

MESSENGERS OF
HOPE



Thank you for worshipping with us this morning. We extend a special welcome to our guests.

For Children: Please feel free to attend services with your children. For the safety of the children, staff and volunteers ERUCC will not be providing childcare during services until further notice. Your children are welcome to bring their own quiet activities, no materials will be provided. Please take ALL personal items with you after the service.



We have removed all items from the pew racks for your safety. Music selections will be provided within this bulletin. If you are visiting and did not stop at the welcome desk in the downstairs lobby please stop by after the service they would love to meet you or, please feel free to reach out to someone sitting near you and ask them questions about the service or church. Many of our visitors ask us about the time of offering. This is a time in our service when we respond to God's gifts of love by offering the gifts of our lives. For many of us, this is when we make a financial gift towards the ministries and programs of our church. We also use this time to ask God how we might use the gifts of our hands and hearts in sharing God's love. If you are visiting, there is no obligation to give a financial gift. We are just glad you are worshipping with us. At this time we are taking offering at the end of the service. Plates will be placed at the doors as you exit the sanctuary, Thank you.

We ask that you please silence your cell phones during our worship service. We also ask that you refrain from applause after our choirs sing and allow the music to resonate in the quiet of the sanctuary and in your hearts. Our musicians are playing and singing for the glory of God. They know you appreciate their efforts and their gift.

Rest rooms (equipped with changing stations) are located on the first floor of the church building and outside the Community Room and the Nursery.

There is much information about the church in this bulletin and our website: www.erucc.org.

Donate online by scanning this code:

or you may use our new texting donation system. Send a donation amount to 301-804-2933 . You will receive a text back within minutes with a link. Click the secure link and provide your method of payment and a receipt will be sent to you! Or, download the GivePlus Church application and make your donation via the app.



Thank you.

EVANGELICAL REFORMED CHURCH

United Church of Christ

- An Open and Affirming Congregation -

December 6, 2020

Second Sunday of Advent

10:30 a.m.

*All who are able may stand. **Bold** print indicates responses by all
Hymns are printed at the end of the bulletin

Greetings and Announcements

Prelude

*Call to Worship *after Isaiah 40: 1-11*

Listen! The voice of God calls out across the ages.

**We hear and respond. We rise up to worship God
from the valleys, the mountains, and the plains.**

Like a shepherd God leads us and tenderly gathers us together.

Comfort, comfort O my people, says our God of love.

The grass withers and the flower fades;

But the word of our God will stand forever!

*Opening Prayer

God

You call to us from the wild places,

You call to us from the inner chambers of our hearts.

We come in answer to your call.

We come to pray, to praise,

To learn of your love for all creation.

Reveal your glory that we may see it together -

Inform and inspire us to seek your kingdom on earth in our time. Amen.

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Mark Ulrich and Darryl Glick

Advent is a season of waiting: waiting for the hope, peace, joy, and love of God to break into our lives anew through the story of the birth of Jesus, and through acts of hope, peace, joy, and love.

Today we light the second candle, the candle of peace.

We wait –

We wait

not because we do not know the story of Jesus, and not because you are not already and always here.

We wait
because to wait
is to expect something more.
To wait is to expect that the story
might enter our hearts
and our world
in new ways,
to bring the change for which we long.

As we light the candle of peace
we remember the stories
of times you have been our comfort,
when you have heard our cries for justice,
for certainty, for peace,
and you have led us home;
and we know we can trust that you
are leading us forward,
as we wait for peace to be born, anew, in us.

***Opening Hymn** *Comfort, Comfort O My People*

101

See back of bulletin

***Call to Confession**

***Prayer of Confession** *(after Psalm 85: 1-2, 8-13)*

God is love;
the omnipotent and compassionate parent
that holds the world tenderly in a warm embrace.
God desires that we love each other
as a mother loves her child, as a father embraces his own.

**All too often we fail in our efforts
to live as God would have us live.**

We push away turning cold shoulders to God and each other.

**We express anger and resentment
instead of compassion and grace.**

We seek revenge instead of reconciliation.

