



December 3, 2023
Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ

www.greenfieldcharge.org
greenfieldchargeucc@gmail.com

Facebook: Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ

Pastor
Mrs. Wendy Farber

Organist
Gary McIntyre (Grace)

farberhome@atlanticbb.net

Sunday Morning Meditation

The perfect Christmas is a myth. After all, the first Christmas was hardly perfect. It was glorious and difficult, miraculous and earthly, sublime and sweaty, tender and harsh.

– Dave Meurer
Good Spousekeeping (2004)

Grace 11:00am

1st Sunday of Advent (Hope)

‘Quaking Mountains...Awesome Deeds’

Community News

Prayer List and Prayers of the People

Prelude/Lighting of the Candles

* *Call to Worship*

Inspired by Isaiah 64

Tear open the heavens and bring forth your presence.

We watch and we wait for the glory to come.

We gather with hope, remembering your mercy.

Lead us in love; shine from above.

Make us your love wave to broaden your reach

We watch and we wait for your deeds to appear.

We gather with hope, remembering your handiwork.

Make us, mold us; shine from above.

* *Invocation*

El Shaddai – God of the mountains who quake at your presence, you meet us in our memory of you. We’d invite you to come down and dwell among us, yet we know that you are already and always with us. Emmanuel, in our collective memory from ages past - God beside us, God before us, God behind us, and God within us. Let your face shine so that we might remember you more clearly. Give us life and we will call on your name as we worship you in spirit and in truth. Amen.

* *Opening Hymn*

“O God, Our Help in Ages Past”

VH #301

Advent Invitation

(All candles are lit)

We come to this season of Advent and gather around a wreath to light candles. This wreath reminds us of the circle of our human community and the lights that illuminate the many ways in which we bring ourselves to the Incarnation, God’s longed-for presence - human and holy, Emmanuel - God with us and God coming to us.

Advent Scripture

John 1:1-5 NRSV

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

Advent Remembrance

We remind ourselves that there has been much light in the world that has been extinguished and we acknowledge that we have let it happen.

We remember hopes that have been extinguished. (*extinguish candle*)

We can barely remember a time of peace. (*extinguish candle*)

We have tried to protect our own joys and ignored the sorrows of others. (*extinguish candle*)

We have let love go out and have not even lifted a hand to protect the flame. (*extinguish candle*)

Now we have not fresh wicks but crumpled ones, and yet we name and claim this truth: God gives us courage and compassion to re-light hope, peace, joy and love in our lives and our times.

Advent Candles

We are empowered by the advent of Emmanuel, God with Us, because of whom Isaiah prophesied no bruised reed would be broken nor dimly burning wick quenched until justice fills all that lives and grows.

We light the candle of **Hope** for earth and air and seas, for the creatures dwelling among us and the plants alive with God's Spirit.

Advent Prayer

Emmanuel, we celebrate the Advent of the past with its precious words and traditions, and we light an Advent of new hope for all the seasons of your children. Amen.

Prayer of Transformation

Inspired by Hope by Jason Robert Brown

We come singing songs of hope, this morning.
Though we may not be inspired much right now, **we still sing.**
Though it may take us time to sit with our hampered thoughts and
sift through the growing pile of despair, **we still sing.**
In spite of everything ridiculous and sad—
Though we may be beyond belief, depressed, confused, and mad—
Some of us got dressed, and
Some of us made it out of bed or out the door
And **we still sing** of hope.

God, remind us that we have gotten through a lot of things we
didn't think we could—
that you have not left us nor forsaken us—
That our individual and collective ancestors still sang new songs in
the valleys of death.
And so, **we still sing**, too.
Embolden us as we try to show the world that we can find hope
even when it seems impossible to bear.

Hope must be there.

Fear never wins.

The work begins in us.

Amen.

* *The Reading of the Holy Gospel*

Mark 13:24-37 NRSV

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

TH #497

The Coming of the Son of Man

²⁴“But in those days, after that suffering,

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

²⁵and the stars will be falling from heaven,
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

²⁶“Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with
great power and glory. ²⁷ Then he will send out the angels and
gather the elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to
the ends of heaven.

The Lesson of the Fig Tree

²⁸“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes
tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is

near. ²⁹ So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰ Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

The Necessity for Watchfulness

³² “But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Beware, keep alert, for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴ It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵ Therefore, keep awake, for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening or at midnight or at cockcrow or at dawn, ³⁶ or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷ And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

* *Gloria Patri*

Children's Message / Congregation Conversation

* *Meditation Hymn* “*In the Bleak Midwinter*”

Insert

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

The Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory Statement

Offertory (MH)

* Doxology TH # 551

* Offertory Prayer

**We dedicate these gifts, for the wondrous ways this offering
will breathe hope into community and for the ways it'll
help us live out God's mission. Let these gifts strengthen
our call to carry out God's justice and mercy. Amen.**

* *Closing Hymn* *"Joy to the World!"* VH #88

* *Benediction*

Go forth with the gift of hope
Remembering God's deeds
Trusting God's presence
And Becoming God's handiwork.
May God's face shine on us now and forever,
Amen.

* *Three-Fold Amen* TH # 558

* *Postlude/Extinguishing of the Candle*

Quakering Mountains...Awesome Deeds: Service Prayers for the First Sunday of Advent Year B was written by The Rev. Mia M. McClain, Senior Pastor of Riverside Baptist Church in Washington D.C. She is an ordained UCC minister.