

Second Sunday of Advent

December 7, 2025

United Church of Christ - Neillsville

Pastor Julie Ruegsegger

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PRELUDE "Come Thou Long Expected Jesus" with "He Shall Feed His Flock"
Anna Laura Page

GATHERING

Like the iconic figures gathered around the Christ Child in our nativity scenes, we gather together because we want to know Jesus more as we seek to bring his Reign of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love on earth.

RINGING OF THE CARILLON

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING OF ADVENT CANDLES

HYMN "What Child is This?" Wm. C. Dix
#148 NCH (verse 2)

Why lies He in such mean estate,
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear: for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.

Light the Candle of Peace

This, this is Christ, the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary!

PRAYER OF INVOCATION (Unison)

Here, at the nativity of your birth, give us the courage to face this moment with new air in our lungs. Open us to new understandings of the unfolding story of your presence among us. Show us the true meaning of peace on earth, good will for all. We pray in the name of the Child, the Prince of Peace in our hearts and lives. Amen.

"BRING HIM LAUD" – OPENING HYMN/SONG

"Star-Child" #223 W&R (vs 1,3,5) Shirley Erena Murray

1 Star-Child, earth-Child,
go-between of God, love Child,
Christ Child, heaven's lightning rod:

Refrain:

**This year, this year let the day arrive
when Christmas comes for ev'ryone, ev'ryone alive.**

3 Grown child, old child,
mem'ry full of years, sad child,
lost child, story told in tears: [Refrain]

5 Hope-for-peace Child,
God's stupendous sign, down-to-earth Child,
Star of stars that shine: [Refrain]

SIGNS OF PEACE

Leader: Peace be with you!

People: And also with you!

Leader: I invite you to pass the peace with one another and to those worshiping online, and I invite children to come forward as we do so!

PROCLAIMING

We open ourselves to the full story of Christ's birth, knowing that his story is the ground of our faith and the light for our path.

"HASTE, HASTE" – THE CHILDREN GATHER

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Luke 1:5-25, 57-80 (Inclusive Bible Translation)

In the days of the ruler Herod, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the priestly class of Abijah. His wife Elizabeth was a descendant of Aaron. Both were worthy in the sight of God and scrupulously observed all the commandments and observances of our God. They were childless—unable to conceive—and they were both advanced in years. Now it was the turn of Zechariah's priestly class to serve. And as he was fulfilling his priestly office before God, it fell to him by lot, according to

priestly usage, to enter the sanctuary of our God and offer incense. While the full assembly of people was praying outside at the time of day when the incense was offered, an angel of our God appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. Zechariah was deeply disturbed upon seeing the angel, and was overcome with fear.

The angel said to him, “Don’t be frightened, Zechariah. Your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear a son, whom you’ll name John. He will be your joy and delight and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of our God. He must never drink wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother’s womb. And he will bring many of the children of Israel back to their God Most High. He will go before God as a forerunner, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the rebellious to the wisdom of the just—to make ready a people prepared for our God.”

Zechariah said to the angel, “How can I be sure of this? I am an old man, and my wife too is advanced in age.” The angel replied, “I am Gabriel, who stands before God. I was sent to speak to you and bring you this good news. But because you have not trusted my words, you’ll be mute—unable to speak—until the day these things take place. They’ll all come true in due season.” Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondered about his delay in the sanctuary. When he finally came out he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision inside. But he could only make signs to them and remained mute. Then, when his time of priestly service was over, he went home.

Some time later, Elizabeth conceived. She went into seclusion for five months, saying, “Our God has done this for me. In these days, God has shown favor to us and taken away the disgrace of our having no children.”

When the time came for Elizabeth to deliver, she gave birth to a son. When her neighbors and relatives heard that God had been merciful to her, they shared her joy. When all had assembled for the circumcision on the eighth day, they intended to name the baby after his father Zechariah. But his mother spoke up, “No, he is to be called John.”

They pointed out to her, “But no one in your family has this name.” Then they made signs to the father to find out what he wanted the child to be named. The father asked for a writing tablet and wrote, “His name is John.” They were all astonished.

