!

Words: Charles Wesley, 1740, P.D.; Music: Charles E. Gounod (1818-1893); 1872, P.D.; CCLI #678905

* Advent Prayer:

*The following resource is based on the “
O” Antiphons, a traditional Advent prayer.*

Reader #1: O Wisdom, coming forth from the mouth
of the Most High,
pervading and permeating all creation,
you order all things with strength and gentleness:
Come now and teach us the way to salvation.

People: Come, Lord Jesus.

Reader #2: O Adonai, ruler of the house of Israel,
you appeared in the burning bush to Moses
and gave him the law on Sinai:
Come with outstretched arm to save us.

People: Come, Lord Jesus.

Reader #1: O Root of Jesse, rising as a sign for all the peoples,
before you earthly rulers will keep silent
and nations give you honor:
Come quickly to deliver us.

People: Come, Lord Jesus.

Reader #2: O Key of David, scepter over the house of Israel,
you open and no one can close,
you close and no one can open:
Come to set free the prisoners
who live in darkness and the shadow of death.

People: Come, Lord Jesus.

Reader #1: O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light,
sun of justice: Come, shine on those
who live in darkness and in the shadow of death.

People: Come, Lord Jesus.

Reader #2: O Ruler of the nations, monarch for whom
the people long,
you are the cornerstone uniting all humanity:
Come, save us all, whom you formed out of clay.

People: Come, Lord Jesus.

Reader #1: O Immanuel, our sovereign and lawgiver,
desire of the nations and Savior of all:
Come and save us, O Lord our God.

People: Come, Lord Jesus.

Reader #2: God of grace, ever faithful to your promises,
the earth rejoices in hope of our Savior's coming
and looks forward with longing to his return
at the end of time.

Prepare our hearts to receive him when he comes,
for he is Lord forever and ever.

People: Amen.

* God's Blessing

* Parting Praise: LUYH #56 v. 1-4

"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"

1. Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.
2. Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art:
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.
3. Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.
4. By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.

Words: Charles Wesley (1744), P.D.; Music: Christian F. Witt's *Psalmodia Sacra*,
1715; adapt. Henry J. Gauntlett, 1861; desc. John W. Wilson © 1983 Hope
Publishing Company; CCLI# 678905

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.

Tech Team	Today: 12/3	Next Week: 12/10
Sound:	Mardy S.	Henry H.
Projection:	Beth B.	France B.
Video:	Tim H./Caleb L.	Tim H./Joel L
Offering:	General Fund	General Fund

First CRC Bulletin Announcements

December 3, 2023

The deadline for announcements is Thursday, 9AM.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Choir: Practice today after the service.

Women's Bible Study meets at 6:30pm tonight!

Church Membership: At the November 27 elders meeting the observation was made that in recent months we have had the opportunity to practice the gift of hospitality through regularly welcoming several new individuals and families to our Sunday morning services. We hope we are using that gift well and our prayer is that First CRC is a welcoming place for all those who desire to grow in their faith and love for Jesus Christ. We also want to do our best to encourage those who are regular attenders to consider becoming members of the First CRC family! If interested, please reach out to Pastor John, Pastor Brad, or Beth with any questions you might have and so the elders can potentially follow up accordingly. We look forward to hearing from you!



A Program of Prison Fellowship

Angel Tree: Today after the service you will have the opportunity to pick up an Angel Tree Tag in the Fellowship Hall with a gift suggestion. Please sign your name on the sheet on the table by the name of the child on the Angel Tree tag that you choose. Each child receives a gift valued around \$25.00. After buying your gift, please wrap and put the Angel Tree sticker on the outside of the

gift. Please have the gifts back to church by December 10th. The families will pick up the gifts on Monday, December 18. Thank you for your generosity! Contact Catherine Vander Kooy at (360) 982-8429 with any questions.

Calling all Bakers! There is a sign-up sheet for those willing to make cookies to bring for after the evening CandleLight Service on the 17th. Thank you in advance for all your hard work!

Worship Service YouTube Links:

Weds., Thanksgiving Eve: https://youtu.be/DkkLRMj_oPA

Sunday, 11-26 Service: <https://youtu.be/LzV8OTrC80M>

First CRC offers the option to give *your offerings online, 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*

There is a new Greeters, Coffee/Lemonade Host schedule in your boxes!



