

Ankeny United Church of Christ

A welcoming church family

Exploring progressive Christian theology

Caring within and serving beyond

An Open And Affirming Church



HOPE

December 2021, 1st Sunday in Lent

Hope

**No matter who you are,
no matter where you are on life's journey,
you are invited and welcome here!**

1st Sunday in Lent

November 28, 2021

**Signifies the request to rise in body or spirit*

Gathering *(As we arrive to worship God, we greet new and old friends)*

Children are invited to participate in our worship and welcome as loved, squirmy, laughing, crying, children of God. A staffed nursery is also always available.

Words of Welcome

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

VOICE 1: O God, we light the first candle of Advent. (light first candle)

VOICE 2: We kindle it with hope. We long for you to come to our world, to break through and reign with compassion, justice, and peace.

VOICE 1: We remember times we longed for God to be present to us, this congregation, and this world. We recall...

(We pause while members of the congregation speak out times they prayed for hope).

VOICE 2: The prophet Isaiah also cried to God to tear open heaven and come down. He called God's people to do right. Isaiah called them to be refashioned like clay by God, the potter. This Advent, we call out to God.

ALL: Mighty God, creator of the world, break through all that keeps us from you. We ask for your mercy and reform us in your image. This Advent, visit us with your justice, love, and peace. Shine on us, O God of justice; Guide our path through gloom of night; Bear within us Wisdom's glory; Come to us, O Christ the Light. Amen.

***Passing of the Peace** *(We share the hope for peace with one another)*

Congregational Preparation: In Te Confido

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In Te Confido

Jacque Berthier

O Christ of com - pas - sion.

5 O Lord God, I trust You.

Following the silent prayer, we will sing again

Prayers of the People

Silent Prayer

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 sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

**And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

Children's Sermon

As they gather, the congregation sings our welcoming song (tune 182)

Gath-er with us chil-dren e-v-ery-where, near and far where'er you be.

This is you-r own place of wel-l-come, it is you we lo-ng to see.

Scripture

Matthew 24: 32-44

“Learn this parable from the fig tree. After its branch becomes tender and it sprouts new leaves, you know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see all these things, you know that the Human One is near, at the door. I assure you that this generation won’t pass away until all these things happen. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will certainly not pass away. “But nobody knows when that day or hour will come, not the heavenly angels and not the Son. Only the Father knows. As it was in the time of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Human One. In those days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark. They didn’t know what was happening until the flood came and swept them all away. The coming of the Human One will be like that. At that time there will be two men in the field. One will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill. One will be taken and the other left. Therefore, stay alert! You don’t know what day the Lord is coming. But you understand that if the head of the house knew at what time the thief would come, he would keep alert and wouldn’t allow the thief to break into his house. Therefore, you also should be prepared, because the Human One will come at a time you don’t know.

Sermon

"Keep Grinding"

-Pastor Nathan

Hymn #118 (black)

"Of the Parent's Heart Begotten"

Commissioning

(We share the church's actions in the world)

***Benediction**

***Benediction Response: #122 (black) Come, O Long-Expected Jesus (v 1,3)**

**Come, O long-ex-pec-ted Je-sus, born to set all peo-ple free;
From our fears and sins re-lease us; grant us your true lib-er-ty.
Born all peo-ple to de-liv-er, born a child, you came to reign!
Born to rule on earth for-ev-er, come, be known to us a-gain.**

Postlude

You are a valued part of the family of God just as you are. We at Ankeny United Church of Christ celebrate the diversity our Creator has given all people. Our community is incomplete and broken when our siblings in Christ are excluded because of their sexual orientation, gender identity, physical ability, mental ability, race, age, nationality, faith background, relationship status, family structure, economic situation, or any of the numerous other aspects of identity that make us each who we are. Your differences make you unique and should be celebrated in God's family. You are wonderfully and purposefully made in the image of our Creator, and you have a place here in fellowship with other members of God's Church. This is a place where you can praise, question, worship, laugh, mourn, doubt, wonder, celebrate, and otherwise live as part of a community with other people seeking God and loving their neighbors. We the members of Ankeny UCC promise to affirm your worth as an individual and your place in our community. You are joyously welcomed to join us just as you are.

