

Sanibel Congregational United Church of Christ
Worship Celebration

December 1, 2024, 10:00 a.m.



Welcome Everyone!

If you are visiting with us, and you are looking for a spiritual community...

where you will be loved, accepted, supported and affirmed regardless of your age, class, ability, race, ethnicity, gender identification or sexual orientation...where you will be encouraged and challenged to reflect on your beliefs, acknowledge your doubts, ask your questions, and grow in your faith...where God's desire for compassion, healing, reconciliation, justice and joy is preached...where you are given the opportunity to put your faith action through effective outreach ministries...then we hope to get to know you as a new friend.

**No matter who you are, or where you are in your life journey...
You are welcome here!**

An Open and Affirming / Creation Justice Congregation of the United Church of Christ

Seeking to love all people ... growing in faith ...
working toward God's vision of justice, healing and joy.

Sanibel Congregational United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming/Creation Justice Congregation
Worship Celebration
First Sunday of Advent - "Second Chances"
Stewardship Reflection - "From Surviving, to Reviving, to Thriving"
Sacrament of Communion
December 1, 2024, 10:00 a.m.

Welcome

Choral Introit *Lo, How a Rose Ere Blooming*
(Es Ist Ein Ros) Translated by Theodore Baker
The SCUCC Choir

Lighting the First Advent Candle - HOPE **Noelle and Bruce Cramer**

Leader: Let us share these words from Psalm 130:

I will wait for the Lord. My soul waits, and in the Lord's word I
hope. My soul waits for the Lord, more than those who watch for the
morning.

Lighting of the Candle

Leader: With the lighting of the Candle of Hope, we begin our Advent
journey. We prepare once again for the coming of God's light into the
world through Jesus. God's light brings Hope, and where there is
light, there is Hope.

Hymn *O Come, O Come Emmanuel #114 (on p. 2)*

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Unison

1. O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive
 2. O come, thou Day - spring, come and cheer our spir - its by thine
 3. O come, thou Wis - dom from on high, and or - der all things,
 4. O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind all peo - ples in one

Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here, un -
 ad - vent here; dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of night, and
 far and nigh; to us the path of knowl - edge show, and
 heart and mind; bid en - vy, strife and quar - rels cease; fill

Refrain (Harmony)

til the Son of God ap - pear.
 death's dark shad - ows put to flight.
 cause us in her ways to go. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em -
 the whole world with heav - en's peace.

man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

WORDS: Latin: c. 9th century; sts. 1,2, tr. John M. Neale, 1851; sts. 3,4, tr. Henry S. Coffin, 1916 VENI EMMANUEL
 MUSIC: French melody, 15th century, arr., harm. Thomas Helmore, 1854 LM w. refrain

Anglican Oxford Movement Neale translated this hymn which originated in the seven Great 'O' antiphons that were traditional for vespers during Advent. The refrain was added in the 13th century.

Opening Prayer (together)

Holy One, You call us to put our hope in You. Despite the difficulties, disappointments and darkness in the world, You still call us to put our hope in You and the one You will soon send us.

But hope is hard at times. It is hard to hope when we see so much destruction and disarray around us. It is hard to hope when the lives of the innocent, or those just being themselves at no harm to others, are threatened. It is hard to hope when family members, friends and neighbors dismiss and demonize each other over social or political views, or, God forbid, views about You.

And so we ask You, O God, to forgive us for the times when we are unable to hope in You, and to help us. Help us to open our hearts, minds and spirits this Advent season to welcome Jesus into the world and into our lives. Help us to welcome, embrace and share the divine hope He embodies - hope when hope seems hardest, or even lost.

Amen.

A Stewardship Reflection

Bruce and Noelle Cramer

Music Meditation *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

Bratt

The SCUCC Choir

A Time of Prayer with The Lord's Prayer

(Please use the wording most meaningful to you.)