In these moments we ask God

to forgive us and set us upon the right path. *Silent prayer*

***Assurance of Pardon**

When we turn to God with faithful hearts,
God hears and responds.
Our failings and shortcomings are forgiven.
Steadfast love and faithfulness meet;
righteousness and peace kiss each other.
God gives what is good and spreads the path of righteousness before us.
Walk in confidence forgiven and forgiving in Christ's name. **Amen**

Thought For the Day

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, for ever. Amen.**

The Scriptures

Isaiah 40:1-11

Mark 1:1-8

Reader: The Word of God for the people of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Prayers of the People

Offering of Tithes, Gifts and Lives to Christ's Service

Anthem *The Call*

*- R. Vaughn Williams, arr. D.E. Wagner
ERUCC Singers*

SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation to the Table

The prophets foretold it: the desert burst into bloom.
Angelic messengers delivered news:
a priest lost his speech; a young woman found her voice.
In this season of Advent, the scriptures revive old stories

and bring new understandings.
In the face of critics and skeptics,
our faith cries out, resilient,
like a baby from a manger bed.
From that Bethlehem beginning,
Jesus, baptized in the Jordan, spent his life serving others
that all might know the compassionate attention of a loving God.
Today, Jesus serves us yet again,
as we gather at this Table he prepares for us.

Communion Prayer

Dear Jesus of Advent,
You remain a sacred mystery to us.
You have brought Good News for all the people
and we will not be afraid, for you are here.
We are hungry for your love
which surpasses all our understanding;
we are thirsty for your spirit that never runs dry.
In this meal nourish our souls,
feed our minds, quench our deepest longings and
forgive our transgressions,
that we may glorify you every day of our lives. Amen.

Blessing of the Bread and Cup

Sharing of the Meal

***Prayer of Thanksgiving**

**Holy Creator, Bread of Life, Everlasting Salvation,
A light shines in the night and the night will not over come it.
In this meal we have been replenished and strengthened,
the light of your love rekindled within.
We will be bold to carry this light into the world.
Thank you for recharging our batteries
and reviving your ambient glow within us.
You are the power source that never gives out
- eternally renewable and sustainable.
Thank you God
Thank you Christ
Thank you Spirit. Amen.**

***Benediction**

Go from this place in the spirit of God's peace.

**Through deserts or valleys,
we take God's message of peace to the world.**

Go from this place in the spirit of God's love.

**Over high mountains or level plains,
We spread the compassionate love of God.**

A voice says, "Cry out!" What shall we cry?

**God's love goes with us!
God's peace will guide us! Amen.**

***Postlude**



Worship Notes: **Service Prayers for the Second Sunday of Advent**, was written by the Rev. Penny L. Lowes, an ordained pastor in the United Church of Christ and has served three UCC churches in Michigan. The Advent Candle lighting liturgy is from Seasons of the Spirit.



Every Sunday at 10:30

<https://boxcast.tv/channel/bziah0xyyacgq5fmjnoi>

Want to listen to the sermon again? Visit our YouTube channel:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9_hGBb5tBHeZuvqBvSbX5w

You can get to the link on our homepage at www.erucc.org

The flowers on the altar this morning are placed in loving memory of their parents by Dan Smith and Austin Byrd.

The **yellow rose bud** on the stand is memory of Maj. Megan M. L. McClung, USMC, KIA in Al Anbar, Iraq on December 6, 2006 by Tom and Evie Frazier

Prayer List - Please remember the following people in your prayers this week: Cathie Duncan, Starr Schaeberle, Anne Hoffmann, Lauren Jenkins (niece of Donna Logee), Ro Higinbotham, The McCarty family, Nikki Keller, Tamara Tamas, Barbara Lee (sister of Milt Crutchley), Alyce Schmid (sister of Dennie Schmid), Lois Wilson (Dan Smith's aunt), Jerry Cassell (brother of Ave Barr), Tina Prescott (daughter in law of Barbara and Bill Prescott), Mary Remsberg,) Susan Matesa (friend of Dan Smith & Austin Byrd), Larry Maples, Jane Doll, Susan McCauley (niece of Jack Stush), Heleen (sister of Karin Mens), Kathy Blue Shores (friend of Jean Fish and Barb Biser), Terry Smiley (uncle of Scott Smiley), Shawn Smiley (cousin of Scott Smiley), Joe Jahoda (Kim Jahoda's dad), Gretchen Manuel (niece of Audrey Rayfield), Ann and Cal Theiss (parents of Katharine Alley), Frank Tymczyszyn (brother in law of Nancy Jones), Debra Reedy (friend of Jean Fish and Barb Biser), Jess Pautz (friend of Sean Sexton).

We ask you to remember all of those currently serving in the Armed Forces. Your prayers and cards are welcomed and appreciated by those on our prayer list.

