

Welcome to First Christian Reformed Church!
Pastor John Knoester
December 22, 2024 ♦ Fourth Sunday in Advent

*Please stand in body or in spirit

"O Come, desire of nations, bind"

Prelude

Choir Opening Song: "Do You Hear What I Hear?"

Welcome

* Sung Call to Worship: LUYH #60 v. 1-4

"Hark, the Glad Sound! The Savior Comes"

1. Hark, the glad sound! The Savior comes,
the Savior promised long!
Let every heart prepare a throne,
and every voice a song.
2. He comes the prisoners to release,
in Satan's bondage held;
the gates of brass before him burst,
the iron fetters yield.
3. He comes the broken heart to bind,
the wounded soul to cure,
and with the treasures of his grace to
enrich the humbled poor.
4. Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
your welcome shall proclaim,
and heaven's eternal arches ring
with your beloved name.

Words: Philip Doddridge (1735); based on Isaiah 61:1-2, P.D. CCLI #678905

* Opening Prayer

* Call to Worship: (Based on Isaiah 40:3 and Psalm 126:3)

Leader: A voice cries, *“In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”*

People: We are preparing our hearts for the God of peace to come into the world.

Leader: God’s peace flows into our lives through the gift of the Christ child. With singing angels, let us praise God’s name and tell the world God’s story.

People: The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with peace.

Leader: We join our voices with the heavenly beings and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Immanuel has the power to overcome sin and death.

People: God has come into our lives, turning our hearts toward him. We have received the ultimate gift of peace in Jesus.

* Opening Hymn of Praise: LUYH #66 v. 1,3,4,5

“With Joy I Heard My Friend’s Exclaim”

1. With joy I heard my friends exclaim:
“Come, let us in God’s temple meet.”
Within your gates, O Zion blest,
shall ever stand our willing feet.

Refrain

*Come, let us go to the house of the Lord.
Zion, sing; sing out your peace and joy.*

3. They come to learn the will of God,
to pay their vows, God’s grace to own,
for there is judgment’s royal seat,
Messiah’s sure and lasting throne.

Refrain

*Come, let us go to the house of the Lord.
Zion, sing; sing out your peace and joy.*

4. For Zion's peace let prayers be made;
may all that love you prosper well!
Within your walls let peace abide,
and gladness with your children dwell.

Refrain

5. For love of friends and kindred dear,
my heart's desire is Zion's peace,
and for the house of God, the Lord,
my loving care shall never cease.

Refrain

Psalm 122; Words: Psalter, 1912, alt.; ref. Hal H. Hopson © 2008 Birnamwood Publications, a division of MorningStar Music Publishers, Inc.; Music: English carol; arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958), P.D.; 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 to the balcony)*

"All peoples in one heart and mind."

Announcements

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Reader #1: We light this candle of peace to remind us
that Jesus is the Prince of Peace.

(The fourth Advent candle is lit)

Reader #2: In Jesus we shall live securely
as Christ's peace extends to the ends of the earth.

**People: God of Peace, you send us the Prince of Peace.
We long for His peace to rule our lives
and our relationships.
We yearn for every corner of your world
to be subject to your peace.**

**We eagerly await the day when your whole flock
will live in the security of your peace.
May we, through the power of your Spirit,
shine the peace of Christ in the darkness.**

Offering: General Fund

Offertory Video: *“O Come, All You Unfaithful”* – Sovereign Grace
*(Following the offertory video 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)*

* Choir Ministry of Music: *“Advent Promise”*

“Bid all our sad divisions cease,”

Scripture Readings: Romans 5:1-11 and Luke 2:8-14

Prayer of Illumination

Message: ***“The Gift of Peace”***

Time of Prayer

“And be thyself our King of peace.”

* Hymn of Application: LUYH #69 v. 1-4

“My Soul Cries Out With a Joyful Shout”

1. My soul cries out with a joyful shout
that the God of my heart is great,
and my spirit sings of the wondrous things
that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant’s plight,
and my weakness you did not spurn,
so from east to west shall my name be blest.
Could the world be about to turn?

Refrain

*My heart shall sing of the day you bring.
Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,
and the world is about to turn!*

2. Though I am small, my God, my all,
you work great things in me,
and your mercy will last from the depths of the past
to the end of the age to be.
Your very name puts the proud to shame,
and to those who would for you yearn,
you will show your might, put the strong to flight,
for the world is about to turn.

Refrain

*My heart shall sing of the day you bring.
Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,
and the world is about to turn!*

3. From the halls of power to the fortress tower,
not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice tears
every tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more
for the food they can never earn;
there are tables spread, every mouth be fed,
for the world is about to turn.

Refrain

4. Though the nations rage from age to age,
we remember who holds us fast:
God's mercy must deliver us
from the conqueror's crushing grasp.
This saving word that our forebears heard
is the promise which holds us bound,
till the spear and rod can be crushed by God,
who is turning the world around.

