

St. Vincent UCC Worship Service
First Sunday in Advent November 30, 2025
Pastor – Rev. Susan Hanson
Church Musician – Deb Rick

Musical Interlude
Ringling of the Bell
Welcome & Announcements

Prelude Music



*** Call To Worship:**

Pastor: Today we enter into the Season of Advent - a time of remembering, of waiting, of preparing. It is a time when we once again anticipate the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ.

People: It is a time when we can celebrate the gifts he brought – the gifts of Hope and Peace, of Joy and Love. **Pastor:** Then, let us begin by joining our voices together in our Affirmation of Faith ...

*** Affirmation of Faith:**

We believe in God, the creator of all things, the giver of life and breath. We believe in Jesus Christ, born Emmanuel, God with us, baptized and revealed the most beloved Son of God. He sought to heal humanity by taking our brokenness upon himself, suffering for us, dying for us, and being raised from the dead for our sake and for the sake of all the world. We believe that he will come again.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, continually poured out refreshing our lives, leading us into a new day, ever-birthing the church, the body of Christ in the world. This Spirit is our soul companion and counselor of truth - reminding us of the gift of faith, the ever presence of God, and the promise of eternal life. Thanks be to God! Amen.

Now, let us sing together our first hymn.

*** Hymn: # 88, "O Come, O Come Emmanuel"**

Please be Seated for the Lighting of our Advent Candle.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath: The Candle of Hope

Led by Kathy Strahan and Nan Holsclaw

Today is the first day of the Season of Advent. During this time, we prepare our hearts and minds for the birth of Jesus once again into the world. It is a time for us to remember that his birth was a promise God made to his people. Because of God's faithfulness in keeping his promises, we can be people of hope, even in the midst of difficult times. (Light the Candle)

So, on this day, we light the first candle in our Advent Wreath. This is the candle of hope. It is witness to our belief in God's faithfulness, the source of our hope. Let us pray together:

We thank you God, for your faithfulness to us. Help us to trust you so much that we can be a hopeful people at all times. May we become a source of hope to people everywhere who are in need and do what we can to help them. Amen.

Now, let us sing our response: (tune # 109, Away in a Manger)

**“Come surely, Lord Jesus, as dawn follows night,
Our hearts long to greet you, as roses, the light.
Salvation, draw near us, our vision engage,
One candle is lit for the hope of the age.”**

Call to Prayer: As we begin this season of anticipation, let us turn to God and seek his help in becoming all that he hopes for us this season. Let us pray together ...

Unison Prayer: Eternal God, you have done so much for us and we are grateful. Now we ask you to help us in becoming more like you. Bless us in ways that make us reflections of your good news as we anticipate again - the coming of our Savior Jesus. Amen.

Assurance: Let us rejoice for God is calling us to be his hands and heart and voices this Christmas Season! Let us respond by singing our hymn.

Hymn: # 89 “Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus”

Scripture Reading: Liturgist: Brenda McFadden

Liturgist: We now turn our hearts and minds to the reading of God’s Holy Scripture. Today’s reading comes from the first chapter of the Gospel, verses 5-25 where the Christmas story begins when the birth of John is foretold.

Let us pray: Heavenly God, you bless us with hope when we find ourselves lost in despair. Be with us in all the moments of our lives and especially as we seek to better understand your ways in the midst of today’s reading of Holy Scripture. We pray this in his in the name of your son, Jesus. Amen.

Read Luke 1: 5-25 (page 56 of the NT of the Pew Bible)

In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah. His wife, Elizabeth, was a descendant of Aaron (the brother of Moses). They were, both of them good people - righteous before God and lived faithfully, according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. But there remained a sadness in their lives, for they still had no children and their hope for one was fading – for they were getting on in years. Once when he was on duty with his fellow priests, Zechariah was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the inner sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense. While he went inside to offer the incense to God, many people stood outside praying. All was quiet in the inner sanctuary of God. But then, there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink – and even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” Zechariah said to the angel, “How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years.” The angel replied, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute - unable to speak - until the day these things occur.” Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondered at his delay in the sanctuary. When he finally did come out, he could not speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. And though he made



motions with his hands to try to explain what had happened, they did not understand him. Then, when his time of service was ended, he went home to his wife. After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she remained in seclusion. She said, "This is what the Lord has done for me when he looked favorably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people."

Liturgist: Here ends the reading of God's Holy Scripture. May God bless us with understanding and may we show our understanding in the way we live our lives. Amen.

Now, let us sing our response # 108, O Little Town of Bethlehem, verse 4.

Sung Response: # 108 O Little Town of Bethlehem" (vs. 4)

**O Holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels – the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us - Our Lord Emmanuel!**

Message: "Unexpected Blessings"

Pastoral Prayer and Lord's Prayer

Offering Invitation:

Let us bring to God all that we are and all that we have to give in the form of our morning offering.

Offertory

*** Response: # 785, "We Give You"**

**We give you but your own – whate'er the gift may be;
All that we have is yours alone – we give it gratefully.**

Prayer of Dedication:

Holy One, bless these gifts which we have brought out of gratitude to you for all you give us. We dedicate them in the name of Jesus, Amen.

*** Hymn: # 99 "Rejoice, Rejoice Believers"**

*** Benediction:** We are the children of God - nourished by his Spirit, his Love, and his Hope - gifts that we are called to share with all those whom we meet as we now go our separate ways. May we go forth to live as people of hope and love so that, through us, the world may become a better place for all people, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

*** Response: # 81, "God Be With You"**

**God be with you till we meet again. By good counsel guide uphold you. With a shepherd's care
enfold you. God be with you till we meet again. Till we meet, till we meet, till we meet at Jesus' feet.
Till we meet, till we meet, God be with you till we meet again.**

*** Postlude Music**