



*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 un-lived 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, Still.* Trad. German carol, arr. by Cathy Moglebust

*DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise God, all creatures
here be - low. Praise God a - bove, ye heaven - ly host. Praise
Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost. Re - jice! Re - jice! Em -
man - u - el Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

Chords: Am Bm7 Em Am Em B7 Em A7 D Em
D Bm G C Am D7 G D Em Bm G
C D7 Em D G C G Am Em Bm Em

*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 churchgoers. 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.*

1 "Com - fort, com - fort O my peo - ple, tell of peace," thus says our God;
 2 For the her - ald's voice is call - ing in the des - ert far and near,
 3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er pla - ces plain!

Com - fort those whose hearts are shroud - ed, mourn - ing un - der sor - row's load.
 Bid - ding us to make re - pen - tance since the realm of God is here.
 Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, for Mes - si - ah's ho - ly reign.

Speak un - to Je - ru - sa - lem of the peace that waits for them;
 Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way;
 For God's glo - ry ev - er - more shall be known o'er all the world;

Tell them that their sins I cov - er, and their war - fare now is o - ver.
 Let the val - leys rise in meet - ing and the hills bow down in greet - ing.
 And all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

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 8.7.8.7.7.8.8.
 (FREU DICH SEHR)
 Trente quatre Pseaumes, Geneva, 1551

The New Century Hymnal (1995)

When Peace, Like a River

(It Is Well with My Soul)

Ps. 146; Col. 1:19–23; 2:13–14; 3 John 1:2

Horatio G. Spafford, 1873; alt.

1 When peace, like a riv - er, up - holds me each day, when
 2 Though e - vil should tempt me, though tri - als should come, let
 3 My sin— oh, the bliss of this glo - ri - ous thought— my
 4 O God, speed the day that is filled with your light, when

sor - rows like sea bil - lows roll, What - ev - er my lot, you have
 this blessed as - sur - ance con - trol, That Christ has re - gard - ed my
 sin— not in part, but the whole— Is nailed to the cross and I
 clouds are rolled back as a scroll; The trum - pet shall sound and the

Refrain
 taught me to say, "It is well, it is well with my soul."
 help - less es - tate, and has paid life and blood for my soul: It is
 bear it no more. Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul!
 Lord shall ap - pear, "e - ven so"— it is well with my soul.

well with my soul, it is well, it is well with my soul.
 It is well with my soul.

This hymn was written out of grief over the loss of the author's four daughters in the sinking of the SS Ville du Havre. After leaving his Chicago law practice, Horatio G. Spafford and his wife settled in Jerusalem.

Tune: VILLE DU HAVRE 11.8.11.9. with refrain
 Philip P. Bliss, 1876

The New Century Hymnal (1995)

We Hail You God's Anointed

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James Montgomery, 1821; alt.

Ps. 72

1 We hail you God's a - noint - ed, the long - a - wait - ed One!
 2 You shall come down like show - ers up - on the fruit - ful earth;
 3 The wise shall bow be - fore you and gold and in - cense bring;
 4 O'er ev - ery foe vic - to - rious, you on your throne shall rest;

Hail in the time ap - point - ed, your reign on earth be - gun!
 and joy and hope, like flow - ers, spring in your path to birth.
 all na - tions shall a - dore you, and praise all peo - ples sing;
 from age to age more glo - rious, all - bless - ing and all - blessed:

You come to break op - pres - sion, to set the cap - tive free;
 Be - fore you on the moun - tains shall peace, the her - ald, go,
 To you shall prayer un - ceas - ing and dai - ly vows be said,
 The tide of time shall nev - er your cov - e - nant re - move;

to take a - way trans - gres - sion, and rule in eq - ui - ty.
 and righ - teous - ness, in foun - tains, from hill to val - ley flow.
 your realm is still in - creas - ing, with you, O Christ, as head.
 your name shall stand for - ev - er, your change - less name of Love.

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.



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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