

LOVE

GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE
HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON.

JOHN 3:16



**Columbia
United Church
Of Christ**



December 22, 2024

10:30 a.m.

"Advent IV– Love"

**indicates that all are invited to stand, if comfortably able*

"Peace on Earth, Goodwill to All"

-Luke 2:14

Welcome and Greetings

Pastor Rick

Prelude

"O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

Steve Jannetti

Mark Hayes

Carrying in the Light of Christ

***Call to Worship**

(based on Psalm 80)

Tricia Soncasie

Tricia: Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
Stir up Your might and come to save us.

Cherubim: **Restore us, O God;**

Seraphim: **Let Your face shine, that we may be saved.**

ALL: **Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD, O my soul!**

Tricia: You brought a vine out of Egypt;
You drove out the nations and planted it.

Cherubim: **Turn again, O God of hosts; look and see Your people.**

Seraphim: **Have regard for this vine that Your hand has planted.**

ALL: **Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD, O my soul!**

Tricia: We will never turn our backs on You, O God.
Give us life, and we will call upon Your name.

Cherubim: **Restore us, O God.**

Seraphim: **Reconnect us to Your love and life.**

ALL: **Come, let us worship God!**

***Hymn**

"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"

#43

***Opening Prayer**

Tricia Soncasie

God of love; we hear the message of repentance voiced through the words of John the Baptizer, and we long to turn back to You. Forgive us for the times we let the ways of our culture distract us from You. Teach us to take the lessons of Advent into our hearts, that we may be able to fully embrace the love that is offered to us, exemplified through the gift of the Christ child. In Jesus' name we pray; Amen.

*Assurance of Blessing

Pastor Rick

The peace that comes when we open our hearts to the love God offers belongs to each one of us. But even when we falter in the quest for peace, God loves us and forgives us. Through our repentance and God's grace we are forgiven, beloved, and blessed. Praise be to God!

*Prayer Response

“Christians, All, Your Lord is Coming”

***Christians all, your Lord is coming, drawing near in holy birth.
Ring the bells and sound the trumpets, let your music fill the earth.
Dance and move to show God's glory;
kneel and pause to hear God's Word.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Rise and let your songs be heard.***

*Sharing God's Gift of Peace

May God's Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Children's Time and Lighting the Advent Candle

Pastor Rick

“Like a Child, Jesus Comes”
(Sung as children return to their seats)
***Like a child love would send to reveal and to mend,
Like a child and a friend, Jesus comes!
Like a child we may find claiming heart, soul and mind,
Like a child strong and kind, Jesus comes!***

Faith Sharing Moment Tindo Leong (piano) & Benjamin Xu (Violin)

“A Holly Jolly Christmas”
“Silent Night” “The First Noel”
“Angels We Have Heard on High”

Faith Sharing Moment “Christmas Love” Rev. Jim Elliott

Gospel Lesson Luke 3:7-18 Tricia Soncasie

John the Baptizer emerges into the Galilean countryside proclaiming a message of repentance. His message was a call for peace; but he knew that the only way to truly have peace was through justice. The oxymoronic phrase, “fighting for peace” is emblematic of his exhortations about achieving peace by creating a just society.

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Anthem “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”
Dennis Marienfeld & Maia Marienfeld-Crenshaw

Homily “Acting Peacefully, Living Justly” Pastor Rick

Anthem

“Almost There”

Steve Jannetti
Smith/King/Grant

Community & Silent Prayer

The LORD's Prayer

In an effort to encourage inclusion, we suggest using the address “Creator God” in our unison recitation of The Lord's Prayer. You are certainly welcome to say “Our Father” instead of “Creator,” “Trespases” instead of “debts,” or “Thy” instead of “Your” if you prefer.

