



*"The Flower Fades"* by Hannah Garrity.

**Christ Church** **UNITED CHURCH**  
**OF CHRIST**

Rev. Dan Stark, Pastor  
Organist, Matthew Lawrenz  
Pam Kothrade, Song Leader

[www.uccmke.org](http://www.uccmke.org)  
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Today marks the second Sunday of Advent. In today's service we light the peace candle and focus on the meaning of peace. The 126<sup>th</sup> Psalm tells us, "When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream..." What does it mean to live as those who dream? In the Bible the prophets, psalmists, and the whole ensemble of characters in the Christmas story were dreamers. They received dreams. They discovered dreams. They responded to God's dreams for the world. They invite us to dream. This day we dream with the Prophet Isaiah and John the Baptizer. Those who dream...prepare the way.

*\*Please recite the purple words aloud.*

## Prelude

*Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme*

Peeters

## Words of Welcome

### Opening Song

*People, Look East*

1. People look east, the time is near of the crowning of the year.  
Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth and set the table.  
People look east: Love the guest, is on the way.
2. Angels announce with shouts of mirth him who brings new life to earth.  
Set every peak and valley humming with the word, the Lord is coming.  
People, look east: Love, the Lord, is on the way.

WORDS: Eleanor Farjeon, MUSIC: French melody; arr. Martin Shaw

### Opening Litany

John the Baptist said, "Prepare the way." So family of faith, how do we prepare our minds for worship?

**All: We silence the inner critic. We let go of busy thoughts.**

**We make space for God to speak.**

How do we prepare our *hearts* for worship?

**All: We bless all emotions. We feel what we feel.**

**We open ourselves up to be moved.**

How do we prepare our *bodies* for worship?

**All: We take in the scent, sight, and feel of this space.**

**We breathe in God's mercy. We exhale God's love.**

How do we prepare our *souls* for worship?

**All: We bring our full selves into this space. We wear our hearts on our sleeves. We trust that even now, God is here.**

Family of faith, what we practice in worship, we must live out in our daily lives. So prepare the way. Let us worship Holy God.



*"Prepare a World"*  
by Lauren Wright Pittman.

## Candle Lighting Song

*Lead Us To Your Light*

Carol Browning

**Lead us to your light, lead us out of darkness.  
Lead us to your light. Come, Jesus, come. (repeat)**  
(solo on verse)

**Lead us to your light, lead us out of darkness.  
Lead us to your light. Come, Jesus, come.**

One: May this light be an invitation to *prepare the way*. May this light be our invitation to be Advent people – people who dream. Amen.

## Opening Prayer

God of Peace, We must admit, there are a million things on our minds.

We would like to be as focused as John the Baptist – preparing the way, gathering the crowd, spreading the word of your arrival.

Maybe then we'd know peace.

However, more often than not, we are a swirling compilation of grocery lists, text messages, e-mails, and over-referenced to-do lists.

So today, we ask for your help in preparing the way.

Could you start with our ears, and then maybe move to our hearts?

We'd like to hear you more clearly.

Maybe then we'll know peace.

Gratefully we pray,

Amen.

## The Gloria

**Glory be to the Christ-Child,  
God's strength made weak, has come to light our way.  
As the Firstborn of Creation, the Alpha and Omega, wonderful birth,  
God has come to earth.**

*Lyrics. Jacqueline A. Burnette*

## Old Testament

[Isaiah 40:1-11 \(ICB\)](#)

Isaiah is the longest and arguably the most important of the prophetic books. It covers Israel's history before, during, and after the exile. Isaiah offers the full range of God's prophetic message – from words of judgment to words of promise and comfort. In this passage, Isaiah portrays God as a mighty creator and the gentlest comforter. Isaiah is quoted more frequently in the New Testament than any other prophetic book.



*"The Beginning of the Good News"  
by Lisle Gwynn Garrity.*

*Your God says, "Comfort, comfort my people. Speak kindly to the people of Jerusalem. Tell them that their time of service is finished. Tell them that they have paid for their sins. Tell them that the Lord has punished Jerusalem twice for every sin they did." This is the voice of a man who calls out: "Prepare in the desert the way for the Lord. Make the road in the dry lands straight for our God. Every valley should be raised up. Every mountain and hill should be made flat. The rough ground should be made level. The rugged ground should be made smooth.*

*Then the glory of the Lord will be shown. All people together will see it. The Lord himself said these things." A voice says, "Cry out!" Then I said, "What shall I cry out?" "Say all people are like the grass. And all their strength is like the flowers of the field. The grass dies, and the flowers fall. This is because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are like grass. The grass dies, and the flowers fall. But the word of our God will live forever." Jerusalem, you have good news to tell. Go up on a high mountain. Jerusalem, you have good news to tell. Shout out loud the good news. Shout it out and don't be afraid. Say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God." Look, the Lord God is coming with power. He will use his power to rule all the people. Look, he will bring reward for his people. He will have their payment with him.<sup>11</sup> The Lord takes care of his people like a shepherd. He gathers the people like lambs in his arms. He carries them close to him. He gently leads the mothers of the lambs. - Isaiah 40:1-11*

