

TULLY UNITED COMMUNITY CHURCH

December 10, 2023, 9:30 AM

The Rev. Richard G. Reed, Pastor



SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

— WE GATHER TO WORSHIP THE LIVING GOD —

STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Tully United Community Church would like to acknowledge with respect the Onondaga Nation, Fire-keepers of the Haudenosaunee, the indigenous peoples on whose ancestral lands our buildings now stand.

PRELUDE

“Ukrainian Bell Carol”
Kay Crosley Bell Choir

Mykolo Leontovich

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

We welcome, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, all who have gathered to worship God together – those who are here in person, and those joining us on ZOOM. Are there any **BRIEF** announcements? Let us worship God.

GREETING

Celebrant: “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, “Your God reigns!” As this season of cold darkness comes upon us, let us seek the warm Light of God’s love in Jesus the Christ!

CHORAL INTROIT

“A Prayer For Advent”

Williams/Nolan

Laura Currie Chancel Choir, Janet Hillenbrand – Cellist

CALL TO WORSHIP

Liturgist: How can we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus, the King?

People: With branches of cedar, the tree of royalty.

Liturgist: How shall we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus, the Christ?

People: With garlands and wreaths of pine and fir, whose leaves are ever living, ever green.

Liturgist: How shall we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus, the Son of God?

People: By proclaiming the words of the prophets who foretold God's saving work.

Liturgist: Glory to God in the highest!

People: And on earth, peace to all people of good will.

ADVENT CAROL

“Light These Lights”

Insert

(Place greenery around the Advent Wreath)

-ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING-

Liturgist: Advent is a time to turn away from meaningless distractions and to notice and count our many blessings. Advent is a time to let go of bitterness and resentment and to spread peace to the world around us. The Advent Wreath is a symbol of preparation. The circle of evergreens reminds us of the everlasting covenant offered in the birth of Jesus. The four candles, one for each of the four Sundays in Advent, symbolize HOPE, PEACE, JOY, AND LOVE. Today, we light the candles of Hope and Peace as symbols of Christ, the Prince of Peace.

People: Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.” (John 14:27)

(The first and second candles are lighted)

Liturgist: May the light sent from God shine in the darkness to show us the way of Shalom - Peace. Together let us pray:

People: Prince of Peace, reveal yourself to us today. We need peace in our lives, our homes, our families, our church, and our whole world. Help us to slow down and seek out the peace you provide, so we may become peacemakers for ourselves and others. In the name of Jesus Christ the Prince of Peace. Amen.

AFFIRMATION OF ADVENT HOPE

Celebrant: In Advent we wait, we prepare, we hopefully and diligently watch for the coming of the One who is the fulfillment of God's promise of hope, of peace, of joy, and of love for all the world.

Our world is filled with violence and hate, pain and sorrow, separation and death. Yet as Advent people, we know that Light shines on in the darkness and the darkness will never overcome it.

Let us watch, then, for the coming of the Holy One of God to make holy again all that ever was, and is, and is to come. And in our watching, may hope, peace, joy, and love reign in our lives, now and forever.

**HYMN

Sing The Promise Of Salvation

Insert

**PASSING THE PEACE

Celebrant: The peace of Christ be with you.

People: AND ALSO WITH YOU.

Celebrant: Let us share signs of welcome and peace with our neighbors.

-THE HANGING OF THE GREENS-

Celebrant: At Christmas time in our homes, we enjoy decorating with lights and candles, evergreen garlands and wreaths, nativity scenes and Christmas trees and other decorations to celebrate in a festive way the wonderful story of the birth of our Savior, Jesus. In the same way, our church family enjoys decorating the sanctuary to celebrate the birth of Jesus. This service of scriptures and songs helps to explain the symbolism of the several decorations and to gain a deeper understanding of the mystery, the glory, the wonder of the coming of God's Son, Jesus, Emmanuel, God-With-Us!

-THE PARAMENTS-

Reader 1: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill made low. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see the salvation of God." Isaiah 40:3-5

Reader 2: We now place the Advent paraments, which are purple, a royal color to remind us of the glory of the King of Kings, who came to be the "Light of the World."

People: With cloth of purple we proclaim him who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

(The banner is turned and paraments are displayed on the altar, pulpit and lectern)

CHORAL ANTHEM

“EVERY VALLEY”
Cheryl Haskins, Flutist

Beck

PSALTER

Psalm 85

#806

R ♪The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.♪

Liturgist: LORD, you showed favor to your land;
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.

**People: You forgave the iniquity of your people;
you pardoned all their sin.**

L: You withdrew all your wrath;
you turned from your hot anger.

**P: Restore us again, O God of our salvation,
and put away your indignation toward us!**

L: Will you be angry with us forever?
Will you prolong your anger to all generations?
Will you not revive us again,
so that your people may rejoice in you?