Worship Next Week: [Ctrl + Click HERE to join worship Sunday 10:30 a.m.](#)

Sunday, December 13 **Third Sunday in Advent**

Isaiah the prophet beautifully portrays that day of deliverance when God will come and deliver suffering Israel in Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11. Isaiah's is the same promise that Jesus will use for his first sermon in Nazareth in Luke's Gospel. God sends forth good news, especially to the oppressed, the broken-hearted, the prisoners, and the poor. In the final verses, Isaiah breaks forth into a song of hope. The Gospel lesson is from Luke 1: 46b-55 and is known as the *Magnificat* or Mary's Song.

Wednesday Advent Services Via Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83151572425?pwd=emJjL25DV2dtSVBLOWI3WIFkRTdtZz09>

Meeting ID: 831 5157 2425 **Passcode: 812725**

December 2, 9, 16, and 23

12 noon – 12:15 p.m. Service of Prayer

12:15 – 1 pm Lunch and Reflection

Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas

We will gather in person and virtually for prayer and reflection on the names for Jesus. In *Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas*, best-selling author Adam Hamilton examines the names of Christ used by the gospel writers, exploring the historical and personal significance of his birth.

In the face of uncertainty and conflict, Christians reclaim the Christ Child who brings us together, heals our hearts, and calls us to bring light into the darkness.

This resource is also being used for Tuesday morning Bible Study and will enrich the conversation on Wednesdays.

December 9 The Savior and Our Need for Saving

December 16 Emmanuel in the Midst of a Pandemic

December 23 Light of the World, Word of God and Lord

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

A response card for Christmas Eve services will be included in the worship packets being delivered at the end of November. In our re-opening guidelines, we can host 100 people in the Sanctuary and another 50 in the Community Room. You will be invited to complete the card and let us know whether you are interested in worshipping, in person, on Christmas Eve.

Thursday, December 24 **Christmas Eve Services**

5:30 p.m. Children's Service in the main sanctuary (also live streamed)

7:30 p.m. Candlelight & Carol Service in the main sanctuary (also live streamed)

10:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Communion Service (Trinity Chapel)

Longest Night Service in the Main Sanctuary/Live Streamed

Thursday, December 17 at 7:30 p.m.

The holiday season can be filled with excitement and anticipation. As the days grow shorter and the nights longer, we await the birth of the Christ Child within us. However, the holidays can also be a time of sadness, stress, and busy-ness that leave little room for praise and thanksgiving. The death of a loved one, the end of a relationship, recovery from addiction, illness, and financial struggles all mirror the lengthening of the nights at this time of the year.

There will be gentle music, readings, and a time for quiet reflection.

SUNDAY SCHOOL Join us for Zoom Sunday School for Children/Youth at 9:30 a.m.

Kindergarten thru 4th grade Sunday School Teachers: Dawn Lagrotteria and Kim Sexton

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89653038025?pwd=djRPU05TNDFYczFMVUdOVzdmWnpuUT09>

Meeting ID: 896 5303 8025

Passcode: 667229

5th - 7th Grade Sunday School Teachers: Kathryn King, Arthur Slade and Jim Weitz

<https://zoom.us/j/92955152861?pwd=VStwT3ZISDILOVhhTWJRdTB0aHRyUT09>

Meeting ID: 929 5515 2861

Passcode: hpQSF1

High School Teachers: Pastor Daniel, Stephanie Sites and Glenn Wallace

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84314617999?pwd=Rkd1N2JyZDFHdmtPY1BMTitkUzhUdz09>

Meeting ID: 843 1461 7999

Passcode: 979546

DECEMBER CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, December 13 at 11:30 am

Participate In person in the Community Room or via Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89756497994?pwd=QjQwcZr2anhOVmF2R3FDeVA0L2RmUT09>

Meeting ID: 897 5649 7994

Passcode: 642147

The Consistory hopes that you will be present for the annual meeting at which time the annual budget will be shared. In addition, there will be an extensive report on the much needed repairs to preserve our beautiful buildings. **YOU ARE THE CHURCH** and we need your participation!!

TUESDAYS WITH TED TUESDAY, December 8 from 6 to 7 p.m.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/92398918264?pwd=SIVFYzNKUklpczJsMElnOTdtRVdvZz09>

Meeting ID: 923 9891 8264

Password: 313735

“What Does It Take to Change A Mind” with Lucinda Beaman

“A man convinced against his will is of his opinion still”. Ever tried to change a person’s mind when they weren’t really that convinced? Impossible, right? As fact check editor at The Conversation, Lucinda Beaman sees first-hand the conflict between facts and beliefs. She offers a framework for understanding how we process information and how we can connect with those who disagree with us.

