

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

### SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

December 8, 2024 – 10:00 a.m.

Children are invited to start in worship at 10:00 a.m. before Sunday School. Nursery care is available during worship; please ask an usher.

Note: We will lift prayers of joy and concern this morning in worship. If you would prefer to submit a prayer to be read, please write it on one of the prayer slips in the folders in each pew and return it to the prayer box in the Narthex or give it to a Deacon before our prayer time.

### PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

PRELUDE O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Bell Choir

Plainsong Mode 1 arranged by John Klein

FRAMING WORDS / WELCOME

Rev. Brent Damrow

#### **GATHERING IN WORSHIP**

TOLLING OF THE HOUR / TIME OF REFLECTION

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Prayer

Pastor Brent

SHARING WHAT WE BRING

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.

SONG

Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers verse 2

See insert

CANDLE LIGHTING LITANY Salt Project – Peace Carl & Stephanie Bradford

One: Because of war, because of violence in our communities, because there is still so much unrest in our hearts, we light a candle of peace...

All: Because hatred is still so strong, because so many swords have not yet been remade into ploughshares, we light a candle of peace...

(Light the second candle in the Advent wreath.)

One: May the light from this candle overwhelm the world.

All: May the light from this candle say to all that God's peace is coming, on earth as it already is in heaven.

One: Friends, be not afraid, God's peace is at hand!

\*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Children are invited to go to Sunday School.

\*HYMN

Comfort, Comfort O My People

See page 5

CONTEMPORARY READING To Come Home to Yourself, by John O'Donohue
Liza Catino

May all that is unforgiven in you be released.

May your fears yield their deepest tranquilities.

May all that is unlived in you blossom into a future graced with love.

### THE GIFT OF THE WORD

SCRIPTURE READING Baruch 5:1-9

Patty Strauch

**SERMON** 

Taking off the Garment of Sorrow

Pastor Brent

\*HYMN

When Peace, Like a River

See page 6

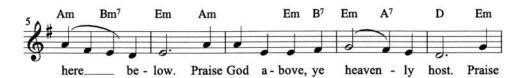
### OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

ADVENT UNISON PRAYER written by Bruce Prewer Elizabeth Young Loving God, be to us as a bulldozer of the spirit. Clear your road in us; clear a path through the detritus of possessions and obsessions. Thrust aside our divided aims and devious games. Topple the ramparts of pride and the doubts that deride. Make a highway on which Christ may come and take possession of the whole territory of our being. To the glory of your name we pray. Amen!

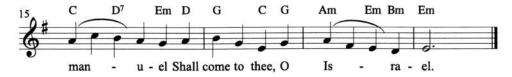
#### CALL TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY Still, Still. Trad. German carol, arr. by Cathy Moklebust \*DOXOLOGY









# \*UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION from Spacious Faith

Holy One, this Advent season we wait in peace and we give in peace.

A peace deeper than our anxiety and fear.

A peace growing from our trust in your loving power.

Bless these gifts and our lives,

And use them to bring your peace to our world. Amen

#### GOING FORTH INTO THE WORLD

#### **INVITATIONS**

\*HYMN We Hail You God's Anointed See page 7

\*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE Carol of the Bells Bell Choir

Trad. Ukrainian carol, by Mykolo Leontovich, arr. by Douglas E. Wagner

**Music Notes** ~ Tracy Wilson, Minister of Music pro tem

Thank you, today, for the Bell Choir's beautiful music making to celebrate the second Sunday in Advent!

We have some wonderful hymns this morning with powerful texts to support the scripture and special readings this morning. But the hymn tunes are also of special mention. The first (*Comfort*, *Comfort*) comes from the Genevan Psalter of 1551, with the title Freu dich sehr, o meine Seele, translated as *O My Soul, Rejoice Thee Greatly*. This is a perfectly matched hymn tune for the Isaiah 40:1 scripture. The second hymn tune was composed by Philip Bliss and is entitled *Ville du Havre*, which is the name of the ship on which Horatio Spafford's four daughters died. The text was written out of grief for such loss. The final hymn tune, Ellacombe, is very familiar to us church goers. It's a traditional German tune used for many other hymns including *I Sing the Mighty Power of God* and even *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*.

**Thank you** to all who helped with today's service, including Deacons (who are also hosting Fellowship) David Anderegg, Gary Cilley, and Elizabeth Young; readers Liza Catino and Patty Strauch; storyteller Elisabeth Bellows. Will Curtiss is running the Livestream and Scarlett Ritcher and Rae Geddes are in the nursery.

# Comfort, Comfort O My People

Isa. 40:1-8

Johannes Olearius, 1671 Transl. Catherine Winkworth, 1863; alt.



