



Second Week of Advent  
Sunday, December 6, 2015

# Jesus Justice Prayer Peace

\* Indicates to rise in body or spirit

## Welcome

*Please pass the red friendship pads to sign in at this time. If this is your first time visiting, please legibly write your name and address so we may send you a letter of welcome and more information about our church.*

## Voluntary

### Lighting of the Advent Candles of Hope and Peace

Brenda Lewis and Catherine Whitlock

**One:** We light this candle of peace,

**All:** *Reflecting on the proclamation of John the Baptist more than 2,000 years ago and working to spread the good news today.*

**One:** We light this candle of peace,

**All:** *Working toward and crying out for a world where everyone's basic needs are met.*

**One:** We light this candle of peace,

**All:** *Smoothing the rough ways and making paths in order to end discrimination and persecution.*

**One:** We light this candle of peace,

**All:** *Awaiting the arrival of Jesus Christ, light of the world. There is darkness everywhere. But even a glimmer of light can dispel it.*

Two candles are lit.

## Sung Response

"Light Two Candles"

Light two can-dle to watch for Mes - si - ah

3  
let the light ban-ish dark - ness He shall feed the

6  
flock like a shep-perd gent-ly lead them home ward.

The musical notation consists of three staves in 3/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is written in a simple, accessible style. The lyrics are placed below the notes, with some words hyphenated across bar lines. The second staff starts with a measure rest and a '3' above it, indicating a triplet. The third staff starts with a measure rest and a '6' above it, indicating a sixteenth-note pattern.

## **Unison Prayer of Confession**

*Holy God, every Advent a voice calls us to walk the path of Love. With clear and strong words, John demands we heed the call to live lives which give evidence of our repentance. Holy God, with your gentle gaze, help us look deep within.*

*Loving God, help us examine our lifestyles: our comfort with ease while others struggle for bread, our tendency to blame the victim for being poor or homeless, our perpetual busyness which keeps us from taking time to see or listen to the hurts. Forgive us when we give only what we no longer want.*

*Holy God, let the prophetic words turn our lives to seek and do your will. In the hope of Christ we pray. Amen.*

**\*Hymn #116**

“O Come, O Come Emmanuel”

## **A Reading from Scripture**

Malachi 3:1-4

One: For the word of God in scripture, for the word of God among us, for the word of God within us

**All: *Thanks be to God!***

## **Anthem**

## **Time with Children**

Gary Mitchell

*After a Time with Children, children may follow Gary out of the sanctuary and into a classroom for a time of religious exploration and education, and will return to the sanctuary before the last hymn. Children are also welcome to remain in worship.*

## **\*Passing the Peace**

## **A Reading from Scripture**

Luke 3:1-6

One: For the word of God in scripture, for the word of God among us, for the word of God within us

**All: *Thanks be to God!***

**Sermon** "What's John the Baptist Got to Do With It?" Rev. Margot Pickett

**\*Hymn #115** "The Baptist Shouts on Jordan's Shore"

### **We Offer Our Gifts**

**Ministry Updates**

Yolanda Adams

**Call for Offering**

Yolanda Adams

**Prayer**

Rev. Margot Pickett

### **We Gather at the Table**

**One:** God's Banquet is coming. The time we await when all will gather from North, East, West and South.

**All:** *A banquet where the rich and powerful will sit with the weak and poverty-stricken. A table where young and old will learn from each other. A time when all will sit together in peace, "and the wolf will lie down with the lamb".*

**One:** Here at this table we get a foretaste of God's banquet. This is indeed God's table, not the church's, and so all who seek to know the presence of Christ and share in the community of God are welcome to eat and drink from it.

**All:** *Come, taste, and see that God is good!*

**One:** God is with us.

**All:** *We are not alone.*

**One:** Christ is present here.

**All:** *The Spirit moves within us.*

**One:** Let us give thanks to God.

**One:** Blessings be to you, Creator God who in the beginning brought light and life to the world and who continues to bring it love and light everlasting.