**ADVENT BIBLE STUDY WITH PASTOR DANIEL
INCARNATION: REDISCOVERING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRISTMAS**

Tuesdays at 11 am

Via Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/608416206?pwd=NzFtVUsxUmQ5eGpxMmk4WDB6Z0lUUT09>

Password: 588188

His parents gave him the name Jesus. But the prophets, the shepherds, the wise men, and the angels addressed him by other names. They called him Lord, Messiah, Savior, Emmanuel, Light of the World, and Word Made Flesh.

In *Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas*, best-selling author Adam Hamilton examines the names of Christ used by the gospel writers, exploring the historical and personal significance of his birth.

In the face of uncertainty and conflict, Christians reclaim the Christ Child who brings us together, heals our hearts, and calls us to bring light into the darkness. Now more than ever, you are invited to reflect upon the significance of the Christ-child for our lives and world today.

December 1	Session 1	Presidents and Kings
December 8	Session 2	The Savior and Our Need for Saving
December 15	Session 3	Emmanuel in the Midst of a Pandemic
December 22	Session 4	Light of the World, Word of God and Lord

THURSDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY from 7-8 pm

The Gospel of Mark

Meeting ID: 896 7236 9983

Password: 427069

(If you are interested in participating in this study, contact the church office for the materials)

A Listen Up! Bible Study from UCC Still Speaking writer, Talitha Arnold.

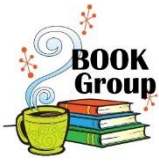
Mark's Gospel, the shortest of the four Gospels, gets right to the point and tells us what mattered most to the earliest of Christians.

Mark didn't have the time or want to take the time, to deal with anything that didn't draw a straight line from Jesus' baptism to the empty tomb. His goal is to get this good news down on papyrus and out to people now, before it lost its urgency, before any more people died or drifted away from this new faith.

Mark is a bare-bones Gospel with a raw faith. From the very beginning of his Gospel, Mark has one purpose – to show us that this Jesus Christ was the One. The One who truly was, as the Roman centurion proclaimed at the cross when Jesus breathed his last, the "Son of God."

Mark seeks to strengthen his readers, and us, in that faith. From the very first verse, his focus is on the good news that this Jesus is who he said he was – the One worth listening to, the One worth following, the One worth giving your life for. This is the Jesus we meet in the pages of Mark.

December 10	Lesson 5	Mark 6 and 7	BREAK FOR CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR
January 7	Lesson 6	Mark 8	



ERUCC BOOK GROUP 2020

Join the Conversation Via Zoom Call at 7 pm
Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89969287938?pwd=eGhQaDJlVVkzazhOZldqd3pFN3pqQT09>

Meeting ID: 899 6928 7938

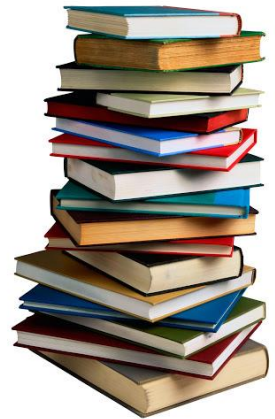
Password: 685141

December 7

***Seasoned with Grace: Recipes from My Generation of Shaker Cooking* by Eldress Bertha Lindsay (Author), Mary Rose Boswell (Foreword)**

We have a special December book group gathering on Monday, December 7 at 7pm via Zoom. Our dear Mary Boswell has copies of a book she wrote in 1987, and it received a national award. It's an easy read, about the Canterbury, NH, Shakers, a celibate, Christian sect that started in the 18th century. A few remaining Shakers live in Maine. It is the memoirs of the Lead Eldress, who was an orphan and was dropped off at the village as a young girl. She had trouble with her sight, and was not considered to be bright. As all young girls did growing up there, she learned many tasks, but excelled in the area of cooking. Her stories are centered around food, and there are several recipes from the 18th century to the 20th. There are many photographs.

Please contact Pastor Daniel for a copy of the book.



