

Millburn Congregational—United Church of Christ

19073 W. OLD TOWN COURT.

LAKE VILLA, IL 60046

847-356-5237

*Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we worship God
as a spiritually alive church,
welcoming all and reaching out with love as Christ's disciples.*

Rev. Miranda Moeller

Twenty-Eighth Sunday after Pentecost December 1, 2024 10:00 a.m.

Building Empathy- Walk in Someone Else's Shoes

Announcements

Greeting and Words of Welcome

*Opening Hymn

People, Look East

No. 142 (vs 1)

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.

*Call to Worship

One: From Isaiah: "Come, let us go up to the Mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob.

Many: That God may teach us God's ways and that we may walk in God's paths."

One: With what shall we come to God's house?

Many: Bring branches of cedar and holly, bring evergreens and a pine tree, hang wreaths and garland.

One: In the act of hanging greens and listening to the words of prophets, let us make our hearts and this space a place of inward and outward preparation for the One who comes to give us second birth. Amen.

***Prayer of Confession**

God of the Possible and Probable,

Gloom often encapsulates us when life is confusing and conflict is great. Our faith is rattled, and we are swallowed by shadows of fear. The world often feels like the end is near even when a new beginning is around the corner. We forget that even when shadows have lengthened, there remains a crack in the surface. Light begins to stream into our space, and warmth dances upon our hearts. When fear unnerves us, may we cling to the hope of God's love and the possibilities of joy once again. Amen.

***Words of Assurance**

Take comfort, dear friends, that God's grace will fill our hearts with joy as we know that light grows ahead. May we cling to the crumbs of hope as we step into the nighttime with faith, knowing Divine Bliss accompanies us in each step.

***Advent Response**

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
 Let earth receive her King!
 Let every heart prepare Him room,
 and heav'n and nature sing,
 and heav'n and nature sing,
 and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Daley Family

Passing of the Peace

Celebration of Holy Communion

All Believers are welcome at this Table.

You may commune as you are served

Invitation

One: May you know that the God of comfort is with you.

Many: And may you see the God of hope with you.

One: Open wide our anxious hearts!

Many: We open them to God's peace.

One: Let us give thanks and share our joy.

Many: In this space and time, we offer God our love and praise.

Communion Prayer

Words of Institution

Prayer of Consecration

Breaking Bread and Pouring Cup

Sharing Elements

*Prayer of Thanksgiving

Leader: In peace let us pray:

All: For the nourishment of spirit, mind, and body, for hope that we begin to see, and for comfort from the Prince of Peace, we share our gratitude, Gracious God. Encourage us in these shortened days. Through the long nights of this season, may your hope carry us until dawn arrives again. Amen.

Anthem

Help

The Beatles

We Hear God's Word*Hanging of the Greens*

First Scripture Reading (NRSV)

Isaiah 9:2, 6

The people who walked in darkness
 have seen a great light;
 those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
 on them light has shined.

For a child has been born for us,
 a son given to us;
 authority rests upon his shoulders,
 and he is named
 Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
 Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

In Ancient times, the cedar was known as the tree of royalty. Today we often use cedar, along with other green trees which we prize for their fragrance as well as the symbolism of our expectation and hope of the coming of the Christ child again. The evergreen reminds us of the everlasting life given to us through the grace of God and the Life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

*Hymn

People, Look East

No. 142 (Vs 2-4)

Tree is Decorated, Greens in Windows

2. Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,
 One more seed is planted there:
 Give up your strength the seed to nourish,
 That in course the flower may flourish.
 People, look east and sing today:
 Love, the rose, is on the way.

3. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim
 One more light the bowl shall brim,
 Shining beyond the frosty weather,
 Bright as sun and moon together.
 People, look east and sing today:
 Love, the star, is on the way.
4. Angels, announce with shouts of mirth
 Christ who brings new life to earth.
 Set every peak and valley humming
 With the word, the Lord is coming.
 People, look east and sing today:
 Love, the Lord, is on the way.

