

December 20, 2020  
Fourth Sunday of Advent  
St. Mark's United Church of Christ  
St. James United Church of Christ

Rev. Dr. Patrick Schultz  
Pastor

Kathy Jurk  
Organist

Prelude Music  
Gathering in Readiness for Worship

*like a child*

### Call to Confession

Our Advent hope is in a coming one who establishes peace and justice in our world. Yet we know that we have betrayed that hope by contributing to enmity and injustice. We also know that if we confess our sin we can be restored to a right and just standing before God and others. Let us therefore confess our sin, trusting God's Advent promise of grace and peace.

### Prayer of Confession

O God, we have been created in your image; indeed, you have crowned us with glory and honor. But we have lived self-centered lives, thereby failing to reflect your glory. We have not treated others with dignity and respect. We have violated your good creation. We confess our sin, O God. Renew us and restore us to our rightful place as bearers of your image. Empower us as agents of your love and justice in all that we are and all that we do. Amen.

### Assurance of Pardon

God's mercy abounds. God's Advent grace goes before us, after us, through us — sometimes even unbeknownst to us, restoring us and empowering us for participation in God's work in the world. Friends, hear the good news of the gospel: We are forgiven and restored, set on right paths of justice and peace.

### Prayer of illumination

O God, send your Advent Spirit to us to open our hearts, so that that we may discern your Word in and through the words that we are about to hear.

### Hymn of Praise

*Lo! How a Rose e'er Blooming*

### Reading and Lighting of the Advent Candles

Bradley and Faith Grunwald

### Praising God in Music

*Long Ago Prophets Knew*

### Scripture Reading

*John 1:17*

### Message:

*Who Can Honestly Say*

Rev. Dr. Patrick Schultz

### A Time of Prayer and Silent Reflection

### Affirming our Faith:

The UCC Statement of Faith

**Offering, Tithes and Gifts** can be made on-line through our website (**St. James Only**), or by mailing your offering to: St. James UCC, 13312 Pioneer Road, Newton, WI 53063 OR St. Mark's UCC, W1307 Orchard Road, Cleveland, WI 53015

### Offertory Music

*Trust and Obey*

### Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving (all together)

Lord, you have blessed our lives in so many ways. Receive our tithes, gifts and offerings. Multiply them and cause them to work in this world which you have loaned to us to make light shine in the darkness with peace and justice for all in this world. We offer these gifts in Jesus' name. *Amen.*

### A Sending Forth Song

*Near to the Heart of God*

### Benediction

As you go from here, look upon the people around you – your friends, your neighbors, the strangers you meet. And look upon yourselves, with new eyes as bearers of God's own image, who are crowned with glory and honor and who shine like the sun. Embody divine majesty by lifting up the brokenhearted, by standing with the oppressed and by incarnating God's own love in your lives. *Amen.*

### Postlude

*Hark, the Glad Sound!*

### This Week We Celebrate:

Birthdays: Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup> – Michael Scharl; 24<sup>th</sup> – Jenny Riesterer, Lee Sixel;  
25<sup>th</sup> – Raymond Henschel, Noel Wippermann;  
27<sup>th</sup> – Ethen Lutzke

### REMINDER: The church financial books are closing soon!

St. James Financial books are closing on Monday, Dec. 28<sup>th</sup>

St. Mark's financial books are closing on Tuesday, Dec. 29<sup>th</sup>.

All contributions received after that date will be put towards your 2021 donations.

## Readings and Lighting of The Advent Candles

Luke 2:10-14 “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.’ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

Today we relight the Candles of Hope and Peace and Joy recalling God’s advent promise and grace. [Light the blue candle, the blue candle, the pink candle]

Now we light the candle of Love. We celebrate the announcement of the coming King and the greatness of God’s love revealed through the Christ child.

Prayer: Father, we thank you for revealing yourself through Jesus, and we praise you for the greatness of your love. Help us to share your hope, peace, joy and love with others and to live our lives more like Christ every day. In His name we pray.  
*Amen.*

### **John 1:17**

*For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

## UCC Statement of Faith

We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father, and to his deeds we testify:

He calls the worlds into being, creates man in his own image and sets before him the ways of life and death.

He seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

He judges men and nations by his righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord, he has come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to himself.

He bestows upon us his Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

He calls us into his church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be his servants in the service of men, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.

He promises to all who trust him forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, his presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in his kingdom which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto him.

Amen.