



*The First Congregational Church
of the United Church of Christ
Stockbridge, Massachusetts*

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

PAGEANT SUNDAY

December 17, 2023 – 10:00 a.m.

- ◇ Each week in worship we welcome people to share their prayers. If you like for a worship leader to read your prayer, please fill out a prayer slip and leave it in the offering plate.
- ◇ For those **worshipping at home**: you are encouraged to text the names of those attending to 413-644-6435 that we might welcome you.

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

PRELUDE

Comfort, Comfort Now My People, setting by Paul Manz

WELCOME

Pastor Brent Damrow

GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

UNISON PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Jeremy Ridenour

God of gifts. God of story. God of our story. As we wait for the fulfilment of your promise, we watch, we listen, and we open our hearts for your Word. Show us signs of your presence: a light in the darkness, a voice in the silence, and a stirring deep within us.

*HYMN

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel verse 7

7 O come, Desire of Nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind;
Make envy, strife, and quarrels cease;
fill the whole world with heaven's peace.

Refrain:
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel!

CANDLE LIGHTING *Candles and Conifers*, by Ruth Burgess

Terry Wise and Liza Catino

One: Candles burn, the signs of our waiting.

All: God of love, come to us again this Advent.

One: We re-light the three candles who have been our companions on our journey.

All: In their flicker we remember hope, peace, and joy.

One: As Christmas draws near, we light the final candle – the candle of love.

All: We light it in remembrance of God’s great gift of love wrapped in flesh.

SUNG RESPONSE

We Are In Darkness, by Anne McKinstry, verse 4
(to the tune of “Away in a Manger”)

**Are we now a lamp that gives hope to a world;
Surveying the heav’n’s for a sign that you’re here?
Yes, you are the light of world; a bright star;
And all of earth’s wand’rers will follow your glow.**

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

CALL TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY

Say to Them That Are of a Fearful Heart, by Everett Titcomb

*DOXOLOGY

Laast Uns Erfruen

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ the Word in flesh born low; Alleluia, Alleluia.
Praise Holy Spirit evermore; One God, Triune, whom we adore.
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.**

*BLESSING OF THE GIFTS

LIFTING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER / THE LORD’S PRAYER

Our God, 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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT MESSAGE

Story

Pastor Brent

THE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

"Be Still, and See"

by David Anderegg

CAROL *O Little Town of Bethlehem* (pew hymnal #43)

Children sing verse one, congregation joins in for verse 4.

1 *O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.*

4 **O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in,
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel!**

SCENE 1: Revelers gather at an inn in Bethlehem

REVELERS' SONG

Guard your penny, lucky man, make it last, make it last.

Gov'ner takes it if he can, keep it fast, keep it fast.

The pauper begs you for his mite, just don't pay, just don't pay,

Kick him out into the night! Go away! Go away! Go away!

This little penny's just for me, mine all mine, mine all mine!

And I have no sympathy; never thine, never thine!

Gov'ner, pauper go away, leave me be, leave me be!

Let my little penny stay! Go away! Go away! Go away!

SCENE 2: Mary and Joseph receive aid

SCENE 3: An angel appears

BE STILL AND SEE

Be still and see, what God's great will has done;
Be still and see, God's true and only Son:
A child as gentle as a dove,
A tiny babe who rules the world with love.

SCENE 4: Shepherds hear the good news

*CAROL

Away in a Manger

(pew hymnal #24)

Children sing verse one, congregation joins in for verses 2 and 3.

- 1 *Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.*
- 2 **The cattle are lowing, the poor Baby wakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes;
I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky,
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.**
- 3 **Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And fit us for Heaven to live with Thee there.**

SHEPHERDS' SONG

Born in a manger! He must be a shepherd boy like you or me;
He'll know what it's like to be all alone out on a hill with a pillow of stone.
Born in a manger! A shepherd-king just like King David, he will sing;
And he will go out all alone and slay a giant with a sling and stone!
Born in a manger! Wherever he goes he will vanquish all our foes;
Lead a great army all alone, and all will cry out, even the stones!

SCENE 5: A multitude of angels appear

BE STILL AND SEE

Be still and see, what God's great will has done;
Be still and see, God's true and only Son:
A child as gentle as a dove,
A tiny babe who rules the world with love.
Not with a sword will He complete His reign;
Not with a shield will He our peace obtain;
And yet, the world is in His hands
With Love the only weapon He commands.
The Word comes down, to save our very soul,
The Word made flesh, to make our spirits whole.
God sends the Son from up above,
A tiny babe to rule the world with love.

