



First Congregational United Church of Christ

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[@FirstCongregationalUCCWaterlooIowa/](https://www.instagram.com/FirstCongregationalUCCWaterlooIowa/)

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 18, 2022



Worship Leader

Barb Mardis

Director of Music

Luke Overton

Organist

Hudson Lourenço-Feld

Guest Preacher

Rev. James Altenbaumer

Director of Youth

Abbie Chronister

Office Manager

Michelle Wolfe

Custodian

Kyle Lindaman

*No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here.*

Prelude

Hymn Improvisation

Hudson Lourenço-Feld

Welcome & Announcements

Barb Mardis

Call to Worship

Barb Mardis

Leader: We are courageous

All: When we are vulnerable.

Leader: We are courageous

All: When we are honest with ourselves.

Leader: We are courageous

All: When we extend words of welcome.

Leader: We are courageous

All: When we invite others to sit with us.

Leader: We are courageous

All: When we proclaim the love of God to a broken world.

Leader: We are courageous

All: When we say that love cannot wait.

Leader: So let us be courageous

All: Let us worship Holy God.

***Prayer of Invocation** (*unison*)

Rev. Jim Altenbaumer

Gracious God, we long to be as courageous as Joseph—Brave enough to trust Your call, And strong enough to hold onto one another. There are so many places in the world that could use our courage. You know them, but we do too. So when fear takes over, forgive us. When our knees shake and our words fail, forgive us. When self-hatred is easier than self-love, forgive us. When walls are more convenient than peace, forgive us. When pessimism is more convenient than hope, forgive us. When our comfort is more important than our neighbor, forgive us. You invite us to be courageous. Forgive us. Amen.

***Words of Assurance**

Rev. Altenbaumer

An angel said to Zechariah—an angel said to Mary—an angel said to the shepherds—an angel says to us: “Fear not! Your prayer has been heard. You have found favor with God. I bring you good news of great joy: To you is born a Savior. Go forth with courageous love, and be good news to all you meet.

***Hymn**

Now Bless the God of Israel

#110 (NCH - Black)

Lighting of the Advent Candle

(Love Can't Wait)

Jennifer Thompson & Eva Sapp

Children's Skit

“How the Grinch Found the Christ in Christmas”

Original tale by Dr. Seuss / Adapted as a religious Christmas program by Valerie Lynch

Joys & Concerns

Barb Mardis

Prayers of the People & Lord's Prayer

Rev. Altenbaumer

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, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Invitation to Offertory

Barb Mardis

Offertory

Chancel Choir

***Doxology**

#515 (Pilgrim - Red)

***Prayer of Dedication**

Barb Mardis

Scripture Reading

Matthew 1:18-25

Barb Mardis

***Hymn**

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

#116, vs. 1, 6 & 7
(NCH - Black)

Message

"When God Is With Us"

Rev. Altenbaumer

***Hymn**

Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates

#117 (NCH - Black)

Benediction

Rev. Altenbaumer

Postlude

Hymn Improvisation

Hudson Lourenço-Feld

* You are invited to Stand

(Hearing assistance devices are available in the cabinet in the back of the sanctuary.)

Childcare for students up to 5th grade is provided after the Children's Skit through the end of service. We welcome your child(ren) to follow youth staff to the childcare room (located at the bottom of the steps closest to the sanctuary) at the conclusion of the skit.