St. John United Church of Christ
First Sunday of Advent
November 29, 2026 8:30 a.m.
Pastor: Rev. Lynn Martin

The Advent liturgy for the lighting of the Advent Candle has been taken from materials from The Moravian Church.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT-HOPE

One: Today, we begin our celebration of Advent. For the next four Sundays, we will eagerly anticipate the gift that is ours in Jesus Christ. To guide us through this Advent season, we will use the candles arranged in this wreath to help us remember that Jesus is the light of the world. On this first Sunday of Advent, we light the candle of hope.

Many: We rejoice that in Jesus Christ, God is with us, Immanuel.

(The first candle is lit)

One: Hope is our assurance that God is with us even in the darkest of times, times facing uncertainty–the unknown.

Many: Hope is our confidence that God's presence is felt around the world through the work of the Church. Gracious God, help each of us to bring hope into the lives of others.

One: Hope is our belief that the promises of God are fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Many: God is our hope today and forever! Thanks be to God for this indescribable gift!

One: God created and named all of creation good. Jesus reminds us about the goodness found in the world. He talked about birds, flowers, sheep, seeds, water and trees. He reminded people that creation is a gift.

Many: God cares about the needs of creation. The earth gives us clean water to drink, air to breathe, food to eat and animals and plants to protect.

One: God asks us to live gently with the earth and with each other.

Many: This is how we take care of creation and enter into the HOPE all around us.

One: Many people live near the oceans. When big storms hurt coastal towns, we help to rebuild, repair, and restore. Water filters are provided in Honduras so that families can have clean water. Water pumps are supplied so that youth in Nicaragua can restore the wells that provide water for the community.

Many: This is how we take care of creation and enter into the HOPE all around us.

One: In Zambia, children love to learn at school. But sometimes the lights went dark. Now the sun gives power and the lights shine bright.

Many: This is how we take care of creation and enter into the HOPE all around us.

One: In this time, our congregation celebrates the light of HOPE in our community through the ministries that care for creation. It is good to be a church together:

Many: Together we take care of creation and enter into the HOPE all around us.

One: *People with sickness are praying for health, come, come, Come Jesus Christ; people in poverty want to have wealth, Come, Lord Jesus Christ. These days of adventure when All people wait are days for the advent of HOPE.***

One: We pray today for all God's children,

Many: That each one might know the hope, peace, joy, and love that comes from God through the Advent of the Christ Child. Amen.

OPENING HYMN#314, Glory to God Hymnal "Christ Be Our Light" (verse 1)

SCRIPTURE Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19, Mark 13:24-37

SERMON

PRAYERS AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

HYMN#506, Chalice Hymnal "Healer of Our Every Ill", refrain only

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, forever. Amen.

OFFERTORY

HYMN #47, Chalice Hymnal "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow"

BENEDICTION

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Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 (Common English Bible)
Shepherd of Israel, listen! You, the one who leads Joseph as if he were a sheep. You, who are enthroned upon the winged heavenly creatures. Show yourself before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh! Wake up your power! Come to save us! Restore us, God! Make your face shine so that we can be saved! Lord God of heavenly forces, how long will you fume against your people's prayer? You've fed them bread made of tears; you've given them tears to drink three times over! You've put us at odds with our neighbors; our enemies make fun of us. Restore us, God of heavenly forces! Make your face shine so that we can be saved!

Mark 13:24-37 (Common English Bible)
"In those days, after the suffering of that time, the sun will become dark, and the moon won't give its light. The stars will fall from the sky, and the planets and other heavenly bodies will be shaken. Then they will see the Human One coming in the clouds with great power and splendor. Then he will send the angels and gather together his chosen people from the four corners of the earth, from the end of the earth to the end of heaven. "Learn this parable from the fig tree. After its branch becomes tender and it sprouts new leaves, you know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see these things happening, you know that he's near, at the door. I assure you that this generation won't pass away until all these things happen. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will certainly not pass away. "But nobody knows when that day or hour will come, not the angels in heaven and not the Son. Only the Father knows. Watch out! Stay alert! You don't know when the time is coming. It is as if someone took a trip, left the household behind, and put the servants in charge, giving each one a job to do, and told the doorkeeper to stay alert. Therefore, stay alert! You don't know when the head of the household will come,whether in the evening or at midnight, or when the rooster crows in the early morning or at daybreak. Don't let him show up when you weren't expecting and find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to all: Stay alert!"