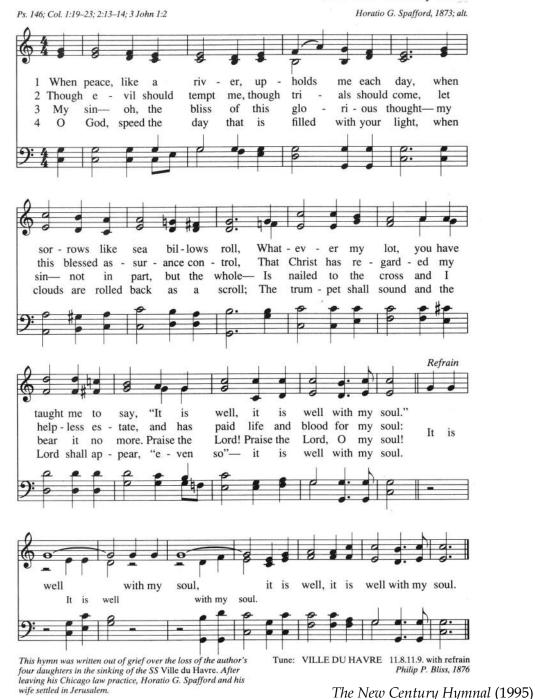
Written for John the Baptist's Day, June 24, this hymn clearly reflects the Isaiah text. Johannes Olearius, a Lutheran pastor, held a faculty appointment at Wittenberg University as well as church administration positions in his region.

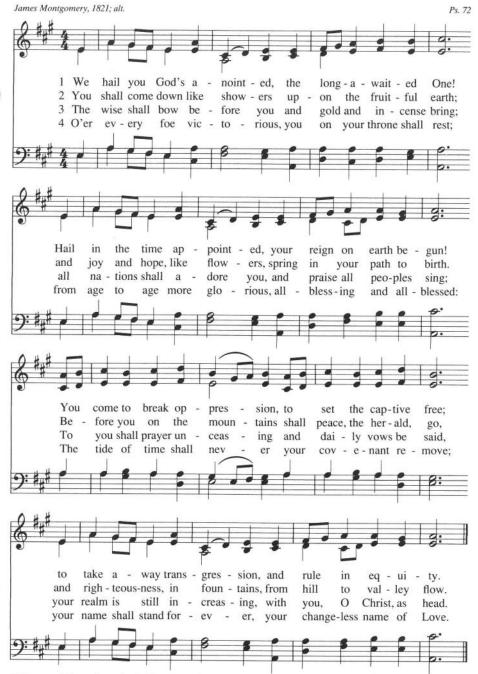
Tune: PSALM 42 8.7.8.7.7.7.8.8. (FREU DICH SEHR) Trente quatre Pseaumes, *Geneva*, 1551

The New Century Hymnal (1995)

# When Peace, Like a River

(It Is Well with My Soul)





7

Written as a Christmas hymn for the Moravian settlement in Yorkshire, England, this hymn has enjoyed widespread popularity from the beginning. It is characteristic of Montgomery's deep faith and passion for social justice.

Tune: ELLACOMBE C.M.D. Gesangbuch der herzoglichen Wirtembergischen katholischen Hofkapelle, 1784

### The Giving Tree

Pick a tag or three for our neighbors so that they have a Merry Christmas. We need the packages wrapped and returned by Sunday December 15. Thank you!

#### **Poinsettias**

We invite you to help transform the sanctuary on Christmas Eve. Donate one or more poinsettias to the church in honor or memory of someone who is in your heart this Christmas. You can then choose to take your plant home or let us to bring it to someone who could use some joy. There are paper forms in the JE Room or just call Will in the church office. The gifts will be listed in the Christmas Eve bulletin. Deadline: December 16.

*Christmas Eve service is at 5:00pm.* 

# **Stockbridge Festival Chorus**

Saturday, December 14, 2024, 3:00pm A joyous Christmas concert at The First Congregational Church. The main selections are two glorious pieces by Ralph Vaughan Williams: Fantasia on Christmas Carols for baritone soloist (John Demler) and chorus, and Magnificat for contralto soloist (Vira Slywotzky) and women's chorus. We will also be singing anthems by David Anderegg, Philip Stopford and Bob Chilcott. Donation \$20 (\$10 for members of local community choirs, free for 18 and under), at the door.

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Reminder: This church is a latex, peanut, and tree-nut free zone for ALL events.

Welcome! We are Open and Affirming, 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.

As followers of Christ and committed to Isaiah's charge to "maintain justice and do what is right," we acknowledge with gratitude and humility that we are learning, speaking, gathering, and worshiping on the ancestral homelands of the Mohican people, who are the indigenous peoples of this land. Despite tremendous hardship in being forced from here, today their community resides in Wisconsin and is known as the Stockbridge-Munsee Community. We pay honor and respect to their ancestors past and present as we commit to building a more inclusive and equitable space for all.

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