**All:** *Your song of wisdom echoes through the ages, your ancient promise still brings us hope.*

**One:** Over the ages you have called people to embrace your hope and share your love. But even when they have closed their ears to the song you did not stop singing. You sent prophets and messengers to your people, reminding them of the promised time of peace and justice that would surround the world.

**All:** *They came in the midst of our despair and filled us with hope.*

**One:** And then you came to a young woman named Mary and laid out the promise in a new way.

**All:** *Promising her that in her son the world would be changed.*

**One:** And now as we prepare for that child to be born, we echo the ancient cry:

**All:** *O come, O come Emmanuel!*

**One:** Yet even now, as we prepare to celebrate his birth, we remember the life that this baby will live, a life like ours, filled with joy and sorrow, love and loss, brokenness and healing. Hear us now as we pray for those we know and love who stand in need of prayer this day. (Please feel free to call out a name or offer a brief prayer.) We remember Jesus broke the bonds of tradition to show all what the Banquet of Hope could be when he touched the untouchable, healed on the Sabbath and ate openly with the despised and outcast of his world.

**All:** *And we remember one special meal, foretaste of the banquet that is to come, that he ate with his closest friends.*

**One:** Gathering them together in an upper room to share the story of liberation, he prepared them for a new liberation. And at the end of the meal he took bread, blessed and broke it, then passed it to them saying:

**All:** *Take and eat. This bread is the body of Life, broken by the world. Eat it in remembrance and in hope.*

**One:** After that he took the cup, blessed it, and passed it to them saying:

**All:** *This cup is the sign of the New Covenant. Whenever you drink it remember me, for I shall not eat or drink again until the time of the heavenly banquet.*

**One:** Remembering the birth of the child in the stable, we remember also his life, his death and his resurrection.

**All:** *We remember how he poured his love out to all he met and we look forward to his return and the coming reign of peace, love, and justice.*

*Let us pray*

O God, you poured your Spirit on Mary and she sang words of defiance and hope. Pour out your Spirit upon us gathered here. As we eat and drink may we know your presence. As we eat and drink may we be opened to the possibilities of your hope and power. And may we be

strengthened in our time of waiting for peace and justice so that we will have the courage to make the Christmas promise a reality.

*The Pouring and Breaking and Serving*

The bread we break is the Bread of Life

The cup we share is the Cup of Promise

These are the gifts of God for the people of God.

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

Come and eat, the banquet awaits.

*(All are welcome at this table. Please come down the center aisle, take a piece of bread, dip it in the cup, and return by one of the side aisles. Each station has a gluten free option. The dark liquid is wine, the lighter liquid is juice.*

*There will be a communion station in the balcony for those seated there.)*

*Prayer Following Communion*

***All: God of pregnant expectations, God of Christmas promise, God of child-like hope, we have eaten and drunk from your table. May the eating and the drinking fill us with hope in a world of despair. May we be beacons of hope as we wait for the day when the world will be changed. Grant that this taste of your banquet which is to come gives us the hunger for peace and justice in our community and around the world today. Amen.***

**\*Hymn #122**

“Come, O Long Expected Jesus”

**\*Unison Blessing**

***May the rough places in our lives be made smooth.***

***May the valleys of despair be filled with comfort.***

***May the door to our hearts be wide open.***

***May the glory of Immanuel be with us all our days.***

## For This Week's Service

Greeters/Ushers: Lisa, Jennifer and Joseph Wehe-Davis

Advent Wreath Lighters: Re. Brenda Lewis & Catherine Whitlock

Liturgist: Sandy Clark

Communion Prep: Carol Duin

Communion Servers: Joanna Crew, Ricky Haralson, Rev. Margot Pickett, Jacque Wuelling

Deacon of the Month: Mary Kancevitich

Alternate Deacon of the Month: Sharon Stepp (Handicap Door)

Nursery/Childcare: Marcella Gonzalez

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## Activities

- **TODAY!!!! ALTERNATIVE GIFT MARKET December 6:** We have an impressive group of artists and non-profits participating in the event. Please stop by after worship! Gifts from Heifer International, Rise Up Studios (a ministry of Beloved House) and many talented artists and craftspeople from our congregation and beyond will be selling gifts, art, and all kinds of wonderful treasures. 11:30 am -3:00 pm in our Friendship Hall.