Refrain

Luke 1:45-55: Words: Rory Cooney (b. 1952), based on the *Magnificat*,
© 1990 GIA Publications, Inc.; Music: Irish traditional; arr. Rory Cooney
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* Advent Acclamation: Our Song of Hope

Leader: Our only hope is Jesus Christ.
After we refused to live in the image of God,
he was born of the virgin Mary,
sharing our genes and our instincts,
entering our culture, speaking our language,
fulfilling the law of God.
Being united to Christ's humanity,
we know ourselves when we rest in him.

**People: Come, Lord Jesus: We are open to your Spirit.
We await your full presence.
Our world finds rest in you alone.**

* Call to Service: II Peter 3:13-15

In accordance with his promise,
we wait for new heavens and a new earth,
where righteousness is at home.
Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things,
strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish;
and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

—2 Peter 3:13-15, NRSV

* God's Blessing

* Parting Praise: LUYH #80 v. 1-3 *"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"*

1. Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King;
peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise;
join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

- Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold him come,
offspring of the virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail the incarnate Deity,
pleased as man with us to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel.

Refrain

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

- Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild, he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth.

Refrain

Words: Charles Wesley, 1739, alt., P.D. Music: Felix Mendelssohn, 1840; adapt.
William H. Cummings, 1856, P.D.; CCLI: 678905

Postlude

A sincere **welcome** to all who have come to worship the Lord! May each of us have our faith increased, our love enhanced, and our courage strengthened. May God's presence be very real as we approach the throne of grace. After joining us in worship, join us in the fellowship hall next to the sanctuary for a cup of coffee or juice and continued fellowship.

Tech Team	Today December 22	Candlelight Svc. Dec. 22 pm	Christmas December 25	Next Sunday December 29
Sound:	Henry H.	Mardy S.	Tim H.	Mardick S.
Projection:	Maddie D.	Tim H.	France B.	Isaac D.
Video:	Isaac C.	Brandon S.	Brandon S.	Tim H.
Offering:	General Fund	Love, INC.	Love, Inc., C.A.R.E. Ministries	General Fund

First CRC Bulletin Announcements

December 22, 2024

***The deadline for announcements this next week is Tuesday,
9:00 A.M.***

OUR CHURCH FAMILY:

This Week's Deep Q's with PB & J:

What is one thing you've learned from someone who is from a culture or ethnicity that is different from yours?

The Offering for tonight's Candlelight Service is for Neighbors in Need, not the general fund, as stated in the bulletin. Thank you.

The **Men's Breakfast Bible Study** will **not** meet on Tuesday, December 24 at 7:00 am at IHOP.

There is **CHOIR PRACTICE** this morning after church.

Worship Service YouTube Links:

Thanksgiving Eve Svc, Nov. 27, 2024:

<https://youtu.be/Zyj6IEJRjKU>

AM December 15, 2024: <https://youtu.be/Z2qM1V9yEu0>

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

Dear Friends in Jesus Christ,

The word '*parable*' literally means "*brought alongside*." In the Bible, parables are short stories about familiar subjects that are used to illustrate a spiritual truth. To those with a genuine hunger for God, a parable is often an effective way to convey divine truth and is therefore a blessing. Yet, for those with hard hearts and ears, a parable is often instrument of both judgement and mercy.

Jesus himself told well over 30 parables that are mostly recorded in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Throughout the seasons of Epiphany and Lent we will take a closer look at many of them. Listed below is a tentative plan of study and as always we encourage you to read and ponder them in advance before the day they are proclaimed. May God bless us in this study together.

In His Grace, - Pastor John and Pastor Brad

1. Dec. 29 *"The Parable of the Sower"*
Matthew 13:1-13, Luke 8:4-15
2. Jan. 5 *"The Lamp on the Stand"*
Matthew 5:13-16, Luke 8:16-18
3. Jan. 12 *"The Narrow and Wide Gates"*
Matthew 7:13-14
4. Jan. 19 *"The Wise and Foolish Builders"*
Matthew 7:24-27, Luke 6:46-49
5. Jan. 26 *"The Two Debtors"* Luke 7:36-50
6. Feb. 2 *"The Rich Fool"* Luke 12:13-21
7. Feb. 9 *"The Unjust Steward"* Luke 16:1-15
8. Feb. 16 *"The Mustard Seed and Yeast"*
Luke 13:18-21
9. Feb. 23 *"The Wedding Feast and Banquet"*
Luke 14:7-24
10. Mar. 2 *"The Pharisee and Tax Collector"*
Luke 18:9-14
11. Mar. 9 *"The Good Samaritan"* Luke 10:25-37
12. Mar. 16 *"The Friend at Midnight"* Luke 11:1-13
13. Mar. 23 *"The Lost Sheep and Coin"*
Luke 15:1-10
14. Mar. 30 *"The Parable of the Talents"*
Matthew 25:14-30, Luke 19:11-27
15. Apr. 6 *"The Rich Man and Lazarus"*
Luke 16:19-31
16. Apr. 13 *"The Persistent Widow"* Luke 18:1-8
17. Apr. 18 *"The Parable of the Tenants"*
Luke 20:9-19

Save These Dates!