Young Adults Pizza Party! Christmas break is often a great time for our out-of-state college students and young adults to reconnect with friends and church family. This year's young adult (all high school graduates under the age of 35 are considered 'young!') pizza party will take place on **Thursday, Dec. 28 at 6:30 PM at Coconut Kenny's in Burlington, WA.** Friends and 'significant others' are invited as well. If possible, please

send Beth a quick RSVP email (secretary@firstcrcmv.com) so that we can plan ahead accordingly. Thank you!

The votes of the “Let’s Draw Simon and Thomas LeClair for the Directory” Contest have been tallied! It was very close, but two drawings rose to the top of the votes. The winners are the following:



**Simon, drawn by
Tess Vander Hoek**



**Thomas, drawn by
Nellie Vander Hoek**

Please pick up your mini Simon and Thomases in the Fellowship Hall so you may add them to your directories.

“O Come, Emmanuel!” – 2023 Advent Series

Dear Friends in Jesus Christ,

Sprinkled throughout the famous Advent hymn, “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,” are various biblical titles for Jesus. These titles invite us to contemplate the character of the God whose advent we welcome. Throughout the Advent season we will be reflecting on a different title each week as we make our way to the manger on Christmas morning. Listed below is a tentative schedule for our journey. May God bless us as we reflect on these titles of Jesus together.

In His Grace, Pastor John

1. Dec. 3 – “O Come, Sun of Righteousness, Dayspring, Bright & Morning Star” - Malachi 4:1-3, Luke 1:67-80, Rev. 22:12-16
2. Dec. 10 – “O Come, Wisdom from on High”
– Prov. 8:1,6,22-36, I Cor. 1:18-25, James 3:17-18
3. Dec. 17 AM – “O Come, Key of David” – Revelation 1:9-20; 3:7-13
4. Dec. 17 PM – “O Come, Branch of Jesse’s Stem” – Isaiah 11:1-10

5. Dec. 24 – “O Come, Desire of Nations” – Haggai 1:1-2:9

6. Dec. 25 – “O Come Emmanuel, Our King of Peace” - TBD

Calendar:

Greeters/Coffee Hosts today: Tim H., Mardy & Kristi S., Katie J.

Greeters/Coffee Hosts next week,

Dec. 10: Dave & Nancy V., Jon & Catherine VDK

Worship Team:

Today: Henry, Pam & Sylvia VZ, France B.

Dec. 10: Men’s Group

Nursery:

Today: Angela See & Rhyson O.

Next Week, Dec. 10: Kayla VH, Myra VDB

Children in Worship:

Today: Heidi B., Kiera L.

Next Week, Dec. 10: Sheri L., Kayla VH

Today:

Choir Practice after the service

Tonight, 6:30pm: Women’s Bible Study

This Week:

Tues, Dec.5, 7:00am – Men’s Bible Study at Shari’s

There is NO GEMS this week because of the MVCS Elementary Christmas concert.

Upcoming Dates to Note:

Sun., Dec. 17, 6:30pm: Candlelight Service

Weds., Dec. 20, 6:30-8:30pm: GEMS

Christmas Day Service: 10:00am

Thurs., Dec. 28, 6:30pm: Young Adults Pizza Party at Coconut Kenny’s

CRC COMMUNICATIONS:

Thrive Faith Formation Tip - Ponder this quote from Mother Teresa: "This Christmas when Christ comes, will he find a warm heart? Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving others with God's own concern." How might you and your family love and serve others during this season? Learn more at crcna.org/FaithPracticesProject

Kids Corner: The Prophet's Message of Hope - Check out this week's kids' devotion at www.kidscorner.net. The devotion is all about how the prophet Isaiah talked about how light shining in the darkness gave people comfort. We know Isaiah 9:2 is about Jesus coming to earth and dying on the cross for our sins. How amazing is that! The hope we have is a person! Check out all the great content at kidscorner.net like the Bible story podcast "The Story of the Prophets."

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



How can
we
PRAY
for you?

