

First Congregational Church of Rowley, United Church of Christ
The Order of Morning Worship
Drive in Service - 90.3 FM – November 29, 2020 @ 10am
First Sunday in Advent

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Tom Bentley

Call to Worship

Ken Sanford

Leader: The days are coming:

ALL: When God's promises are fulfilled.

Leader: The days are coming:

All: When God leads us on paths of righteousness.

Leader: The days are surely coming:

All: When the kingdom of God draws near.

Leader: Let us worship our God of possibilities and hope.

God be with you.

All: And also with you.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Leader: We light this first candle, beginning with hope—the hope that God holds for a new world:

All: God's gift of hope, that persists to bring forth life.

Leader: God's gift of hope, that protests the way the priorities of the world discounts people.

All: God's gift of hope that names all as beloved and beautiful children, that comes to be with us.

Opening Song – “Come Thou Expected Jesus” (*Lyrics below. First two stanzas repeat at the end.*)

Old Testament Reading

Ken Sanford

Isaiah 64:1-9 The Message

Oh, that you would rip open the heavens and descend,
make the mountains shudder at your presence—

As when a forest catches fire,
as when fire makes a pot to boil—

To shock your enemies into facing you,
make the nations shake in their boots!

You did terrible things we never expected,
descended and made the mountains shudder at your presence.

Since before time began

no one has ever imagined,
No ear heard, no eye seen, a God like you
who works for those who wait for him.
You meet those who happily do what is right,
who keep a good memory of the way you work.
But how angry you've been with us!
We've sinned and kept at it so long!
Is there any hope for us? Can we be saved?
We're all sin-infected, sin-contaminated.
Our best efforts are grease-stained rags.
We dry up like autumn leaves—
sin-dried, we're blown off by the wind.
No one prays to you
or makes the effort to reach out to you
Because you've turned away from us,
left us to stew in our sins.
Still, God, you are our Father.
We're the clay and you're our potter:
All of us are what you made us.
Don't be too angry with us, O God.
Don't keep a permanent account of wrongdoing.
Keep in mind, please, we *are* your people—all of us.

Moment of Music **"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" ... sung by Enya"**

Joys and Concerns

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

Ken Sanford

Mark 13:24-37 *The Message*

"Following those hard times,
Sun will fade out,
moon cloud over,

Stars fall out of the sky,
cosmic powers tremble.

“And then they’ll see the Son of Man enter in grand style, his Arrival filling the sky—no one will miss it! He’ll dispatch the angels; they will pull in the chosen from the four winds, from pole to pole.

“Take a lesson from the fig tree. From the moment you notice its buds form, the merest hint of green, you know summer’s just around the corner. And so it is with you. When you see all these things, you know he is at the door. Don’t take this lightly. I’m not just saying this for some future generation, but for this one, too—these things will happen. Sky and earth will wear out; my words won’t wear out.

“But the exact day and hour? No one knows that, not even heaven’s angels, not even the Son. Only the Father. So keep a sharp lookout, for you don’t know the timetable. It’s like a man who takes a trip, leaving home and putting his servants in charge, each assigned a task, and commanding the gatekeeper to stand watch. So, stay at your post, watching. You have no idea when the homeowner is returning, whether evening, midnight, cockcrow, or morning. You don’t want him showing up unannounced, with you asleep on the job. I say it to you, and I’m saying it to all: Stay at your post. Keep watch.”

Message: “What Are We Waiting For - Anyway?”

Rev. Tom Bentley

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Benediction:

Rev. Tom Bentley

Postlude: “Lord Dismiss Us With Thy Blessing”

THANK YOU

We’d like to thank everyone who helped, supported, purchased or somehow participated in this year’s (Virtual) Olde Tyme Country Fair. Even though the circumstances weren’t ideal, we are glad that we were still able to uphold our annual tradition and we know that it wouldn’t have been possible without your help.

At a later time, we’ll be posting additional information so that you can know how much we raised! Thanks again – hopefully next year we’ll be back to ‘NORMAL’ again.

