



**SIGN OF THINGS TO COME**

*St. Martin United Church of Christ*

*Sunday, December 2, 2018*

*Rev. Terry Minchow-Proffitt, Pastor*

*Kelly Krener, Pianist*

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*\*If able please stand.*

**Centering Words**

*When someone we love comes to visit—when a child returns home for a holiday or an old friend from far away finally comes to town—we are full of anticipation and prepare to receive our guest with joy. Maybe we clean the house and polish the silver. So it is with Advent, the season set aside by the ancient Christian communities to prepare for the mystery we are about to celebrate at Christmas: the arrival of God with us, God incarnate.*

*Today we begin our Advent journey by widening our hearts to receive **God's gift of hope**. Our hope is based on the saving sense that God is one who comes to us now; and we look forward to God's future coming in glory at the end of time.*

**Prelude**

**\*Call to Worship**

There will be signs in the heavens and distress among the nations.

**When Christ returns in power and glory people will faint with fear.**

But when you see these things, lift up your heads:

**our redemption is drawing near!**

Heaven and earth may pass away,

**but the Word of God will stand unshaken.**

**\*Hymn of Adoration**    "Because He Lives"    #447

**Call to Confession**

Jesus said, Do not let your hearts be weighed down by the sins and worries of this life, but watch and pray for the grace of God, who will save you in your time of trial. With confidence in God's mercy, let us confess our sin.

**Unison Prayer of Confession**

**Lord, have mercy on us. We are not ready for your coming. We live in sin, as though there were no justice. We live in fear, as though there were no grace. Forgive us, Lord.**

**Show us your mercy and steadfast love. Lead us in your truth, and teach us your paths, for you are the God of our salvation. Amen.**

## **Declaration of Forgiveness**

Friends, believe the good news: In Jesus Christ you are forgiven.

### **Thanks be to God.**

May the Lord guide your way, strengthen you in all holiness, and make you abound in love.

## **Greeting and Announcements**

### **\*Sharing of the Peace**

#### **Children's Time**      "Jesus Loves Me"

*As the children come forward, they are invited to place their offering in the small church at the front of the sanctuary.*

#### **Prayer Hymn**

"Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

#437

#### **Prayers and Praises of the People** (See insert)

*We invite you to fill out a prayer concern card located in the pew holder and place it in the offering plate or give to an usher. You may also light a candle at the front of the sanctuary to express the light of your prayer.*

#### **The Lord's Prayer** ("Debtors" Version)

#### **Worshiping the Lord with Tithes and Offerings**

**\* Offering Response**      "Doxology"

#### **\*Dedicatory Prayer for Our Pledges**

Creator of all, the earth is yours, the world and all who live in it.

**You have entrusted us with gifts—time, talent, energy, money—and asked us to use them to build your kingdom. With thanks and praise we respond to your call.**

We bring these gifts you have given, returning your generosity, paying it forward.

**We offer ourselves, our lives, our hopes and fears, our dollars and our hours. We commit ourselves to work for your world, to love and serve wherever you call.**

We ask your blessing on this, your church, as we seek to follow you with heart, mind, and soul.

**All: Bless also these gifts, our investment in your future, that they may multiply in faith, hope, and love. Amen.**

**Written Word:**

.Luke 21:25-36

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**The Lighting of the Hope Candle**

Diana and Allen Ross

We gather before the Hope Candle on this first Sunday of Advent.

**We need your hope, Lord. Fill us that we live lives devoted to you.**

As the first candle is lit today, imagine its light overcoming the darkness.

*(The first Advent Candle is lit)*

Dispel the darkness, Lord, both in us and in your world.

**Help us to flicker forth, to become a vital part of all you're doing to call the world toward the light. Amen.**

**Spoken Word**

“Hope!”

**Silent Reflection**

*Even in the midst of trouble and turmoil, God allows us glimpses of the kingdom to come. What signs of promise do you see that bolster your hope in a new heaven and a new earth?*

**Celebration of Communion** (see insert)

*The two center rings are grape juice. The outer ring is wine.  
We partake together.*

**\*Departing Hymn**

“My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less” #405

**\*Blessing**

**\*Benediction**

“Threefold Amen”

**Postlude**

**LEADERS TODAY**

Ushers:

Dale Rose

Fred Dishner

Reader: Diana Ross

Greeter: Bette Ford

Attendance for November 25: 69

## THIS WEEK: December 2- December 8

Today	9:30 AM	Worship with Communion
Sunday		Children's Church
	10:45 AM	Bible Study
	2:00 PM	Recital
Sunday	8:30 AM	Fellowship Hour
	9:30 AM	Worship & Children Church Bible Study

**SANCTUARY FLOWERS:** .Sponsored by Don and Better Ford.

**POINSETTIA ORDERS** due December 9. Order form is available in the narthex.

**PLEDGE CARDS:** Please place your pledge card in the offering plate. There are extra cards in the narthex. If you forgot, we will accept the cards the next several weeks.

**DATES TO REMEMBER:** December 9 Christmas Fund Offering  
December 15 Caroling  
December 16 Christmas Program  
December 24 Christmas Eve Worship 5:00  
December 29 Non-Trad. Service & Lunch

**ANNUAL REPORTS DUE** December 26

**ADOPT- A-FAMILY:** Our church prepares baskets for 5 families as part of Feed My People Adopt-A-Family program. We include all nonperishable food items, paper goods, health care products and a small gift for each family member. This year we have 15 family members. We will be packing these baskets on December 16<sup>th</sup> after the Christmas party. Please consider helping with this project.

**IF YOU NEED TO CONTACT:** Pastor Terry: 314-304-6818; email: [thechickentrain@gmail.com](mailto:thechickentrain@gmail.com).