ERUCC BOOK GROUP 2021

January 26	The Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan
February 23	City of Girls by Elizabeth Gilbert
March 23	Tending Roses by Lisa Wingate
April 27	Breath: The New Science of a Lost Art by James Nestor
May 25	The Island of Sea Women by Lisa See
June 22	The Five Wishes of Mr. Murray McBride by Joe Siple
July 27	The Dutch House by Ann Patchett
August 24	The Orphan's Tale by Pam Jenoff
September 28	American Dirt by Jeanine Cummins
October 26	This Tender Land by William Kent Krueger
November 30	Unorthodox: The Scandalous Rejection of My Hasidic Roots by Deborah Feldman

COVID Support-Encouragement Group

The class is called "Surviving and Thriving During the Covid Virus." The virus pandemic has been difficult for everyone. This group will provide a safe place to talk about what it's like to go through the pandemic. The group will meet the first and third Tuesdays of each month from 2-3 pm. It is a drop-in group, no preparation needed. Joan and Allen Maples will be hosting the group using Zoom, For additional information please contact Allen Maples at allen.maples@gmail.com or call 301-663-5351.

Join us for Christmas Bingo

You will need a bingo card for each person playing and bingo markers (pennies, buttons, M&M's) Bingo cards can be printed from the church website or you can contact Kim Sexton at ksexton@ERUCC.org and I will get one to you

Topic: ERUCC Christmas Bingo

Time: Dec 13, 2020 04:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86295489396?pwd=aWkzR1M3bWIwczZFalYxR2Y5blFEZ09>

Meeting ID: 862 9548 9396

Passcode: 374103

Green Team News

Spiritual Walk at Gambrill State Park TODAY Sunday December 6 2:00 - 3:30 pm

Join us for our third Spiritual Walk on Sunday December 6 from 2:00 -3:30 pm at Gambrill State Park. We will reflect on the blessings of air and rock as we travel along the mountaintop trail. There are several spots where we can stop to reflect on the panoramic views of the Middletown Valley and Frederick. While the terrain is rocky, the trail is relatively flat and the distance is short. All are welcome. Dress in layers as it is usually colder and windier on the ridge than in town.



Directions: Take Rosemont west out of Frederick. Turn left on Montevue Lane.

Continue on to Shookstown Rd. Turn right onto Gambrill Park Rd. Drive on the park road to the top of the mountain. Turn left and go to the end of the parking area. We will meet in the parking lot near the Tea Room. 8602 Gambrill Park Rd, Frederick, MD 21702

Stay Connected and Get Informed!

There are many ways to receive information about what is happening at church each week. The weekly bulletin, the weekly informational email, and our monthly newsletter, The Trinity Chimes, Facebook, and Instagram. @eruccfred

Thursday Thoughts-A weekly emailed message that shares updates, highlights the upcoming service's scripture and focus, and includes announcements about Sunday School. To sign up to receive Thursday Thoughts, contact Amy Aguilar at 301-662-2762 or aaguilar@erucc.org and share your preferred email address.

Trinity Chimes—ERUCC's monthly newsletter. A more in-depth look on what's happening with the congregation. How we're reaching out, learning and volunteer opportunities, member and social program updates. Receive Trinity Chimes by email! Contact Amy Aguilar at 301-662-2762 or aaguilar@erucc.org to request to be added. (Paper copies also available upon request.)



Ministers - All the People of Evangelical Reformed Church

Rev. Dr. Barbara Kershner Daniel, Senior Pastor (bkdaniel@erucc.org)

Rev. Fred Wenner, Pastor Emeritus (faw500@msn.com)

Kim Sexton, Associate for Children's Ministry (ksexton@erucc.org)

Alison E. Shafer, Music Director • Tricia Coffey, Head Chimer & Children & Youth Choir Director

Sherry Murray, Nursery • Jaci Clayton, Facilities Mgr.

Amy Aguilar, Office Administrator (erucc@erucc.org) • Jenna Duranko, Social Media Coordinator

15 West Church Street, Frederick, MD 21701 • (ph) 301-662-2762 • www.erucc.org



Now Available!

November 2020

Excited to reveal the 275th Anniversary commemorative ornament, featuring Trinity Chapel's beautiful stained glass window.

This miniature, just 2"x3" in size, reproduces the historic window on glass, with a metal frame and hanger. Now available for sale at \$15 each, your purchase supports the *Preserving Our History* campaign. All funds raised through the sale of the miniature windows go directly into our historic building preservation fund.

Just 200 boxed miniatures were ordered, the shipment is here, and they are available for purchase today. Use the order form below, or contact ERUCC to submit your request.

A sincere thank you to Jeff Schaeberle whose photograph of the stained glass window was used to create this miniature. His talents shine brightly at ERUCC!