Second Scripture Reading

John 1:1-5

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,^[a] and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

The candles symbolize the light of God that came into the world through the birth of Jesus Christ. Windows in the homes and churches alike are decorated with candles that burn each night. This is an old custom that sprang from the belief that the lighted windows would guide the Christ Child through the darkness of the house.

*Hymn

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

No. 119

Candles are put in windows and tree is lit

1 O come, O come, Immanuel,
 and ransom captive Israel
 that mourns in lonely exile here
 until the Son of God appear.

Refrain:

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

2 O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's deep shadows put to flight. Refrain

3 O come, O Wisdom from on high,
who ordered all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show
and teach us in its ways to go. Refrain

4 O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples
in one heart and mind;
bid envy, strife and quarrels cease;
fill the whole world with heaven's peace. Refrain

Third Scripture Reading

Luke 2:8-14

Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, ^[a] the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, ^[b] praising God and saying,

¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!

According to legend, St. Francis of Assisi created the first living Nativity scene in 1223, in Grecco, Italy. This included the Holy Family, animals, and human visitors. Today we remember Christ's birth with our creche.

*Hymn

Come, O Long Expected Jesus

No. 125

Children will create the creche display

1. Come, O long expected Jesus, born to set your people free.
From our fears and sins release us; Christ, in whom our rest shall be.
You, our strength and consolation, come salvation to impart;
dear desire of many a nation, joy of many a longing heart.

2. Born your people to deliver, born a child, and yet a king,
born to reign in us forever, born your gracious realm to bring.
By your own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
by your all sufficient merit raise us to your glorious throne.

Fourth Reading

Revelation 22:12-13, 16

“See, I am coming soon; my reward is with me, to repay according to everyone’s work. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.”

¹⁶ “It is I, Jesus, who sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”

Today marks the beginning of a new church year. Blue, the color for hope, is used to mark the season of Advent, the time of preparation before Christmas. Like the cycles of the church year, we are reminded that God is the first and last, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. He is our bright Morning Star. We remember this with the star-shaped leaves of the poinsettia. May we prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of a Savior into our world today.

Sermon

“Preparing an Unprepared World”

Rev. Miranda Moeller

We Respond to God's Word

*Hymn

When God Is a Child

No. 132

1 Hope is a star that shines in the night,
Leading us on till the morning is bright.

Refrain:

When God is a child
there's joy in our song.
The last shall be first
and the weak shall be strong,
and none shall be afraid.

2 Peace is a ribbon that circles the earth,
Giving a promise of safety and worth. [Refrain]

3 Joy is a song that welcomes the dawn,
Telling the world that the Savior is born. [Refrain]

4 Love is a flame that burns in our heart.
Jesus has come and will never depart. [Refrain]

Prayers of the People

Pastoral Prayer, Silent Prayer

Lord's Prayer (debts/debtors)

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.

Call to Offering

***Doxology**Old One Hundredth

**PRAISE GOD FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW;
 PRAISE GOD, ALL CREATURES HERE BELOW;
 PRAISE GOD FOR ALL THAT LOVE HAS DONE;
 CREATOR, CHRIST, AND SPIRIT ONE.**

***Prayer of Dedication**

Joyous God, Originator of all Gifts, this day and always, we celebrate the gifts of our hands and hearts. We share our talents and time, knowing our energy builds the world with love. We share our treasures, knowing that all gifts we entrust to your Church will build your Realm. With joy, we devote our first fruits to loving you and your children. Amen.

***Closing Hymn**

Emmanuel, Emmanuel

No. 134

Emmanuel, Emmanuel,
 his name is called Emmanuel.
 God with us, revealed in us,
 his name is called Emmanuel

***Commission and Blessing**

As we open the doors to the dawn of this season,
 May the Creator of Our Hearts fill us with Joy,
 May the Light of Christ fill our hearts with Hope,
 And may the Spirit of Tranquility assure our souls with Strength. Amen.