2. **Christmas Day Service** - Wednesday, Dec. 25 at 10 AM (Note earlier time)
3. **Post High School Pizza Night**: Thursday, Dec. 26 at 6pm and Coconut Kenny's. Please RSVP to Pastor John (jknoes0812@gmail.com) or to Beth at (secretary@firstcrcmv.com)
4. **Movie Night at Church** - Friday, Jan. 24 (The Best Christmas Pageant Ever)

CALENDAR:

Greeters/Coffee Hosts: December 22: Kera B., Terry & Mandi D.
December 22pm: Dick & Linda G., Mardy & Kristi S.
Next week: December 22: Kera B., Terry & Mandi D.
December 25: Sarah Z., Katie J.
December 29: **Looking for volunteers to greet/coffee**

Worship Team: December 22: Men's Group
December 25: Henry & Pam VZ, Adriana & Tessa S.
Next Week:

Nursery: December 22: Pam VZ & Emily VH
Next Week: December 29: Adriana S. & Myra VDB

Children in Worship: December 22: Tim H., Maddie D.
Next Week, December 29: Julie S. & Millie F.

This Week:

Sunday: December 22

NO Sunday School

Worship Service: 10:30 am

Candlelight Service: 6:30 pm

NO Youth Group

Wednesday: Christmas Day Service: 10 am

Thursday, December 26, 6 pm: Post-High School Pizza Night at Coconut Kenny's in Burlington

Upcoming Events:

Friday, January 24: Movie Night at Church

CRC COMMUNICATIONS:

Kids Corner: Advent Week 4: The Blessing - Check out this week's kids' devotion at www.kidscorner.net. We cannot repay God for his love. What we can do is give his love to others and bless those around us the same way God blesses us. Christ is the ultimate blessing, and when we receive him, it's not something we keep to ourselves. As God's children, he wants us to share the good news of Jesus's birth, death, and resurrection with others. Check out all the great content at kidscorner.net, like the Bible Story Podcast The Story of the Shepherds.

Thrive Faith Formation Tip - This coming week marks the winter solstice—the “longest night” of the year. For many, the Christmas season can be a particularly difficult time. How might God be calling you to minister to people who struggle? How might you remind them that the dark of night will gradually give way to the light of day? Brought to you by Thrive: crcna.org/Thrive

The Gift of Christmas - Next week, we celebrate the gift of Jesus, who left his heavenly home to offer us the hope of eternal life with him. Your gift for World Renew this season gives hope to people who live with poverty, disaster, and injustice worldwide. Put families in need on your Christmas list this year by giving generously in the World Renew offering. Traveling over the holidays? You can give at worldrenew.net/gifts or call 800-552-7972.

Jesus Christ is Born! - As we exchange gifts at Christmas, we celebrate Jesus, God's great gift to us. Will you add someone in need, like Moses from Malawi, to your Christmas giving today? Your financial gift to World Renew helps people around the world who live in poverty improve their lives and find a home for their heart in Jesus. Please give generously in today's offering for World Renew, go to worldrenew.net/gifts, or call 800-552-7972.

The January Series - The January Series of Calvin University returns January 20 through January 31. From Paralympians to historians, adventurers, and innovators, we have a topic for you to deepen your curiosity. Join us in the Covenant Fine Arts Center on the campus of Calvin University or online. More information can be found at www.calvin.edu/january-series

Year-End Giving Reminder - Many of you will be giving a special year end gift to your church or favorite charity. If you plan to give from your IRA, remember those gifts need to be received and deposited by December 31 to count for 2024 taxes. Plan your giving ahead. To learn more about giving from your IRA or other ways to give to the CRC, please visit crcna.org/heritagefund



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.

CONTINUING REQUESTS:

Please continue to pray for **John Velasquez**, who was recently diagnosed with a serious lung disease. He is currently on oxygen full-time and is currently waiting to get into therapy for greater improvement. Please pray that he can get into therapy soon and that it will be effective!

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

SHUT INS: ***Nell Annema*** at Birchview Memory Care in Sedro-Woolley; ***Shirley Boonstra*** at Country Meadow Village in Sedro-Woolley, ***Marjean DeGroot*** at Mountain Glen in Mount Vernon; ***Martha Haarsma*** at home in Mount Vernon, ***Mary Koopmans*** at Where the Heart is in Burlington; ***Clarence Vander Griend*** at Home Place in Burlington; ***Sally Reehoorn*** at Creekside in Burlington.

OTHER REQUESTS: (CRC Communications)

Monday December 16 - ReFrame: Indonesia

Pray for Yakobus, a member of a listener community led by our ministry partners. Through the listener-community discussions and reflections, Yakobus says he finds humility and renewed insight in God's Word. Pray for continued spiritual growth and unity for Yakobus and his family.