## Announcements

- **Annual Congregational Meeting** Please do your best to join us for our Annual Congregational Meeting on December 13th after worship. We will be electing new board members as well as voting on next year's budget. Anyone is welcome to attend and anyone who has joined First Congregational as a member is able to vote on these issues.
- **Community High School** gifts must be wrapped and turned in by December 13<sup>th</sup>. Contact Yolanda if you have any questions!
- **On December 13<sup>th</sup>** we will be taking up the **Christmas Fund Veterans of the Cross offering**. The Christmas Fund provides direct financial assistance to retired and active United Church of Christ authorized ministers and lay employees and their surviving spouses, including pension and health premium supplementation, emergency assistance, and Christmas thank-you checks.
- **Intergeneration Sunday School:** Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am in the Friendship Hall. Please join us for a crafty/artsy activity for all ages.

## Classes & Workshops

**Sundays at 9:15 am:** Join Rev. Brenda Lewis for a drop-in style Bible Study on the topic of 1 Corinthians. Anyone is welcome to attend as often as they like. In E-101.

**Mondays at 5:45-8pm:** Creative Contemplative Group. Join us in some meditative art-making! No art experience or supplies needed. Drop-ins welcome. Please arrive on time. In E-107

## Advent and Christmas

- **Crèche Service:** Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 am. A Sunday advent lessons and carols service that incorporates the placing of the Nativity figures on the communion table.
- **Longest Night Service:** Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm. Not everyone finds Christmas to be filled with joy and laughter, and it's a hard time not to be happy when everyone and everything around us says we should be! This service is designed as a time of prayer, lament, scripture and music to help us remember that the Light came into the world and the darkness has not overcome it.
- **Christmas Eve Service:** Thursday, December 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm. Join us for our traditional Christmas Eve service that incorporates many beloved carols and ends with a candlelight singing of Silent Night. Children are welcome and communion will be served.

# Calendar

## **Sunday, December 6, 2015**

Bible Study with Brenda Lewis E-107 9:15 AM - 10:15 AM  
Worship 10:30am  
Alternative gift market - Friendship Hall 11:30 AM - 3:00 PM  
Lea Kibler & Dan Weiser concert in Sanctuary 2:00  
FCUCC Youth group tower Room 2 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM

## **Monday, December 7, 2015**

Creative Contemplative Group class w/Mandy E-105 5:30 PM - 8:00 PM  
Transition Asheville E-205 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM

## **Tuesday, December 8, 2015**

FCUCC Game Night w/ Mary & Dennis E-1057:00 PM - 9:00 PM

## **Wednesday, December 9, 2015**

Stir the Soul Cafe - Library 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM  
Bell choir E-101 5:30 PM  
Church Choir Rehearsal 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM

## **Sunday, December 13, 2015**

Intergenerational Sunday School 9:00 Friendship Hall  
Worship 10:30 AM  
Annual Congregational Meeting 11:30  
FCUCC Youth group tower Room 2 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM  
Faith & Flicks in the Library 5:45 PM - 8:00 PM

Welcome! WE ARE...

*AN LGBT OPEN and AFFIRMING Congregation of the United Church of Christ  
and a Just Peace Church.*

*We are a progressive, risk-taking Christian faith community.*

*We follow the way of Jesus as the Christ and are welcome, open, and affirming to all.*

*We believe God is vibrant, alive, and still speaking to us!*

*We believe that God encourages us to engage the world through acts of mercy, peace, and justice.*

**First Congregational UCC is located at 20 Oak Street in  
downtown Asheville.** Please send all mail to PO Box 3211 Asheville, NC 28802.

**[www.uccasheville.org](http://www.uccasheville.org) 828-252-8729**