Church Activities:

Our full calendar is online at <http://www.ankenyucc.org/ankeny-ucc-google-calendar>

Sunday

10:30am Worship

Sunday

9:30 am Christian Ed

10:30am Worship



Choir Director

Laura Beckwith

Accompanist

Paige Wonderly

Organist

Nancy Pingel

Cantor

Brad Church



Pastor

Nathan Willard

Office Manager

Gemmy Sigma



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pastor@ankenyucc.org

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Exploring Progressive Christian Theology:

Religion and Bipolar Disorder by George Hofmann, shared with us by Progressive Christianity:

"... I've had a complicated relationship with religion. At times I fully embraced the idea of God, at others I completely rejected religion as mere delusion. I never seemed ambivalent about faith, but I always changed my mind as my moods coalesced into furious yet inspiring mixed episodes, episodes in which mania and depression occur together, that left me full of religiosity and wrestling with big questions and supernatural forces...

... We are an inquisitive and doubting bunch, so we'll always try to use our reason to settle such questions. But we're inclined toward spirituality as well. And for many, spirit transcends reason and leads to greater understanding. A mixed episode can take us there as well, or it can leave us dreadfully desperate. How we approach, make room for and hold the occurrence of private religious practice in the treatment of bipolar disorder, how we seek to ameliorate the aspects of bipolar disorder that make us suffer and uphold the aspects of bipolar disorder that reinforce us, can make all the difference in our ability to live meaningful lives of service and health." Click [here](#) to read the full article!

Caring Within:

Thank You!

We would like to say "Thank You" to our Deacons and the other people who helped to decorate the Sanctuary yesterday.

Mayor's Tree Lighting and Fireworks - now Dazzling in the District:

Date: 12/04/2021 6:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

This event is now part of Dazzling in the District. The Mayor's Tree Lighting and fireworks will serve as the finale to Dazzling in the District. The event is located at The District at Prairie Trail in Ankeny. The community is invited to continue this holiday tradition at its new location.

Join in the fun at Dazzling in the District with Santa, kids activities, mini photo sessions, a

holiday scavenger hunt with great prize giveaways, tree lighting and fireworks. The event will be held at participating businesses throughout The District including the Ankeny Kirkendall Public Library. The library will be hosting a kids dance party, holiday crafts and more! There will be fun, festive activities all day. The event will wrap up with Mayor Gary Lorenz lighting the big tree in Town Square Park along with a spectacular fireworks finale at 6:30 p.m. Ankeny Police and Fire will also be in the Town Square Park from 6-6:30 p.m. Learn more about Dazzling in the District at <https://fb.me/e/1tvEHOYE6>.

Serving Beyond:

Can Mindspring count on your help?

Mindspring has had a successful and busy year, serving 106,144 people in over 70 countries! Our growth led us to re-define community, engaging people around the world around the same great purpose, enhancing awareness and knowledge of mental health. So now we would like to ask you, a valued member of our unique community, to help Mindspring Mental Health Alliance continue our impact. If you have enjoyed our programming and have the means available, we invite you to support Mindspring with a tax-deductible contribution by December 31st, 2021.

Your donation plays a vital role in improving the quality of life for our friends, family members, and neighbors. Your donation, however large or small, will go a long way toward building a future of recovery, respect, and opportunity for anyone in need of mental health education and information.

With Warm Regards,

Thank you on behalf of the board of directors, staff, and dedicated volunteers at Mindspring Mental Health Alliance.

\$300= A week of webinars (average 1,800 participants)

\$100= A one-hour hour community education presentation (Our average webinar participation is around 600 participants)

\$50= 104 newsletters distributed

\$35= Crisis Cards for 67 people

Donate [here](#) or text "Mindspring2021" to 202-858-123

A note on our worship:

In Ankeny UCC, we encourage the **Holy Spirit** to flow in our service to all who are called to be in this place. As we get our feet under us in our return to in-person worship, we have changed some of our practices for the time being.

First, we have limited our sanctuary capacity somewhat, and **we invite you and whoever you are worshiping with to space yourselves around our pews**. Due to the ongoing pandemic, please wear a mask during the service.

Second, **we are distributing communion on the way into the sanctuary**, rather than circulating and serving communion during the liturgy. Know that no matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, the table is set for you. Likewise, **we invite you to share any offerings you may have in the plates outside the doors to the sanctuary** as you exit.

Third, **we are holding off on a return to congregational singing** during the service. We miss it, too!

Finally, it's not yet time to return to our indoor fellowship time, but invite you to socialize out of doors. **Pastor Nathan would be delighted to see you there following the service.**