Invitation to Giving

Offertory Music

You Raise Me Up
Henry Crater, soloist

Graham and Lovland

***Presentation of Offering and Congregational Response**

(In the Bleak Midwinter, v.4)

*What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb
If I were a wise one, I would do my part
What can I give Him? Give him my heart*

***Prayer of Dedication**

God of Hope, we hope for lives and a world in union with You and Your ways - a world where all Your people are fed, clothed, housed and living in peace. May these gifts be used to help bring a measure of that hope to all who are served by them. And may we find hope in helping You move the world closer to what You created and call it to be.

Amen.

Ministry of the Word Matthew 1:18-24 (on p. 5)
(New Revised Standard Version Translation)

MINISTRY OF THE WORD

Matthew 1:18-24

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way.

When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.

But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.”

When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife.

The Sacrament of Communion

Introduction

One: God is with us;

All: In every moment of our lives.

One: So let us lift up our hearts.

All: Let us lift them up to our God.

One: Let us present our lives to our God;

All: Through all we do and say.

The Words of Institution

The Consecration

Sharing God's Gifts

The Community's Prayer of Thanksgiving

We give You thanks, O God, for calling us to this table of nourishment and healing for body, mind and spirit. May the sharing of this Holy Meal strengthen our faith, increase our love for You and one another, and give us the courage we need to go out into the world as Christ's disciples, inspired and supported by Your Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Hymn

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus #121 (on p. 7)

Blessing

Postlude

All Glory, Laud and Honor

***All who wish are welcome to stand.**

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

121

1. Come, thou long - ex - spect - ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo - ple free;
2. Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art;
3. Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king,
4. By thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it rule in all our hearts a - lone;

from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.
dear de - sire of ev - ery na - tion, joy of ev - ery long - ing heart.
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king - dom bring.
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

WORDS: Charles Wesley, 1744, alt.

MUSIC: Melody attr. Christian F. Witt, (1660-1716), *Psalmodia Sacra*, Gotha, 1715

STUTTGART

87.87

Witt was court organist, then Kapellmeister, at Gotha, Germany.

He composed sixty-five church cantatas.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

“The Lord is coming, always coming. When you have ears to hear and eyes to see, you will recognize the Lord at any moment of your life. Life is Advent.”

Henri Nouwen, Dutch Catholic priest, theologian and author

“Hope begins in the dark, the stubborn hope that if you just show up and try to do the right thing, the dawn will come.”

Anne Lamott, American author



ANNOUNCEMENTS

To Our Guests This Morning

If you are with us today for the first, or one of the first times, please let us know. Also, please take a moment to introduce yourself, or reintroduce yourself, to Rev. Mark. Our hope is to provide you with the most graceful welcome possible.

TODAY Sunday, December 1 – ADVENT Begins!

We begin the sacred season of advent today Sunday, December 1. During these weeks in which we prepare to once again welcome the birth of Jesus, the embodiment of God and God's ways for us in the Christian spiritual community. Our theme for this year is "*Second Chances*".

During each of the four Sundays in Advent, the morning's Message will explore how characters in the Gospels received "*second chances*" through Jesus' coming into the world - opportunities to find or reclaim their voice, be delivered from unfair or unjust burdens, or become spiritually and emotionally stronger.

On this day, we will also celebrate the Sacrament of Communion as a spiritual community.

Lastly, this is the final Sunday of our *Annual Stewardship Campaign Reflection Weeks*. This year's theme, symbolizing the journey we have been on these last two post-Ian and now post-Helene and Milton years, is "*From Surviving, to Reviving, to Thriving*".

On each of these Sundays, members of our community are offering reflections on what SCUCC has meant to them both in general and more specifically during these difficult years.

Today, we welcome Noelle and Bruce Cramer to offer their thoughts.

Christmas Eve at SCUCC!

After a two-year absence, we are blessed to be able to celebrate Christmas Eve this year in the SCUCC Sanctuary!

We will join together at **5:30 PM on December 24** for a time of readings from Luke's Christmas story, inspiring music, the Sharing of Light, and a "*Dramatic Reflection*" from Mark.

Shell Point Christmas Communion Celebration Wednesday, December 11!

Our annual Shell Point Christmas Communion Celebration will take place on Wednesday, December 11 at 1:30 PM in the Chapel of the Village Church. It will be a time of prayer, hymns, special music, a brief Reflection from Mark, and, of course, the Sacrament of Communion. Joining Mark in leading this time will be Mackenzie Albert and Linda Convertine, SCUCC Parish Nurse.