***Congregational Response**No. 312**AMEN. AMEN. AMEN.**

Today's Liturgy: Hanging of the Greens written by Ashley Danyew at
<https://www.ashleydanyew.com/posts/hanging-of-the-greens>.

Wreath lighting at: <https://sanctifiedart.org/how-does-a-weary-world-rejoice-advent-bundle>

Remaining Liturgy written by Rev. Michelle L. Torigian, senior pastor of St. Paul United Church of Christ, Belleville, Illinois at <https://www.ucc.org/worship-way/advent-1c-december-1/>

Today's Ushers: Thank you, Shirley and Dan Haley for serving as ushers this morning.

Celebrating Birthdays: Margo Paramski 11/26, Matt Lakemacher 11/27, Alexander Polit 11/27, Lynn Doolittle 11/30, Alyssa Dragin 12/4, Sandra Holst 12/5, Andrew Mathis 12/5, Kory Daley 12/6,

CIRCLE OF PRAYER: We are holding prayer for the following persons (new in italics): All those dealing with mental health crisis; all those struggling with addiction; those impacted by mass shootings and gun violence, those experiencing loss from climate crisis disasters; our LGBTQIA+ youth and children, as they remember they are loved; all caregivers who need support and rest; Deb Grandos niece, Susie, as she battles metastatic breast cancer; Doug, a friend of Toot's daughter-in-law, is in stage 4 cancer; prayers for strength and comfort for the Tschannen's, as well as those that will be helping them as they enter a new phase of their journey with Alzheimer's; Tim Chichester for his diabetes struggle; Lorel Chichester for her knee problems; Donna Geary's great nephew, Teddy, a one year-old recently diagnosed with cancer; Lisa Horist's Aunt Joy Ann, who is settling in to her new home; Donna Geiger's niece, Fay Anne, who underwent breast cancer surgery; Roberta Young, navigating seizures; Judy Kozak, who is recovering after a fall and hip surgery; Jean Lindholm, Diane Etienne's mom, in rehab following a car accident, Susan Lee's sister-in-law, Kim, who has been hospitalized; Carol Rossi's sister-in-law, Pat, and niece, Eileen, both of whom are navigating cancer; *and Eddie Young, Ruth's husband, who continues to be hospitalized.*

Church Office Hours:

Monday: Closed

Tuesday: 8:30-2:00

Wednesday: 8:30-2:00

Thursday: 8:30-2:00

Friday: Closed

*If you need something in the bulletin, please send the information to Susan by **Tuesday**. You can call the office or email Susan at secretary@millburnchurch.org. Thank you for your help.

Pastor Miranda's Office Hours:

Pastor Miranda's ministry often takes her out of the office. While she maintains an office presence Mon, Tues, and Thursday, her hours vary. In order to best meet your needs, feel free to call or email at pastor@millburnchurch.org to schedule a meeting. Do not hesitate to contact her at 860-751-4452, especially in the event of an emergency. She looks forward to supporting you and serving the community at Millburn and beyond.

Coffee Hour Sign-up - We need your help. Please consider providing items for our Sunday Coffee Hours following the 10 a.m. worship service.

Messenger Deadline – 3rd Friday of the month

Calling all bakers! Time for our annual Christmas Cookie Walk. This year it will be held on Saturday December 14th. Please bring in your favorite home-made holiday cookies, fudge, or candies. Please sign up by the bulletin board in Lauren Hall. Drop off is Friday 12/13 from 6-8:00 p.m. or Saturday between 8-9:00 a.m. If you have any questions call Margo at 847-525-3591.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT MILLBURN CHURCH:

Advent Devotion Study via Zoom - Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m.

Council Meeting - 3rd Thursday of the month

Pajama Night w/Pastor Miranda – December 1st, 4-6:00 p.m. in the basement

Christmas Cookie Walk – December 14th, 9:00 a.m.