Immediately Zechariah’s mouth was opened and his tongue was loosed, and he began to speak in praise of God. Their neighbors were all filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea, people were talking about these events. All who heard the news stored it in their hearts and said, “What will this child turn out to be?” For God’s hand was with him. Zechariah, John’s father, was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

“Blessed are you, the Most High God of Israel—
for you have visited and redeemed your people.
You have raised up a mighty savior for us
of the house of David,
as you promised through the mouths of your
holy ones,
the prophets of ancient times: salvation from our
enemies
and from the hands of all our foes.
You have shown mercy to our ancestors
by remembering the holy Covenant
you made with them,
the oath you swore to Sarah and Abraham,
granting that we,
delivered from the hands of our enemies,
might serve you without fear, in holiness and
justice,
in your presence all our days.
And you, my child, will be called the prophet of the Most
High,
for you’ll go before our God
to prepare the way for the Promised One,
giving the people the knowledge of salvation
through forgiveness of their sins.

Such is the tender mercy of our God, who from on high
will bring the Rising Sun to visit us,
to give light to those who live
in darkness and the shadow of death
and to guide our feet
into the way of peace.”

In the meantime, the child grew up and became strong
in spirit. He lived out in the desert until the day he
appeared openly in Israel.

SERMON “The Silent Word is Pleading” Pastor Julie

RESPONDING

Our faithful response is to praise God for this story of Emmanuel, God-With-Us, even and especially in the midst of difficulty, for God is indeed with us even still.

"WE KEEP WATCH" – PRAYERS IN WORD AND SONG

Centering Song: "Great Holy One"

by Brian Wren and Susan Heafield

Congregation:

**Great, Holy One, spreading time and space,
show us who You are in a human face.**

Time of Silent Contemplation

Soloist:

Seeking one, how will you meet us?

**"In the person who resists hate and greed, and then
persists;
when my people work together, righting ancient
wrongs, singing peaceful songs."**

Congregation:

**Great, Holy One, spreading time and space,
show us who You are in a human face.**

PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

**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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not
into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is
the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.
Amen**

Congregation:

**Great, Holy One, spreading time and space,
show us who You are in a human face.**

"SO BRING HIM..." (OFFERING)

Invitation to Generosity

Offertory *"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"*

Gordon Young

Doxology *"In the Bleak Midwinter"*

#128 NCH vs. 4 Christina G. Rossetti

**What can I offer, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.
If I were a wise one, I would do my part;
But what I can I offer: all my heart.**

Prayer of Dedication

**God of Peace and Hope, receive these gifts of
gratitude, the offerings of our lives. Purify them with
your refining fire so that they may serve your
purposes and shine with your glory; through Jesus
Christ our Lord. Amen.**

COMMUNION

Invitation to the Table

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is good, Holy One, to give thanks to you, always and everywhere. You created us, you loved us into being, you delivered us, and you spoke to us through prophets. And then the time came for you to be with us, Emmanuel.

Congregation Sings:

Tune: "In the Bleak Midwinter"

Words by Amanda Udis-Kessler and Marcia McFee

**In a time of trouble, poverty, and pain,
Living was a struggle. Hoping was a strain.
Fear and desperation robbed the world of joy.
In a weary nation, Mary had a boy.**

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Congregation Sings:

**Holy, Holy, Holy, God of pow'r and might.
Raise we now, "Hosanna," to the highest height.
Heav'n and earth proclaim it, in all time and space.
Blest are we to meet you, in this holy place.**

Mary's boy became a man, compassionate and kind.
He invited all to follow the way of the kin-dom, the
commonwealth of God. Wherever he went, he tended
to those who suffered.

Congregation Sings:

**Teaching, feeding, healing, Jesus showed the way,
Sacred love revealing day by day by day,
Practicing resistance, cultivating care,
Centered in persistence, every act a prayer.**

His own suffering at the hands of the elite gave birth to a movement of your Spirit, O God, that would forge a new covenant of peace. Jesus promised to be with us always, in the power of your Word and Holy Spirit.