**NURSERY:** Nursery is now available for children to go to immediately following children's time.

**DONATION:** You can donate to the church on our website <http://stmartinucc-hr.com>. Click on "Members" to find the donation page and other resources.

**SCHNUCK'S SCRIPTS** cards are available on the table in the narthex. St. Martin receives 1-3% profit from this fundraising effort.

**BIRTHDAYS:** Jim LaJeunesse (12/3), Lexi Vanover 12/6)

**ANNIVERSARIES:** Dale & Terri Rose (12/3)

Connect with St. Martin: Address: 3229 High Ridge Blvd., High Ridge, MO 63049 Phone Number: 636-677-5602 website: [stmartinucc-hr.com](http://stmartinucc-hr.com).

Churchline and bulletins are available for viewing.

## Sign of Things to Come

### *First Night of Hanukkah*

Portents of the end of everything doesn't sound much like a Christmas story, does it? This year the lectionary starts Advent off with a bang by not so much predicting an apocalypse but making sure we understand what the signs of its appearance will be. Luke's Gospel tells us that the skies will burst and the countries of the world, all the nations, will be in anguish. People will be anxious and despairing. Everything will be shaken to its core. The next sign, the one that would be hard to miss, according to Luke's Gospel and the book of Daniel, will be Jesus riding on a cloud and shining with all his glory. You would especially pay attention if you saw this because, according to this Gospel, it would signal the entrance of a new world.

In Jesus' day, living in his world meant being part of the Roman Empire; an empire with extreme income inequality, and oppressive forces pushing down both on the poor and the foreign born. The new world this passage envisions, is one where the poor will not be hungry, equality and compassion will rule and everything hopeful will be revealed in every corner of every street everywhere. Another way of imaging this can be stated this beautiful way: "Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing." (Arundhati Roy)

The apocalypse, then, signals not only an end but also a beginning. According to the book of Revelation it will herald a time when the world will change dramatically...for the good, for the just, for the end of sorrow, for the defeat of greed and the end to all those things that keep people from seeing each other as they are. The new world will truly be a Just World for All!

The birth we anticipate, the baby in the manger, is a glimpse of that new world...the hope of all. It is the great purpose of the church to be a place where we can hear the breathing of that new world. The world outside our congregations might feel hopeless. It may feel like evil powers are in control disregarding human beings, creating an order that feeds on greed and corruption and the extremes of inequality. But the church as the body of Christ houses hope itself. It's here, where we worship, that love is made visible, especially those three loves that the UCC holds dear: Love of Neighbor, Love of Children, Love of Creation. This Advent be mindful of how making love visible recharges our communities with possibility and infuses our world with resilience in times of trouble. This is the great work of the church – to make Christ visible, always.



## The Celebration of Communion

### The Great Thanksgiving

Lift up your hearts!

**We lift them up to God!**

Celebrate God's love!

**It is right to give our thanks and praise!**

We give thanks and praise to you,

God of love and grace! **Amen.**

Lord of our hope, we return to your Table this morning. We know that your world is both beautiful and troubling. Teach us to stay hopeful and eager.

Keep us prayerful, so that even as our world is shaken, we will not be consumed with fear. Awaken us when we slumber, sharpen us when we are dull of heart. All praise and gratitude to the One who comes! **Lord, may it be. Amen.**

### Words of Institution

And so, God, we remember Jesus' words of self-giving love.

How on the night of betrayal and desertion, Jesus took bread, gave you thanks, broke the bread, and gave it to his disciples, saying: "Take, eat, this is my body, broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way, Jesus also took the cup, after supper, saying: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

### Behold the Mystery

Called to remember these acts whenever we eat and drink, as we partake in remembrance of these gifts as we proclaim the mystery of our faith.

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

## Prayers and Praises

Merciful God, you call us to be alert and alive to your coming Presence. You encourage us with signs of your coming and urge us to keep watch. Watching and waiting, we pray for this world that needs your saving power.

For nations at war,

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For all who suffer from violence, in the streets or in their homes,

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For all who live in worry, loneliness, or fear,

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For all who have forgotten your path of righteousness,

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those who need to hear of your rescuing love,

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, for these specific concerns that we carry in our hearts . . .

*(Please feel free to mention any concerns you may have.)*

Lord, for these praises in our hearts . . .

*(Please feel free to mention any praises you may have.)*

Now, by the power of your Spirit, make us ever more faithful. May your peace, your gentleness, and your strength accompany us wherever you take us, filling us with your hope,.

Now, let us pray as Jesus taught us, *Our Father* . . .

## **Prayer Concerns**

December 2, 2018

**Homebound:** Virginia Ahlvers, Hazel Rose, Dee and Dave St. Clair, Joan Roth

**Ongoing Health Issues:** Mary Ann Potthoff, Judy Cope, Ruth Hart, Michael Patrick, Joy and Nick Coffey, Cathy Hartig

**Surgeries and Recovery:** Cory Callahan, Terri Rose, Dottie Varner's mother, Lil Garig (a broken leg), Carol Stoval (broken hip and surgery)

**Cancer:** Steve Burner, Rhonda Crawford, Treva Singleton, Dan Manson's granddaughter Rachel, Teri Finan's niece Molly Dignan (leukemia), Colleen Ramatowski, Warren McGraw, Ed Holke, Darrell Manson, Jordan Jeffries (8 year-old, brain cancer), Sandy Earlywine

**Grieving:** York Family (loss of Keith), Hussung Family (loss of Marsha), Reeves Family (loss of Carol), Murphy Family (loss of Allen), Richardson Family (loss of Matthew)

### **Other Concerns:**

Mike Dickey, care for his parents

Kelly and Steven Dunn as they adopt a child from the Ukraine

For the rising hatred and division our nation

Dale Oetjen

California wildfires recovery