Church Office Hours

The Church Office is regularly open from 9am-3pm on Monday through Friday.

Mark is normally on campus Tuesday-Thursday pending pastoral visits or off-site meetings. Please feel free to just "drop by" or make an appointment directly with him by email: mark@sanibelucc.org or text/phone at 908-477-5426.

Mackenzie Albert, our Director of Music, is normally on campus each Wednesday and some Fridays. Please make an appointment by phone or text at 203-517-5427.

SPIRITUAL EXPLORATION

Our first Fall Spiritual Exploration Unit has concluded, and our next unit, for Advent, begins THIS Tuesday, December 3!

“LETTERS FROM THE EDGE OF THE WORLD”

**Tuesdays: December 3, 10 and 17
7:00-8:15pm on Zoom**

This three-week Advent unit is based on Ruth Boling’s book, *Season’s Greetings*.

During our time together, we will explore letters Boling imagines having been written by characters associated with the Christmas stories in the Gospels. Each week, we will review and discuss the content, context and spiritual concerns expressed in a couple of those letters, with an eye toward gaining new insights on the meaning of Christmas for us in the Christian community and for the world.

BIBLE STUDY

Bible Study will meet on a different day this week. We will gather on WEDNESDAY, December 4, at 10:30am on Zoom before we return to our usual day of Thursday the following week.

Each week, we explore the passages which will be part of that coming Sunday’s Worship. These sessions are discussion based, with Mark guiding a structured conversation based on participants’ questions, concerns and considerations of the text.

The passage(s) to be looked at each week, as well as the necessary information for joining in, will be sent by email the day before.

The Choir Welcomes New Members!

Our Choir has been growing this fall, with several new members already, and is looking forward to welcoming even more singers.

If you enjoy singing, or have always wanted to sing, but never quite managed it, this is the perfect time to join in. Our group rehearses at 4:30 PM on Wednesday afternoons, and often goes out to eat at Jerry's afterward.

Why not stop by and see what it's like?

You are also welcome to call or text Mackenzie with any questions at 203-517-5427.

Floral Invitation

We invite you to contribute to the Floral Fund. This fund is dedicated to preserving the memory of a loved one through the vibrant and uplifting presence of flowers. If you would like to honor a loved one by dedicating flowers to a Worship Celebration, please visit or contact the office.

Floral dedications will be featured in the weekly bulletin.



Trim The Holiday Tree

As we prepare for the joyful season of Christmas, we invite you to be a part of a cherished tradition in our church by donating an ornament to our annual Christmas tree. Each ornament is a symbol of our unity, creating a beautiful, shared display that reflects our diverse community.

Whether it's handmade, a family favorite, or something new, your contribution will help fill our tree with warmth and memories. Please bring your ornament to the Church Office or drop it off on a Sunday morning as soon as possible.

Thank you for adding your personal touch to our Christmas celebration!



“Adopt a Sunday” Fellowship Hour

Please consider volunteering your time to serve during our Fellowship Time after Worship. It's a wonderful way to contribute to our community, connect with others, and give back to our spiritual home. If interested, please contact Shirley Akins at 239-691-4537.

Here's how you can help:

Sign Up to Serve – Select a Sunday and mark it on your calendar! You'll find a sign-up sheet on the table at the back of Fellowship Hall. Serving is easy, and help will be available if needed.

1. **Bring a Treat** – If you love to bake or have a favorite snack to share, consider bringing it along to make our Fellowship Time even more special. Beverages are also welcome.
2. **Contribute to Fellowship Time** – If serving isn't for you, a donation is a meaningful way to support this cherished time together.

Shell Point Men's Group December Luncheon

The Sanibel Congregational UCC Shell Point Men's Group will have its next monthly luncheon meeting on **Tuesday, December 10th at noon at the Palm Grill in the Woodlands Common**. Please make reservations with Candy Atchison at JimAtch@aol.com or 561-714-4655.

