



*November 29, 2020*  
*Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ*

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*Advent Thought*

Advent announces that Jesus is coming and not through any action of our own. We do not deserve it. Advent happens. Advent means that Jesus comes again and for all time, at Christmas, this Christmas.

Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ  
Mt Hope 8:30am                      Greenfield 9:50am  
1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent

November 29, 2020  
Grace 11:00am

*Community News*

*Prayer List and Prayers of the People*

*Prelude*

*Lighting of the Candles*

\* *Call to Worship*

After such suffering,  
We go searching for a sign, any sign.  
The sun seems to dim, the moon fails, the stars fall.  
We need a sign, any sign.

**Be aware, stay awake, change is coming.**

We hope that the Human One is on the way,  
gathering the faithful from the four winds,  
into a place of peace –  
We need a sign, any sign.

**Be aware, stay awake, change is coming.**

Nature once offered signs to depend on:  
The fig tree put out tender leaves,  
and we knew summer was near—  
But climate today  
Is hurting, and unpredictable.  
We need a sign, any sign.

**Be aware, stay awake, change is coming.**

So together we search for a sign of the One who is coming--  
Clarity in confusion  
Green shoot in a barren landscape  
Song arising in a weary soul.

**Be aware, stay awake, change is coming**

Come, let us worship!

\* *Opening Hymn*

*“O Come, O Come Emmanuel”*

vs 1-3

*Mt Hope VH #93*

*Greenfield CH #245*

*Grace VH #93*

## *Lighting the first Advent Candle – The Candle of Hope*

O Holy One, we light this first candle, a candle of grief, in the midst of the stories of the last year; Let it burn through these weeks as a beacon to become *The light of Hope*. Let it guide us to your presence in our midst, leading us to your Justice and Joy in the service of Peace.

**God be with us in this Light of Hope.**

### *Lighting of the first Candle*

#### *Gathering Prayer*

Come into our midst, O Holy One,  
Rider of the Clouds of Heaven,  
Surprising answer to heartfelt prayer.  
In whatever way you choose—  
Come. Shake us up.  
Help us find you at work in our lives  
Showing the way to make all things new.  
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

#### *Prayer of Confession*

*Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19*

This has been a year to lament—  
Grief and loss,  
Crisis when social structures have failed the common good  
Complicity when age-old prejudices found new and cruel  
expression:

**Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

This has been a year to wake up—  
To read the “signs of the times”  
To wake up to painful truths, and give them voice  
To ponder the changes needed for a just world for all:

**Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

This has been a year to call God into our sorry midst—  
Show us your face!  
Encourage us in the face of brutal realities,  
Empower us to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with you  
On the way in which you make all things new.

**Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

*Silent Reflection*

*Words of Assurance*

*1 Corinthians 1:3-9*

God is faithful and gives us grace in Christ Jesus.  
In this fellowship we can count on being enriched  
**in speech, in knowledge, in every spiritual gift.**  
Let us give thanks, in Christ, we are forgiven  
**and sent forth to work for God's reign among us.**

*The Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings*

Offertory Statement

\* Doxology

\* Offertory Prayer

TH # 551

**O Faithful One, accept these gifts of our hearts and hands.  
May they be multiplied and magnified as the living  
presence of Christ in the world. Amen.**

\* *The Reading of the Holy Gospel*

Mark 13:24-31 NIV

*Gloria Tibi (Glory be to Thee, O Lord.)*

TH #497

<sup>24</sup>“But in those days, following that distress,

“the sun will be darkened,  
and the moon will not give its light;

<sup>25</sup> the stars will fall from the sky,  
and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’

<sup>26</sup>“At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in  
clouds with great power and glory. <sup>27</sup> And he will send his angels  
and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth  
to the ends of the heavens.

<sup>28</sup>“Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get  
tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is  
near. <sup>29</sup> Even so, when you see these things happening, you know  
that it is near, right at the door. <sup>30</sup> Truly I tell you, this  
generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have  
happened. <sup>31</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will  
never pass away.

\* *Gloria Patri*

*Children's Message*

## *Hanging of the Greens*

Today marks the beginning of the season of Advent, a time of preparation, a time of going toward the coming again of the Messiah, a time of great expectation and great anticipation. But exactly what is it that we anticipate? What are we getting ready for? What do we expect to happen? Are we preparing our hearts and spirits to receive again the coming of the Christ child into the world? Or are we too busy feeling upset and depressed this year?

The hanging of the greens, the beauty of the Christmas tree, the lighting of the first Advent candle; all these invite us to dream dreams of a better world, to allow expectant visions that have nothing to do with sugar-plum fairies to dance in our heads.

Advent invites us to fill the cup of today with a full measure of tomorrow - when the Christ child of this Advent Season returns as the King of our hearts.

So, whether you are here today in person or worshipping from your individual homes, let us now hang our greens together as the united children of God.

\* *Meditation Hymn*      **“Have Thine Own Way, Lord”**  
Mt Hope VH #328      Greenfield CH #591      Grace VH #328

## *Today's Message*

### \* *The Apostle's Creed*

**I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hades; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic/Christian church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.  
Amen.**

*The Lord's Prayer*

**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.**

\* *Sung Response*                    *“Hear Our Prayer, O Lord”*                    TH # 501

\* *Closing Hymn*            *“Open My Eyes, That I May See”*  
*Mt Hope VH #156            Greenfield CH #563            Grace VH #156*

\* *Benediction*

Send us into the world refreshed in hope,  
Awake, alert, attuned to your presence  
ready to join your work of blessing for all.

In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy  
Spirit, one God, now and forevermore. **Hallelujah! Amen!**

\* *Three-Fold Amen*

\* *Postlude/Extinguishing of the Candle*                    TH # 558

\* *Postlude 2/Exiting the Church*