



First Congregational Church of Rowley

Order of Worship Service Sunday, November 28, 2021

First Sunday of Advent - Hope

Welcome and Announcements

Reverend Tom Bentley

Call to Worship

Les Warren

Leader: The days are shorter, and darkness comes early to our lives.

People: Lord, hear our prayers through the darkness. [SEP]

Leader: Come, seek the Lord. Place your hope in God's mercy and love.

People: Lord, we seek your presence among us. [SEP]

Leader: Look closely! God is making us ready.

Leader & People: Brighten our Spirits this day and help us to receive your Good News. AMEN.

Opening Prayer

Les Warren

We can hardly believe it, Lord. The Advent season is upon us. We usually translate that into the buying season in preparation for THE BIG DAY. But when we place our hope in the tinsel, wrappings, tape, and boxes, we forget the most glorious gift of all, the gift of God's absolute love. Open our eyes, our hearts, our spirits today to behold God's gracious love for us in the fulfillment of all God's promises. For we ask this in the name of Jesus. AMEN.

Lighting the Advent Candle

Reader 1: Today we light one candle - the Candle called HOPE, as a reminder that God's promises are true. This Sunday our candle lighting is done by the members of our Diaconate

Reader 2: We place our hope in God.

Reader 3: We place our lives In God's care.

All: Come, all is ready. Let the light of this one candle, called HOPE, bring brightness to your spirits.

[The first Advent Candle is lighted]

Prayer of Confession (In unison) (led by Rev. Tom Bentley)

It is so easy for us, Lord, to let the anger, frustration, and fear overshadow our lives. We can't seem to escape it. We try to find some way to cover it up, but it remains. And in our anxiety, we act out our fear in ways which are not helpful and, far too often, go against the ways you have taught us to live. We feel the pressure to give, and resentment in giving. We feel the push to be present at every upcoming event and want to run and hide. Help us, Lord. Heal our wounded spirits. Free us again to look to you for Hope. Let us see the many ways in which you are present to us... guiding, healing, loving, encouraging us. Forgive us for our fears and our stubbornness. Bring us again to your light, for we ask this in Jesus' Name. AMEN.

Words of Assurance**Reverend Tom Bentley**

"The days are coming", says the prophet Isaiah, "when all God's promises will be fulfilled." These promises of hope, peace, joy, and love are for you. Receive the hope that God offers to you today.

Opening Song: For the Beauty of the Earth**New Testament Reading****Les Warren****1 Thessalonians 3:9-13. *The Message***

What would be an adequate thanksgiving to offer God for all the joy we experience before him because of you? We do what we can, praying away, night and day, asking for the bonus of seeing your faces again and doing what we can to help when your faith falters. May God our Father himself and our Master Jesus clear the road to you! And may the Master pour on the love, so it fills your lives and splashes over on everyone around you, just as it does from us to you. May you be infused with strength and purity, filled with confidence in the presence of God our Father when our Master Jesus arrives with all his followers.

Call to Offering

Moment of Music: *(sung by the choir - title to TBD)*

Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow

Praise Him, all creatures here below

Praise Him above the Heavenly host

Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Amen

Prayer of Dedication

Joys and Concerns *(prayer requests can be texted to 978-973-2362)*

Pastoral Prayer**The Lord's Prayer** *(in unison)*

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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever, Amen.

Gospel Reading

Luke 21:25-36 *The Message*

“There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in a cloud’ with power and great glory.

Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

Then he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. “Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

Message: “Clearing Away the Angst”

Closing Song: Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

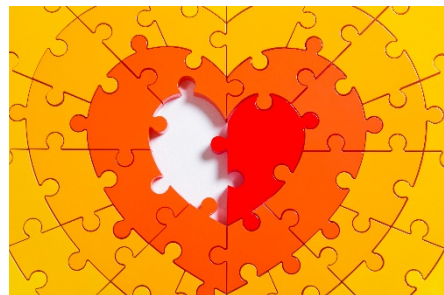
Benediction: Rev. Tom Bentley

Deacons: Penny Hurley and Nicola Pyburn
Flowers on the Altar

Following today’s service – All Church Meeting

Please join this important journey to discern
“What is God Calling us to Be?”

Faith question: *Who are We?*
What Do WE Believe is Important?



Refreshments will be served

Notes

Who Are We?

What Do We Believe is Important?

Key Points

Doodles

A large, light gray rounded rectangular area intended for writing key points. It has a thin blue border and rounded corners.A vertical, white rounded rectangular area intended for doodles. It has a thin blue border and rounded corners.