### **Poetry Prayer**

My dad built me a changing table.  
For nine months, my mom watched her  
ankles swell and her belly grow.  
For nine months, my dad would come  
home from work, kiss her on her  
forehead –  
Pressing bangs to skin – and tell her she  
was beautiful.  
Then for nine months, he'd slip into the  
garage  
To build sawdust sandcastles and a  
dresser out of dreams.  
I imagine she smiled, perched in that  
rocking chair.  
He was in his woodshop, preparing the  
way.  
Eighteen years later I left for college.  
As I packed my bags, my mom baked  
blueberry muffins for the road – the  
smell of home.

Sarah Are

She wrapped them in foil and placed  
them in a cardboard box,  
Willing similar layers of protection to be  
wrapped around me, her little girl.  
She was preparing the way.  
My aunts and uncles bought sweatshirts  
in my new school colors.  
My dad taught me how to change a tire.  
My mom gave me the earrings I'd been  
sneaking from her jewelry box for the  
last four years.  
I hid sticky-note love letters on the  
kitchen door for them to find when they  
returned home.  
We were quiet in the car.  
My brother cried.  
We were all preparing the way.  
And through these moments, I have  
come to see,  
That preparation and love can be the  
same thing.

For there is something about love that makes us want to prepare.  
There is something about love that compels us to  
Throw open the doors,  
Yell it from the rooftop,  
Set the table,  
Decorate the nursery,  
Leave love notes on the back door,

Build the changing table,  
Trim the tree,  
Bake muffins for the road,  
And when it's time,  
If you must,  
Let go.  
Preparation and love can be the same thing.

## New Testament

[Mark 1:1-8 \(ICB\)](#)

Mark is the earliest written of the gospels in the Bible. Mark's Gospel is simple and unsophisticated. In today's passage, John the Baptizer calls the crowds to repentance and transformation. John's word transcends the pages today to challenge us to prepare the way for God's message of love and liberation. Those who dream make a way for righteousness and peace.

*This is the beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as the prophet Isaiah wrote: "I will send my messenger ahead of you. He will prepare your way." "There is a voice of a man who calls out in the desert: 'Prepare the way for the Lord. Make the road straight for him.'" John was baptizing people in the desert. He preached a baptism of changed hearts and lives for the forgiveness of sins. All the people from Judea and Jerusalem were going out to John. They told about the sins they had done. Then they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. John wore clothes made from camel's hair and had a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts and wild honey. This is what John preached to the people: "There is one coming later who is greater than I. I am not good enough even to kneel down and untie his sandals. I baptize you with water. But the one who is coming will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." – Mark 1:1-8*

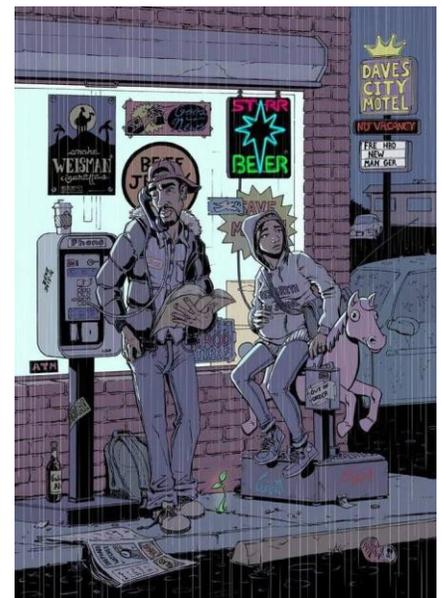
## Prayer of Confession and Forgiveness

One: Holy God, I wish that peace was something I could buy. I wish that peace could be ordered in a subscription service, found on a map, downloaded in an app, or voted for in a ballot.

I wish that peace was as easy as a one-time choice when I was feeling my best. However, what I have found is that peace involves everyday decisions over and over, whether or not I am feeling my best.

So today I confess, in front of this community of faith, that I need your help in this Advent season.

Prepare the way for greater peace, and teach me how to be a part of it.



**All: May God forgive you. May God's guiding hand surround you. May you know comfort. May you know peace.**

One: Amen.

**All: Holy God, We wish that peace was something we could buy.**

**We wish that peace could be ordered in a subscription service, found on a map, downloaded in an app, or voted for in a ballot.**

**We wish that peace was as easy as a one-time choice when we are feeling our best. However, what we have found is that peace involves everyday decisions over and over, whether or not we are feeling our best.**

**So today I confess, in front of this community of faith, that I need your help in this Advent season.**

**Prepare the way for greater peace and teach me how to be a part of it.**

One: May God forgive you. May God's guiding hand surround you. May you know comfort. May you know peace.