**P: Show us your steadfast love, O LORD,
and grant us your salvation. R**

L: Let me hear what God will speak,
for the LORD will speak peace to his people,
to his faithful, to those who turn to the Lord in their hearts.

**P: Surely salvation is at hand for those who fear the Lord,
that glory may dwell in our land.**

L: Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.

**P: Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky.**

L: The LORD will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.

**P: Righteousness will go before the Lord,
and make God's footsteps a way. R**

-WREATHS AND GARLAND-

Reader 1: “The glory of Lebanon will come to you, the pine, the fir and the cypress together, to adorn the place of My sanctuary; and I will glorify the

place of My feet. The sons of your oppressors will come bowing before you; all who despise you will bow down at your feet and will call you the City of the LORD, Zion of the Holy One of Israel.” Isaiah 60:13-14

Reader 2: People of God, as we enter through the doors of the church in order to worship, so we enter through the doorway of Advent to celebrate the Christian year. On this Second Sunday of Advent, let us mark the entrance to the church building and our hearts and minds as portals for Christ to enter into our lives.

People: With these wreaths, circles without end, we remember your everlasting love, O God, and we give you praise.

(Wreaths for the doors and garlands for the organ pipes or elsewhere are placed)

****CAROL**

“Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates”

Vv.1-3

#213

**1. Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates;
behold, the King of glory waits;
the King of kings is drawing near;
the Savior of the world is here!**

**2. Fling wide the portals of your heart;
make it a temple, set apart
from earthly use for heaven's employ,
adorned with prayer and love and joy.**

**3. Redeemer, come, with us abide;
our hearts to thee we open wide;
let us thy inner presence feel;
thy grace and love in us reveal.**

-POINSETTIAS-

Reader 1: Hear the prophecy of Isaiah, “A voice says, “Cry out.” And I said, “What shall I cry?” “All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the LORD blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.”

Isaiah 40:6-8

Reader 2: The “Flower of the Holy Night,” the poinsettia, is the most widely used Christmas-time flower. It was discovered growing wild as a tall bush

in Mexico and was brought to North America by Ambassador Joel Poinsett, where it was developed into the type of flower we have today. The star-shaped center of the bloom reminds us of the star that shone on that first Christmas, while the blood red petals remind us of the gift of Jesus on the cross.

People: As in your birth you brought the assurance of God's presence, so by your blood, O Jesus Christ, may we be redeemed and made whole.

(Poinsettias are brought in and placed about the sanctuary)

****CAROL**

"Hail To The Lord's Anointed"

#203

**1. Hail to the Lord's anointed, great David's greater Son!
Hail in the time appointed, His reign on earth begun!
He comes to break oppression, to set the captive free,
To take away transgression, and rule in equity.**

**2. He comes in succor speedy to those who suffer wrong,
To help the poor and needy, and bid the weak be strong.
To give them songs for sighing, their darkness turn to light,
Whose souls, condemned and dying, are precious in His sight.**

**3. He shall come down like showers upon the fruitful earth,
Love, joy, and hope, like flowers, spring in His path to birth.
Before him, on the mountains, shall peace, the herald, go,
And righteousness, in fountains, from hill to valley flow.**

**4. To him shall prayer unceasing and daily vows ascend;
his kingdom still increasing, a kingdom without end.
The tide of time shall never his covenant remove;
his name shall stand forever; that name to us is love.**

-DECORATING THE WINDOWS AND ALTARATION-

Reader 1: The prophet Isaiah further prophecies:

"A shoot shall come out from the stump 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;
Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

Reader 2: 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." Isaiah 11:1-10

Reader 1: The sprigs of holly placed in each window are signs of Christ's passion. Candles remind us of the true Light that Christ brings. The Altarations speak to us of drawing closer together, sitting at the table, around the Advent Wreath, sharing food and fellowship. All nature will tell of the glorious grace of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

People: The garlands of green in the windows and the decorations in the baptistry bring us joy and remind us of all you give that delights us, O God.
(Holly and Ivy garlands and candles are placed in the windows and the Altaration is Lighted)

****CAROL**

"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"

#216

**1. Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming From tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming, As men of old have sung.
It came, a flow'ret bright, Amid the cold of winter,
When half spent was the night.**

2. Isaiah 'twas foretold it, The Rose I have in mind;
With Mary we behold it, The virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright, She bore to men a Savior,
When half spent was the night.

3. O Flow'r, whose fragrance tender With sweetness fills the air,
Dispel in glorious splendor The darkness ev'rywhere;
True man, yet very God, From sin and death now save us,
And share our ev'ry load.

-THE CRÈCHE-

Reader 1: The Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

"See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way,
the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
'Prepare the way of the Lord;
make his paths straight,' "

so John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And the whole Judean region and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him and were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the strap of his sandals. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Reader 2: John the Baptist, the cousin of Jesus, fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah as the one crying, "In the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord." As we place the manger or crèche on the altar, we are reminded that Jesus was born in the humblest of places, so that the humblest of humanity would see and understand the compassion and inclusion of God. Jesus has compassion on all God's children - from the humblest to the richest.