SCENE 6: The wise ones follow the star

FLY, GOOD KINGS

Fly, good kings, fly from Herod's false words, for he is beyond all believing;
Fly to the East like beautiful birds from him who perfected deceiving.
The king and his court will rattle and quake, their nights will be riven with fear;
The powers that be will splinter and break
When the Power That Shall Be draws near.
Fly, Joseph, fly: the manger is warm, but it is past time to be going;
Fly with your brood like crows on the storm, for Herod's cold anger is blowing.
The king and his court will rattle and quake, their nights will be riven with fear;
The powers that be will splinter and break
When the Power That Shall Be draws near.
Fly, children, fly, take cover, take care, the sweetness must come to an ending;
Fly, children, fly like ducks from the snare, for Herod's cruel net is descending.
The king and his court will rattle and quake, their nights will be riven with fear;
The powers that be will splinter and break
When the Power That Shall Be draws near.

SCENE 7: The Holy Family escapes to Egypt

BE STILL AND SEE

The Word comes down, to save our very soul,
The Word made flesh, to make our spirits whole.

God sends the Son from up above,
A tiny babe to rule the world with love.

And when God comes into your life anew,
Be still and see, what God's great love can do;

Take Love, the Gift from God to men,
And give it back into the world again.

*BLESSING

Pastor Brent

*CAROL

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

(pew hymnal #29)

Children sing the refrain, the congregation joins in for all subsequent verses.

Refrain:

*Go, tell it on the mountain
Over the hills and everywhere;
Go, tell it on the mountain,
That Jesus Christ is born.*

**1 While shepherds kept their watching
O'er silent flocks by night,
Behold throughout the heavens
There shone a holy light.**

Refrain (everyone)

**2 The shepherds feared and trembled,
When lo! above the earth,
Rang out the angels chorus
That hailed our Savior's birth.**

Refrain (everyone)

**3 Down in a lowly manger
The humble Christ was born,
And God sent us salvation
That blessed Christmas morn.**

Refrain (everyone)

~ PAGEANT CAST ~

Author/Composer: David Anderegg

Director: Michael Deegan

Costumes: Sarah Conly

Music Directors: Elisabeth Bellows and Liza Catino

Narrator 1: Patty Strauch

Narrator 2: Elisabeth Bellows

Hannah: Jake Damrow

Innkeeper: William Barrett

Reveler 1: Elizabeth Evans

Reveler 2: Alessandra Barrett

One more Reveler: Liza Catino

Joseph: Connor Hall

Mary: Ruth Wheat

Angel 1: Gwendolyn Evans

Angel 2: Adrianna Duhon

Angel 3: Aviana Schilling

Angel 4: Amos Fries

Shepherd 1: Lizzie Smith

Shepherd 2: Maddie Smith

Shepherd 3: Tommy Wheat

Sheep: Betsy Wheat and Oscar Fries

Herod: Khalil Haddir

Soldier: Ryleigh Fillio

King 1: David Anderegg

King 2: Joshua Hall

King 3: Ken LaBresh

Christmas Eve Evening Worship

December 24 at 5:00 p.m.

With doors opening and preludes beginning at 4:30, all are welcome for our traditional service of lessons and carols. Part of the reason for this earlier time is to be more child friendly. The service will be filled with familiar stories and favorite carols. We will finish worship with the service of Light and the singing of *Silent Night* and *Joy to the World*. Special music including trumpet and choir, will bring joy and beauty.

There will be no morning worship on December 24.

Poinsettias

We invite you to help us transform the sanctuary on Christmas Eve. You may donate poinsettias to the church (the cost is \$20 per plant) in honor or memory of someone who is in your heart this Christmas. You can then choose either to take your plant home or allow us to bring it to someone who could use some joy. To order, fill out a form, found in the JE Room (be sure to indicate how you want the honor/memorial to be worded). Or just call Will in the church office! 413-298-3137. The gifts will be listed in the Christmas Eve bulletin. New deadline: Monday, December 18.

Welcome! We are an Open and Affirming Church which means that we invite persons of every sexual orientation, gender identification and expression, racial and cultural identity, age, physical ability, economic circumstance, faith background and family structure to share fully in the ministry, leadership and fellowship of this congregation's life in Christ.

The Rev. Brent Damrow, Pastor

Peter Frost, Minister of Music

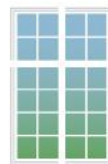
Will Garrison, Administrator

Marion Pomeroy, Financial Secretary

Will Curtiss and Will Pohl, Livestream Technicians

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