Yes! I/We want to order the miniature of Trinity Chapel's stained glass window

Quantity: _____ @ \$15 each * = \$ _____

How would you like to receive them? Pick up from church

Deliver with my next envelope Other _____

I/We would like to make an additional donation to the 275th Campaign this year \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

* 100% of your purchase is a donation to ERUCC's *Preserving Our History* campaign! The cost of the ornaments has been underwritten so that all purchases support the anniversary campaign.

Thank you!

EVANGELICAL REFORMED CHURCH | UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

15 West Church Street, Frederick, MD 21701 | 301-662-2762 ♦ Fax 301-695-2578 ♦ www.erucc.org

Comfort, Comfort O My People

Isa. 40:1-8

Johannes Olearius, 1671

Transl. Catherine Winkworth, 1863; alt.

1 "Com - fort, com-fort O my peo - ple, tell of peace," thus says our God;
 2 For the her - ald's voice is call - ing in the des - ert far and near,
 3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er pla - ces plain!

Com-fort those whose hearts are shroud-ed, mourn-ing un - der sor-row's load.
 Bid-ding us to make re - pen - tance since the realm of God is here.
 Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, for Mes - si - ah's ho - ly reign.

Speak un - to Je - ru - sa - lem of the peace that waits for them;
 Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre-pare for God a way;
 For God's glo - ry ev - er-more shall be known o'er all the world;

Tell them that their sins I cov - er, and their war-fare now is o - ver.
 Let the val - leys rise in meet-ing and the hills bow down in greet - ing.
 And all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

Written for John the Baptist's Day, June 24, this hymn clearly reflects the Isaiah text. Johannes Olearius, a Lutheran pastor, held a faculty appointment at Wittenberg University as well as church administration positions in his region.

Tune: PSALM 42 8.7.8.7.7.8.8.
 (FREU DICH SEHR)
 Trente quatre Pseumes, Geneva, 1551

Let There Be Light, O God of Hosts

William M. Vories, 1908; alt.

1 Let there be light, O God of hosts!
 2 With - in our pas - sioned hearts in - still
 3 Give us the peace of sens - es clear
 4 Let woe and waste of war - fare cease,

Let there be wis - dom on the earth!
 the calm that ends all strain and strife;
 to know our neigh - bors' good our own;
 that use - ful la - bor yet may build

Let broad hu - man - i - ty have birth!
 Make us your min - is - ters of life;
 To hope and suf - fer not a - lone,
 Its homes with love and laugh - ter filled!

Let there be deeds, in - stead of boasts!
 purge us from lusts that curse and kill!
 bond - ed in love that con - quers fear!
 God, give your way - ward chil - dren peace!

William Vories, founder of the vast, interdenominational Omi Mission in Japan, wrote this hymn as a response to the rising threat of German militarism in 1908. It exemplifies the vision of world peace and unity Vories strove to promote through his lifelong missionary work.

Tune: PENTECOST L.M.
 William Boyd, 1864

Messengers of Hope

The prophets are not always easy company. As a body, they would be difficult dinner companions. It's hard to imagine them sitting down to conversation about the weather or kindly inquiries about how the grandchildren are doing. Others shake hands politely. They blow raspberries.

The prophets calling and passion is to reveal the truth that God has shown them. Most of their listeners, in their time and ours, would rather have their truths served with a sugar coating. So, the prophets rarely win any "likeability" polls.

But if you can handle your truth served rare and with minimal dressing, the prophets are bracing conversation partners. Their bluntness springs from a deep and always unsatisfied yearning to bring everyone closer to God. And yet, sometimes, the poets surprise with an after-dinner song of joy.

Today, in the fortieth chapter of the book of Isaiah, the prophet leaves behind his fiery ranting and offers words which at last sound less like a lecture and more like a lullaby. Maybe this comfort, this intimacy with God is what the prophets had in mind all along. Can you listen past their prickly rhetoric to hear what they really want for those who listen - in their time and in ours?

Comfort, comfort my people,
says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem

Today, on this second Sunday of Advent, listen! There are prophets speaking in your city, in your county, in your church. Sometimes those prophets are cranky. Sometimes they stick out their tongues instead of smiling. Sometimes they lecture, rather than hum lullabies. And that lecture can feel like it's really close to home.

But you'll know a true prophet by this. That their words bring you ever closer and more intimately into relationship with a God who wants nothing more than to know and be known.



8 1/2" x 14" UCC SUNDAY BULLETIN SERVICE

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