Creator God in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your 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 Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Sharing our Announcements of Community Life

Pastor Rick

Invitation to the Offering

*To give online text “GIVE” to 573.240.4041
You can also give online by visiting our website:
www.columbiaucc.com*

Offertory

“My Soul in Stillness Waits”

Steve Jannetti
Marty Haugen

*Prayer of Dedication

Tricia Soncasie

God, we give thanks for the gift of love that Christ brings. During this Advent Season we prepare our hearts to receive it. Now take these gifts we offer. May they be used to convey the love that you offer everyone, no matter who they are. Amen.

*Benediction

Pastor Rick

*Response

“Let There be Peace on Earth”

**Let there be Peace on Earth and Let it Begin with me!
Let there be Peace on Earth; the Peace that was meant to be!
With God our Creator, Children all are we!
Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony!
Let Peace begin with me; let this be the moment now!
With every step I take let this be my solemn vow:
To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally!
Let there be Peace on Earth; and let it begin with me!**

*Postlude

“O Come, Divine Messiah”

Steve Jannetti
Mark Hayes

SCOUTING AMERICA AND CUCC

We are the Charter Organization for four Scouting America units, which includes over 150 children, youth, and adult leaders. These units are:

- **Cub Scout Pack 5183** – The younger group of Scouts, with boys and girls from kindergarten age through 5th grade. They meet every other Monday.
- **Scouting America Troop 4475** – The girls troop. They are a very active troop of girls from 6th-12th grades. They meet every Monday.
- **Scouting America Troop 708** – The boys troop. They are from 6th-12th grades and are very active. They meet every Monday, too.
- **Venture Crew 5334** – This is a focused co-educational group of older youth, from High School through college age.

As the Charter Organization for these four units, they are a part of us and we are a part of them. “They are our scouts, and we are their church.” Working together, in covenant, we will share the joys of common life and enhance one another’s mission, all to the glory of God.

CUCC Open and Affirming/Inclusion Covenant:

Columbia United Church of Christ celebrates God’s boundless and unconditional love by intentionally welcoming and affirming all God’s children.

No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey;
No matter where you are on your faith journey;
No matter your sexual orientation, gender expression, or identity;
No matter your race, culture, ethnicity, nationality, or politics;
No matter your age, ability, health, relationship status, or family structure;
No matter your social, economic, educational, legal, or life circumstances;
You are welcome here!

Called by Jesus to be an Open and Affirming, inclusive faith community, Columbia United Church of Christ commits to welcoming everyone into the full life of our congregation. Our paths and voices may differ, but we journey in faith together.



C U C C
Columbia United Church of Christ

Columbia United Church of Christ

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LODO Director: Erika Maltsbarger

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Custodian: Caleb Berry

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Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Fred Brandenburg

TODAY IN WORSHIP:

Worship Leader: Tricia Soncasie

Ushers: Llona Weiss & Mahree Skala

Greeters: Donna Marsh

Technology: Carissa Graves & John Graves

Hospitality: Tricia Price & Alethea Tennill

Council Stewards: Tricia Price & Alethea Tennill

NEXT SUNDAY IN WORSHIP:

Worship Leader: Mahree Skala

Ushers: Mary Lorber

Greeters:

Technology: Doug & Judi Privitt

Hospitality: Tricia Price & Mary Lorber

Council Stewards: Tricia Price & Mary Lorber



Online giving

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NURSERY CARE is available for children in kindergarten and younger in room #201 in the educational wing. If you need help finding it, ask an usher!

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP 12/24 AT 7:00 & 10:00 P.M.

This year our Christmas Eve worship services will be at 7:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. Both services will have communion, lessons and carols, and “Silent Night” sung by candlelight. We hope to see you on Christmas Eve!

CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING – CCUA

Our Christmas Eve Offering this year will be designated for the Columbia Center for Urban Agriculture, one of our CUCC Mission Partners. If you wish to donate, but will not be here on Christmas Eve, you can do so using our online giving platform, or designate “CCUA” on your check or offering envelope.

SCOUTING AMERICA PANCAKE BREAKFAST 1/11/25

Our Scouting America unit will host a fund raising pancake breakfast here at CUCC in the Fellowship Hall on 1/11/25 from 7:00-10:00am! Come support “our Scouts” and have a great breakfast while you do so!