People to be remembered with prayers, cards, letters & words of encouragement. Email the office at secretary@firstcrcmv.com or call the church office at (336-2405) by 9:00 am Thursday of each week with your prayer items.

NEW REQUEST:

Maxine Greidanus received the news that she still has cancer on the lining of her right lung, although it has not spread into other organs. She will start weekly chemo treatments and will also be having paracenteses procedures every 10 days to continue to treat damage to her liver. Please Continue to keep Larry and Maxine in your prayers for healing, courage and grace to face whatever lies ahead.

CONTINUING REQUESTS:

Keith Rasmussen continues to undergo various tests for his heart. In addition, he recently developed a UTI and is receiving treatment for that too. Please continue to pray for a complete recovery in the days and weeks ahead.

Juli Oostra's platelet levels have come up from very low numbers, but they still have a ways to go so she can regain strength. Please pray that will do so rapidly. We thank God for the progress already made.

Yvonne Boon is home, but she WILL need a few chemo treatments in the weeks to come. Please keep her in your prayers that she remains healthy and strong throughout this process.

Please continue to pray for those members who have lost loved ones recently.

Pray for continued healing for **Margaret VanderPol** as she strives to get her strength back with physical therapy.

SHUT INS: ***Nell Annema and Marion Ekkelkamp*** at Birchview Memory Care in Sedro-Woolley; ***Shirley Boonstra*** at Country Meadow Village in Sedro-Woolley, ***Marjean DeGroot*** at Mountain Glen in Mount Vernon; ***Mary Koopmans*** at Where the Heart is in Burlington; ***Hans & Aileen Meischke*** at Kenmore Living in Kenmore, WA, ***Adrianna Swanson***, and ***Clarence Vander Griend*** at Home Place in Burlington; ***Hank VanderVeen at The Bridge in Mount Vernon***; ***Grace Feddema and Sally Reehoorn*** at Creekside in Burlington; ***Bev Van Slageren*** with family in Grandview, WA.

OTHER REQUESTS: (CRC Communications)

Monday November 27 - *World Renew: Giving Tuesday*

Tomorrow is Giving Tuesday, an international day of charitable giving. Over 1 billion people face food insecurity around the world due to conflict, climate change, and economic downturn. Please ask God with us to bring hope to these people, that they may be able to grow food sustainably and save up their resources for times of crisis.

Tuesday November 28 - *Indigenous Ministry: Giving Tuesday*

There are many unglamorous needs that the Urban Indigenous Ministry Centres are called to address in Regina, Sask., Winnipeg, Man., and Edmonton, Alta. On this Giving Tuesday please pray for success in fundraising for these needs, including insurance, pest control, and accessible washrooms.

Wednesday November 29 - *Resonate: Uganda*

“We thank God that our door is always revolving with visitors who come for Bible study, advice, tutoring, babysitting, a meal, or a rest,” shared Resonate missionaries Karen and Moses Lubbers-Odel in Uganda. Give thanks for these relationships and for opportunities to disciple believers and share the gospel with people who do not yet know Christ.

Thursday November 30 - *ReFrame: Burkina Faso*

Pray for a woman named Neema, who listens to our French audio programs. She has asked our partners in Burkina Faso for prayers for wisdom as her family wants to give her in marriage to a Muslim man. As the only Christian in her family, she feels especially trapped by this situation.

Friday December 1 - *Decolonization and Antiracism Collective: Inclusion*

Lord, grant us strength to foster a community where all share their gifts, feel loved, and see the light of Christ in the people we serve. Help us to remember that each of us is loved, willed, and essential. May we balance mercy and justice to achieve equity, access, and belonging for all your children. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Saturday December 2

ReFrame Ministries: Egypt - ReFrame’s partners in Egypt are attending a Christian film festival this week. Pray that they will make good connections with fellow brothers and sisters in Christ who are skilled in media ministry. Pray that these connections will allow them to further their witness and grow their newly formed team.

Sunday December 3 - *Calvin University: Faith*

Give thanks with us for vibrant Christian faith and practice taking place on Calvin’s campus. Pray for faculty members as they seek to integrate the good news of Jesus into all they do. Pray for students, especially those new to faith, struggling in faith, or doubting their faith or the church. May God’s love and grace be revealed to them.