

**The First Church of Christ in Marblehead
Old North Church, United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming Congregation**

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

December 6, 2020

Second Sunday Of Advent

GATHERING

WELCOME

Rev. Dr. Dennis Calhoun

CALL TO WORSHIP

Rev. Dr. Dennis Calhoun

One: We gather here,
bringing our whole being into awareness
of our thirst for meaning, and of the presence
of the holy in our midst.
We gather here, mindful of God's love and justice
made manifest in Jesus Christ.
We gather here, aware that this is a season of preparation.
God's glory is being revealed! Let us wait and watch.
Come let us worship the Lord our God.

LIGHTING THE SECOND ADVENT CANDLE OF PEACE

The Jackson Family
Jennifer, Noah, Connor and Ryan

HYMN

Comfort, Comfort Ye, My People
Holly Cameron, soprano; Maria vanKalken, organ

#115

CENTERING

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Rev. Lindsay Popperson

One: Loving God, your prophet sang "comfort, comfort O my people." Here, today, we cry out for your comfort. We long for it. We are not sure how it could ever find us, given the current circumstances, but you are the God of the impossible. Your love was made manifest in the baby born in Bethlehem, and your love and comfort can come to us, here, today. We pray for you to calm our anxious spirits and fill us with your peace, as we pray in the words Jesus taught us, saying:

LORD'S PRAYER (debts)

ALL: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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 and ever. Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

One: The year past has been riddled with crisis and losses:
pandemic illness and natural disasters,
exposure of societal injustices rooted in racist and sexist structures,
painful political reckonings.

This year, believe it or not, will not last for ever.
In this season of Advent, we are called to examine our hearts for our role in the
last year:
to name what traditionally have been called
Sins of Commission—
that is, what we may have done to contribute to the pain and chaos of these days;
and Sins of Omission—
that is, what we may have left undone which contributed to the pain,
or failed to help alleviate suffering.

SILENT PRAYER

One: In your grace and mercy, hear our confession and forgive us our sins, through the
love of Jesus. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

One: Hear the Good News God speaks to you:
I love you;
I forgive you;
I restore you to new life.

**ALL: We will not ignore the fact that God comes: not to condemn, but to comfort
us; not to scold, but to speak tenderly to us of hope, of love, of joy. Thanks
be to God. Amen.**

LISTENING

A MOMENT WITH OUR CHILDREN

Karen Kilty

ANTHEM

Excerpts from *Messiah* George Frederic Handel
Comfort Ye, Isaiah 40:1-3; Every Valley, Isaiah 40:4 (1695-1759)

Kevin Hayden, tenor; from a live recording of the Old North Festival Chorus, December, 2008

FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 40:1-11

Read by Diane Thomas

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her
that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's
hand double for all her sins.

A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert
a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made
low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of
the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has
spoken." A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their

constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord lows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

GOSPEL LESSON

Mark 1:1-8

Read by John Meakin

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

"See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;
the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
'Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,'"

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

SERMON

"On Track"

Rev. Dr. Dennis Calhoun

PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Lindsay Popperson

RESPONDING

OFFERTORY MOMENT

Rev. Dr. Dennis Calhoun

DOXOLOGY (#45)

Praise God for love we all may share.
Praise God for beauty everywhere.
Praise God for hope of good to be.
Praise God for truth that makes us free. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

Rev. Lindsay Popperson

INVITATION

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

OFFERING OF THE BREAD

OFFERING OF THE CUP

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

SENDING

Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates

#127

Stephanie Scarcella, mezzo-soprano, Maria vanKalken, organ

BENEDICTION

Rev. Lindsay Popperson