HOW TO FIGHT RACISM BOOK STUDY CONTINUES 1/12/25

“How to Fight Racism” by Jemar Tisby is a very relevant book for our current context, investigating the Biblical mandate for racial justice in a constructive way. We will continue this study at 9:00 a.m. three Sundays in January, beginning 1/12 and continuing 1/19 and 1/26. We will look at Part 2 of the book, focusing on “Relationships.” Copies are available in the church office.

GET YOUR CHILI POTS READY– THE ANNUAL COOKOFF IS 1/19/25

Who will win the coveted “golden ladle?” It is up for grabs! Dust off your chili pot and get your recipe ready! The annual Chili cookoff, sponsored by the Men’s Fellowship will be Sunday 1/19/25, right after worship. We will have our monthly Team Earth “Lunch and Learn” in conjunction with this event. Talk to Brent Marcks or Doug Privitt for more details!

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY PANCAKE BREAKFAST 2/22/25

The annual CUCC Habitat for Humanity Pancake Breakfast will be 2/22/25 in the Fellowship Hall. The Men’s Fellowship is coordinating this, but they could use your help serving– and eating! If you want to help, talk to Brent Marcks or Doug Privitt. They also have tickets available– bring a group! All profits are donated to Habitat for Humanity, one of our CUCC Mission Partners.

THIS WEEK’S CALENDAR

Sun	12/22	Bible Study	9:00 a.m.
		Fellowship Time	10:00 a.m.
		Worship (in person and livestream)	10:30 a.m.
Tue	12/24	Christmas Eve Worship	7:00/10:00 p.m.
Wed	12/25	<i>Merry Christmas!</i> (Church office closed)	
Sun	12/29	Christmas Carol Celebration	
		Bible Study	9:00 a.m.
		Worship (in person and livestream)	10:30 a.m.

Columbia UCC Prayer List

Please keep in your prayers this week . . .

Sue Ann Schaefer... recovering from surgery
Deborah Long Birkes... recovering from surgery

Corine Remeika... health issues

Sharon Elliott... on hospice

Vonda Martindale... health issues (Kasper Ramirez's grandmother)

Students and staff at Alpha Hart Lewis Elementary . . . our partnership friend

The people of Palestine, Israel, and Ukraine

Health Issues:

John Adams, Cheryl Cobb, Lauren Helmreich, Pat Schroeder

Stephanie Porter (Phillip Neale's niece), Jennifer (Edie Diel's niece),

Julia Marsh (Donna Marsh's Daughter), Jim Elliott,

Joanne Good (Sue Beckman's friend), Mark Fairley & Connie Hackman Fairley

Marilyn Coronado (Corinne Remeika's friend)

Challenges in Life:

Sheila, The Koerkenmeier & Malicoat Families

Living in Care Facilities:

Neal Sprick, Gary Ehrhardt, Vernie Blank, Helen Graves, Sharon Elliott

Living in Independent Living Facilities:

Don Privitt, Alice Moon

Serving us in the military:

Christopher Tennill, Dane Wilson, Aaron Dachroeden

Pregnancies in our Church Family:

Garrett and Beth Walker– due this week!

Did you know we have a Prayer Team here at CUCC, lifting up the prayer concerns of our congregation? If you are interested in joining our Prayer Team or have a prayer request for our team to lift up please contact

Melba Shaffer (573) 474-2997 whals@centurytel.net

Or Tricia Soncasie (314) 374-7477 tsoncasie@aol.com

CUCC celebrates God's boundless love by:

Welcoming all God's Children;

Nurturing Faith and Spiritual Growth;

Challenging and inspiring everyone with vibrant worship;

Building a supportive church family;

***Transforming both the congregation and community
through service and outreach***

Luke 3:7-18

7 John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8 Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.

9 Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

10 And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?”

11 In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.”

12 Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?”

13 He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.”

14 Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”

15 As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah,

16 John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

17 His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

18 So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.