Shell Point Women's Group December Luncheon

The Sanibel Congregational UCC Shell Point Women's Group will have its next monthly luncheon meeting on **Friday, December 13th at 11:30am at the Palm Grill in the Woodlands Common**. Please make reservations with Emily Kletzien at emily.kletzien@gmail.com

Dinners for 6, 7 or 8

One of our most loved offerings is the social gatherings known as "Dinner for 6, 7 or 8". If you would like to participate, please send your names, email addresses and phone numbers Shirley Akins at akinsteach@gmail.com.



Ushers Needed

We have ushers scheduled through November, but are always looking for volunteers. If you are interested in ushering for Sunday Worship, please contact Frank Palaia at flpalaiajr@cs.com for more information.

INTERESTED IN JOINING SCUCC???

If you are considering becoming a member of SCUCC, or would simply like to find out more about us, please let Rev. Mark know. After you and he discuss the expectations and, as the old commercial says, “the benefits of membership,” you and he can schedule a Sunday that works best for you to become an official part of the SCUCC community.



Like A Ride To Worship?

If you would like a ride to Sunday Worship from Shell Point or Cypress Cove, please contact the Church Office at office@sanibelucc.org **by noon on Thursday.**





Please mark your calendars to brighten and begin your holiday season **this Friday, December 6, 2024, at 4 pm** with Sanibel’s Island-wide 50th Anniversary Luminary Concert.

The Florida Gulf Coast University Bower School of Music presents
“All is Bright” at SCUCC



★
★
★
ASTRALIS
CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

PRESENTS

HOLIDAY BAROQUE



Angela Massey
FLUTE



Yu-Ming Ma
VIOLIN



Laura Usiskin
CELLO



Alexandra Dunbar
HARPSICHORD

DECEMBER 15, 2024

SANIBEL CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
2050 PERIWINKLE WAY
SANIBEL, FL 33957
239.472.0497

2^{PM}

The award-winning musicians of the Astralis Chamber Ensemble; Angela Massey (flute), Yu-Ming Ma (violin), Laura Usiskin (cello), and Alexandra Dunbar (harpsichord); present "Holiday Baroque." The concert will include selections for Advent as well as Vivaldi's famous "La Notte" Concerto and trios to fit the spirit of the season by JS Bach and CPE Bach. Join us for an enchanting afternoon of music and celebrate the season with the Astralis Chamber Ensemble.

Grethe is back!!

She will be teaching her Gentle Yoga Class in Fellowship Hall on Thursdays, starting at 10:45am. Please arrive a few minutes early to check-in.



The Santiva Islanders are Back on Campus!

Please join Mahnaz Bassir at SCUCC for cardio & strength. SCUCC is a temporary location for this class while St. Michael's repairs Hurricane Milton damage. Classes are held Monday, Wednesday and Friday 10am-11am in Fellowship Hall.

Mahnaz has long been a favorite exercise instructor on Sanibel. Come find out why. You'll meet friends and have fun, all while getting and staying fit.

The class starts off with light to moderate aerobics, followed by strength and balance exercises, and concluding with stretching. Please bring plenty of water and a towel. Participants may also want to bring light weights to use during the strength portion. Exercises are done standing so there is no need for a mat.

Come try a class out for free. After that, the cost for Santiva Islander Members is \$5 per class/\$60 per calendar month. The cost for non-members is \$10 per class/\$120 per calendar month.

An annual Santiva Islander Membership is \$25. You can join online or at the door.



Assisting With Today's Worship Celebration

Liturgist: Sharon Hannon

Ushers: Linda Huffington & Judy Palaia

Ministers: All Members and Friends of SCUCC

Moderator: Neal Halleran Vice Moderator: Kathy Y. Carter

Parish Nurse: Linda Convertine, R.N., B.S.N.

Music Director: Mackenzie Albert

Church Administrator: Jenny Chacon

Assistant Church Administrator: Tammy Flatley

Tech Team: Dr. Renee Rawe, Luke Crater

Missionaries: Alex Maldonado-Lizardi & Xiomara Cintron-Garcia

in Colombia

Senior Minister: Rev. Dr. Mark Boyea

Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Dr. Ran Niehoff

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