



FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT – PONDER
NOVEMBER 29, 2020
11:00 AM

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AKRON

*So now we pause.
Still. Ponder. Hush. Wait.
Each day of Advent, God gives you the gift of time,
so you have time to be still and wait.*

Ann Voskamp, adapted

PRELUDE *Once in Royal David's City* arr. Gordon Young

WELCOME & CALL TO WORSHIP

HYMN *When God is a Child* Tune: MOON BEAMS

**Hope is a star that shines in the night,
leading us on still 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.

**Peace is a ribbon that circles the earth,
giving a promise of safety and worth. Refrain**

**Joy is a song that welcomes the dawn,
telling the world that the Savior is born. Refrain**

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

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE

SUNG RESPONSE *Prepare the Way of the Lord* Anna Laura Page

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

THOUGHTS FOR THE YOUNG

ANTHEM *Prepare the Royal Highway* Kenneth Kosche

INVITATION TO PRAYER

PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER (*please use the language most familiar to you*)

**Our Father, which 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.**

READING FROM THE EPISTLE

Ephesians 5:15-31

Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.

READING FROM THE GOSPEL

Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

SERMON

Ponder While You Wait

OFFERING

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

Michael Praetorius

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the vital and ongoing ministries and missions of First Church
or mail your donation to 292 East Market Street, Akron OH 44308*

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

HYMN

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

Tune: HYFRYDOL

**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.**

**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 sufficient merit raise us to your glorious throne.**

BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

Rejoice and Sing

Anna Laura Page

POSTLUDE

From Heaven Above to Earth I Come

arr. Gordon Young

LEADING WORSHIP TODAY

Rev. Nanette Pitt, Senior Minister

Rev. Antigóné Lowery, Associate Minister

Julie Lehman, Choir Director and Organist

Amanda-Joyce Abbott, Tim Borham, Nicholas Campagna, and Stephanie Corbin, Instrumentalists and Vocalists

Karen Bruno and Brenda Waddell, Advent Candle Lighters