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

Come, thou long expected Jesus
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us;
Let us find our rest in Thee

Israel's strength and consolation
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear Desire of every nation
Joy of every longing heart
Born Thy people to deliver
Born a child and yet a King
Born to reign in us forever
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring

By Thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all sufficient merit
Raise us to Thy glorious throne

Come, thou long expected Jesus
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us;
Let us find our rest in Thee

Israel's strength and consolation
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear desire of every nation
Joy of every longing heart

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

O come, O come, Emmanuel
To free your captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the son of God appear

Rejoice! Rejoice! O Israel
To you shall come Emmanuel

O veni, veni Emanuel
Captivum solve Israel
Qui gemit in exilio
Privatus Dei Filio

Gaude! Gaude! Emanuel
Nascetur pro te, Israel

Gaude! Gaude
Gaude! Gaude
Gaude! Gaude
Gaude! Gaude

Gaude! Gaude! Emanuel
Nascetur pro te, Israel

Gaude! Gaude! Emmanuel
Nascetur pro te, Israel

Lord Dismiss Us With Thy Blessing

Lord dismiss us with your blessing
Fill our hearts with joy and peace
Let us each your love possessing,
Triumph in redeeming grace.

O refresh us, O refresh us,
Traveling through this wilderness

Thanks we give and adoration
For your gospel's joyful sound;
May the fruits of your salvation
In our hearts and lives abound.

Ever faithful, ever faithful
To your truth may we be found

Savior, when your love shall call us,
From our struggling pilgrim way,
Let no fear of death appall us,
glad your summons to obey,

May we ever, may we ever
Reign with you in endless day.

A Holiday Message for Our Time

As a people of faith, God calls us to take care of all of creation which we have as a gift and a blessing. The birth of Jesus reminds us just how vulnerable and interdependent we are as a human family. In the spirit of this togetherness, your Missions Committee is inviting you to make this Christmas a gift to our planet.

Making a few simple changes to our shopping and gifting habits will have important long-term effects on our environment and quality of life.

This holiday season, be a champion and a role model for your children and grandchildren. Skip single use plastic bags and toys. Show them you care about them through caring for their environment. Try gifting environmentally friendly items this Christmas. Several gift ideas are provided at the end of this letter.

The Bible proclaims we are **stewards** of this earth. All living things need clean air and clean water for basic survival. Right now, we are faced with a climate crisis that is also creating a refugee disaster around the world. This is fueling wars, conflict, fear and distrust. Crops are failing, animals die, the oceans are warming leaving fish and marine life in peril and near extinction.

Here for you is a short video showing why we need to reduce the use of plastic. To watch [Click here](#).

Thank you for your concern. In 2021 you will be invited to walk with us to consider how we as a church can pursue this challenge together in faith.

Yours in community,
The members of the Missions Committee

A few eco friendly gift ideas:

- magazine, music, movie or game subscriptions
- gift certificates for an experience or service
- lessons - music, art, karate, dance, horseback riding, skiing to name a few
- membership to Mass Audubon, Essex County Greenbelt Association or The Trustees of Reservations
- annual pass to Massachusetts State or National Parks
- donation to a charity in your loved one's name
- reusable shopping bags
- coffee/tea travel mug
- refillable coffee pods for Keurig machine
- refillable stainless water bottles and thermos (Klean Kanteen, Yeti, Thermos and Hydro Flask known for high quality)
- stainless steel straws
- mess kit - stainless steel utensils, reusable plate and mug, mesh bag
- reusable sandwich, snack containers and utensils
- glass and stainless storage containers, mason jars
- cloth napkins and tablecloth
- eco-friendly art supplies
- toys made from wood, cloth, cardboard, or recycled materials
- bamboo handle toothbrush, hairbrush and comb
- all-natural eco friendly soaps, shampoo and other hygiene products
- bird feeder and seed/suet

Consider ordering online for curbside pickup to save on excess packaging and to support local businesses and jobs.

Please use reusable or recyclable wrapping paper, gift bags and natural fiber ribbon.



One of the Missions Committee's suggested gift ideas:



Think Outside the Box
Give Something Wild!



This year has reminded us all how much we need nature. What better time to give the gift of rivers, forests, marshes, and meadows?

Gift Memberships to Mass Audubon include free admission to more than 60 spectacular wildlife sanctuaries across Massachusetts, from breathtaking coastal landscapes, to serene woodlands and working farms.

Mass Audubon members can explore and enjoy hundreds of miles of trails for free.

Buy a Mass Audubon [gift membership](#) by **November 30** and give a **full year of membership for just \$32**. That's half off the regular rate!