Breaking Bread And Pouring Wine

... And so, in remembrance of your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Congregation Sings:

**Christ came to uplift us, by his life we give.
Christ gave up his lifeblood, by his death we live.
Christ comes to us now, still, as we gather here.
Christ will come again, so, nothing shall we fear.**

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, so that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit, make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Amen.

Congregation Sings:

**So, my friends and neighbors, now it's up to us.
May we welcome strangers, building faith and trust.
May we live like Jesus in our time and place
'Til this weary people know amazing grace.**

Sharing The Elements

*All are welcome to partake in the Feast of our Lord.
The table is open to all.*

Prayer Of Thanksgiving

We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

SENDING FORTH

Just as our theme carol asks, "what child is this?" we, too, have come with our questions this day. We go into the world with answers of Good News, being the Body of Christ through our words and deeds.

CLOSING HYMN

*"Let There Be Peace on Earth" #614 W&R
Words & Music: Sy Miller and Jill Jackson*

**Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me;
Let there be peace on earth,
the peace that was meant to be.
With God our Creator, children all are we.
Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.
Let peace begin with me; let this be the moment now.
With every step I take, let this be my solemn vow:
To take each moment and live each moment
in peace eternally.
Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.**

WE ASK, WE ANSWER

As we prepare to go into the world,
let us ask and answer the question we came with.

What child IS this?

This is the one born in a time
when too many were silenced.

What child IS this?

This is the one whose voice would ring out,
reminding all that peace does not come through
violence.

What child IS this?

This, this is the "Prince of Peace"
who shows us the kin-dom in which all have a voice,
and no one is afraid.

SHARING OUR BLESSINGS AND BURDENS

As we are gathered together as children of God, we are called to share our blessings and joys and our concerns, our deepest fears, sadnesses, griefs and needs so that we may bear one another up and support each other in prayer and Christian love.

BENEDICTION

SUNG RESPONSE: "What Child is This?" chorus

**This, this is Christ, the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary!**

POSTLUDE

RADIO BROADCAST
11 AM Sunday radio broadcast
on WCCN 98.5FM and 1370AM

This week's radio broadcast
is given in fond memory of Eileen Zank
by her family.

WELCOME

We welcome you to our service of worship!
We are glad that you have joined us on site,
through the internet or on the radio.
We pray that you will hear God's call,
seek to follow Jesus, led by the Holy Spirit.

YouTube link for Sunday, December 7, 2025
<https://youtube.com/live/nWoY4TAwOEO>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

This Sunday, December 7th

- 9:30 AM Worship

Deacon – Sally Sadowska
Greeters – Stephanie & Craig Heck
Ushers – Paul Schmidt, Cris Hediger
Power Point – Emile Miller

Following Sunday, December 14th

Deacon – Karlene Wallace
Greeters – Nancy & Kirk Rodman
Ushers – Mickey Marty, Joel Raine
Power Point – Bonnie Weyer

Tuesday, December 9th

- 1:00 PM Bible Study
- 3:30 PM Deacon's Meeting

Thursday, December 11th

- 1:30 PM Circle of Friends Christmas Party

Coffee fellowship after worship -
Sign up on back bulletin board

Dec 7 – Marla Raine
Dec 14 – Mathis'
Dec 21 – Christmas Program
Dec 28 -

We need people to sign up

Attend Sunday, December 7th

Concert at Calvary Lutheran Church
at 2 PM featuring the Clark County
Male Chorus and Choraliers.



A Daily Journal for Advent

What Child IS This?

Available in the Narthex - \$5.00
donation to the Mission &
Outreach Committee



Christmas Eve Worship Schedule

Wednesday, December 24th –
Candlelight & communion served
4 PM - Family Christmas Eve Service
8 PM – “Old Fashioned Carols
& Candles” Service

HURRY, ORDER NOW - We are taking Poinsettia orders
for the Advent Season. They are available in red, white,
pink, and marble for \$18.00.

They can be ordered in honor
of, in memory of, or for any
other reason you may have.
Please have your orders in by
December 9th,

forms are available in the narthex.