**All: Thanks be to God. Amen.**

**Sermon**

**Those Who Dream – Peace**

Pastor Dan Stark

**Song of Response**

*On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry*

- 1. On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry announces that the Lord is nigh; awake and listen for he brings glad tidings of the King of kings.**
- 2. Let every heart be cleansed from sin, make straight the way for God within, and so prepare to be the home where such a mighty guest may come.**
- 3. For you are our salvation, Lord, our refuge and our great reward; without your grace we waste away like flowers that wither and decay.**
- 4. To heal the sick, stretch out your hand, and make the fallen sinner stand; shine out, and let your light restore earth's own true loveliness once more.**

WORDS: Charles Coffin; tr. John Chandler. MUSIC: Trier manuscript, 15<sup>th</sup> c.; adapt. Michael Praetorius; har. George R. Woodward

**Prayers of the People**

*Hear Our Prayers, O God, for...*

~The Zabler family as they grieve the loss of their mom Lorraine Zabler who has been a lifetime member of Christ church.

~The husband and family of Pat, a friend of Pat Popp who recently passed away from lung cancer and her husband who has now also tested positive for COVID.

~Dawn, daughter in-law of Laurel and wife of Brad Dayton, as she recovers from a heart attack and manages diabetes and dialysis 4 times per week . Continued prayers are requested.

~Nancy Charles' work facility, as it has been struck with a COVID outbreak.  
~Nichola, friend of Jill Unglaub who can't be home in England with family and friends for the holidays because of the virus. This is especially difficult as her brother just passed away from cancer, and her good friend is in hospice for cancer. She is thankful that her hip replacement rehabilitation is going well.  
~Melissa, wife of Doris and Paul Mayeshiba's nephew who is recovering from lumbar fusion back surgery. Prayers for a healthy recovery.  
~Maureen, friend of Sue Klockow, who has breast cancer.  
~Jerry and Michelle who have been displaced from their home after a fire. They have now found temporary living arrangements in St. Francis for the next 6 months.  
~Jean, sister of Doris Piacentine and her niece who is recovering from COVID.  
~Kathy, Ken Klockow's sister who will be receiving home care for a serious infection.  
~Dan, friend of Molly Pufall Brown, who is very sick with an undiagnosed illness. Prayers also for his wife and 2 young children.  
~Kelley, friend of Nancy Charles as she receives radiation treatment for breast cancer.  
~Bernee, friend of Nancy Kaye who has end-stage lung cancer.  
~Joe and Laurie, son in law and daughter of Jackie Struck. Prayers for continued healing.  
~Linda, daughter of Jackie Struck, as she receives wound care. Prayers for continued healing.  
~Tracy, daughter of Nancy Kaye, who is at home with Nancy awaiting liver and kidney transplants. She is doing well.  
~Family of Ken and Sue who live in California close to the wildfires.  
~Julene Flanagan's nephew, who is struggling with mental health issues.  
~Julene Flanagan's family member who is struggling with health issues related to kidney disease.

### **Prayer Song**

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

**O come, thou Wisdom from on high, and order all things, far and nigh;  
to us the path of knowledge show, and cause us in her ways to go.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

### **Prayer of Dedication**

#### **Doxology**

*Tune: The First Noel*

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise God all creatures here below  
Praise God above ye heavenly host, Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.  
A-men.**

## Closing Song

*Wait for the Lord*

**Wait for the Lord whose day is near.**

**Wait for the Lord. Be strong, take heart!**

WORDS AND MUSIC Taize' Community

## Sending Blessing

[Psalm 85:8-13 \(ICB\)](#)

*I will listen to God the Lord.  
He has ordered peace for his people who worship him.  
Don't let them go back to foolishness.  
God will soon save those who respect him.  
And his greatness will be seen in our land.  
Love and truth will belong to God's people.  
Goodness and peace will be theirs.  
On earth people will be loyal to God.  
And God's goodness will shine down from heaven.  
The Lord will give his goodness.  
And the land will give its crops.  
Goodness will go before God  
and prepare the way for him.*

## Postlude

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

Powell

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## Happy Birthday to these wonderful people!

Skylar Jorgenson December 7th

Joyce Neumann December 8th

Beulah Goebel December 9th

Ethan Misleh December 10th

## Announcements

**BVCC Christmas Donations final drop off Tuesday December 8th.**

The office is open from 8:00am-2:00pm on Tuesday.

Thank you for your generosity! The Social Concerns Committee

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*Some Prayers and Liturgies written by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org)*

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If you should need to contact Pastor Stark, please email [pastor@uccmke.org](mailto:pastor@uccmke.org).  
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We are currently worshipping online-only. Learn more here.

<https://www.uccmke.org/covid-advent>

You can make your offering to Christ Church through [PayPal](#) or by mailing a check to Christ Church, 915 East Oklahoma Ave, Milwaukee, WI, 53207.