People: With manger and stable, figures of Mary and Joseph, the infant Jesus, shepherds, magi and angels, we remember the story of your coming among us, and we praise you, O Lord.

(The stable and the animals only are brought in and placed on the altar)

CAROL (Remain seated)

“Away In A Manger”

#217

**1. Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus Laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.**

**2. The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes;
I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.**

SHARING JOYS, AND CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD’S PRAYER (using “sins”)

#894

Bidding: Come, O Holy One,

Response: come and save us.

Celebrant: *As we prepare the way of the Lord, let us offer prayers to God who will baptize us with the Holy Spirit and fire saying: Come, O Holy One, **come and save us.***

Liturgist: O God of all, God of shalom, we come before you with hearts seeking to know and understand the words of the prophets, the words of the angels, the words of peace that rise around us in this holy season. We pray that you will open us to the meaning of peace, that you will teach us the way of peace, that we will indeed understand your will for justice for all of your world. Help us be faithful to the call that you have put on our hearts to live as people of hope. *Come, O Holy One, **come and save us.***

L: This joyous season puts many demands on our lives. We pray that you would slow us down, open our hearts, and our eyes, that we may see the beauty of the season, feel the joy of hope and peace alive within us and live our days in celebration.

*Come, O Holy One, **come and save us.***

L: For so many this season is, however, a season of sadness and pain. So many are struggling with illness, some with routine colds and flu, while others are

touched with illness that threatens their lives. We pray that you will touch us all with your healing balm and that you will look with favor and blessing upon us. We especially remember those whom we have named aloud and those we bring to you now in the silence. (brief silence) May we all appreciate and celebrate the gift of life that you have given us.

Come, O Holy One, **come and save us.**

L: Give us grace and hope to live our days as your people, for it is Jesus' coming that we celebrate and he is indeed our Christ, the Prince of Peace. Come, O Holy One, **come and save us.**

Celebrant: *O Root of Jesse, who comes as a sign of God's justice, hear our prayers and help us always to hear the prophet's call to turn our hearts to you, in the name of Jesus Christ the Savior who taught us to pray, saying:*

**“Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever. Amen.”**

OFFERTORY INVITATION

Celebrant: *The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Upon those who have lived in the shadow of death the light has shined. With the prophet's words, let us joyfully participate in sharing the life-giving work of God in our world today through the giving of our tithes and offerings.*

****DOXOLOGY, PRESENTATION, AND OFFERTORY PRAYER**

#95

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God, above, ye heavenly host;
Creator, Word, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

Celebrant: *Thank you, God of Love, for the promise of this season. We are grateful for the generosity aroused in us by Christ's coming into the world. May these gifts represent a new spirit of joyous sharing among us, for the sake of all your children everywhere. Amen.*

-EVERGREEN TREE-

Reader 1: The Minor Prophet Micah, brings us a word of hope from the minor town of Bethlehem:

“But you, O Bethlehem, from you shall come forth one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from ancient days. And He shall stand and feed His flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God. And they shall live secure, for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth; and He shall be the one of peace.” Micah 5:2,4

Reader 2: In ancient times the cedar was revered as the tree of royalty. It also signified immortality, and was used for purification. We have placed this tree in the sanctuary as a symbol of Christ, who reigns as King forever, and whose coming will purify our hearts.

People: **With a tree we also remember Jesus Christ’s death on a cross for us and our salvation, and we give thanks for God’s great gift of love.**

Celebrant: *As our final preparation for the coming of Jesus, the Light of the World, we will light the Christmas tree and the star. And in this time of Advent, whenever you see a lighted tree or star, let it call to mind the One who brings light into our darkness, healing in our brokenness, and peace to all who will receive Him. May this tree and star, aglow with beauty and splendor, remind us of the life-giving cross of Christ, that we may always rejoice in the new life that shines in our hearts.*

(The Christmas tree is lighted)

****CAROL**

"O Little Town Of Bethlehem" Vv. 1,3,4

#230

**1. Oh little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie;
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth, the everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**

**3. How silently, how silently, The wondrous gift is given;
So God imparts to human hearts The blessings of His Heaven.
No ear may hear His coming, But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still, The dear Christ enters in.**

**4. O holy Child of Bethlehem, Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in, Be born in us to-day.
We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Emmanuel!**

BLESSING AND BENEDICTION

Celebrant: *Go forth from this place an awakened people, aware of the world's darkness, yet reaching for the light.*

Go forth from this place an expectant people, conscious of judgment in our midst, yet welcoming God's new order and justice.

Go forth from this place a serving people, sensing anew the pain so many bear, yet confident God will bring healing, even through you.

And the God of peace, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be with us all, this season and forever.

People: Amen! Thanks be to God!

ORGAN POSTLUDE

****Indicates to rise if you are able**