



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

FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

December 29, 2024 – 10:00 a.m.

A reminder: children are welcome to be in worship today, it is designed to be an intergenerational service. Nursery care is available during the worship service; 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

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

PRELUDE

Appalachian Christmas Carols, by Vincent Persichetti

Tracy Wilson & David Anderegg, piano

WELCOME

Rev. Brent Damrow

GATHERING IN WORSHIP

SONG *Good Christian Friends Rejoice* vss. 1&2 Pew hymnal #28

CALL TO WORSHIP written by Tim Graves (adapted) Jo Ann Levitt

One: We waited.

All: And imagined a savior.

One: We imagined power.

All: One like the world but stronger and on our side.

One: We imagined a ruler on a white horse wielding a sword.

All: We got a baby born in a stable among the livestock.

One: We imagined the work done for us through the destruction of our enemies.

All: We receive a young one baby who will teach us our calling to seek reconciliation and to love expansively.

One: Praise be to God for the unexpected babe of Bethlehem.

All: Praise to the wisdom of love. Amen!

BLESSING OF THE CHRISTMAS GIFTS

SONG *What Child is This* Pew hymnal #53

*SHARING OF THE PEACE

THE GIFT OF THE WORD

CONTEMPORARY READING Bonhoeffer Ron Hanft

SONG *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming* Pew hymnal #48

SCRIPTURE READING Luke 2:41-52 Susan Moor

RESPONDING TO THE TEXT

SOME PASTORAL THOUGHTS Pastor Brent

*SONG *Who Would Think that What was Needed*, the Iona Community

Who would think that what was needed to transform and save the earth

Might not be a plan or army proud in purpose, proved in worth?

Who would think, despite derision, what a child should lead the way?

God surprises earth with heaven, coming here on Christmas Day.

OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

BRINGING OUR PRAYERS

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.

PRAYER RESPONSE

Danish Amen

CALL TO THE OFFERING

SONG DURING COLLECTION *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*

Verses 1 & 4 – Pew hymnal #38

*DOXOLOGY

Tune: Old 100th

**Praise God for gifts of hope and peace
Praise God for gifts of joy and love
Praise God for sending Christ to dwell
On earth for us – Emmanuel. Amen.**

BLESSING OF THE GIFTS

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Putting Christmas Away

Pastor Brent

GOING FORTH INTO THE WORLD

INVITATIONS

*SENDING CHARGE / BLESSING posted by Rev. Gord David Anderegg

One: If you choose, you can be instruments of hope in the world.

All: **We choose! We go to spread the hope and promise of a coming child.**

One: If you choose, you can counter the voices of anxiety and despair in the world.

All: **We choose! We sing songs of hope because the world can be changed.**

One: If you choose, you can fight against the fear that freezes the heart of many.

All: **We choose! We will tell of the love that conquers fear, the love of a child in a manger.**

One: The choice is ours to make, how we live into the possibilities of Christmas,

All: the beauty is that we do not live out the choice by our own strength.

One: Go with God, who feeds our hopes and quiets our fears

All: Always and everywhere. Amen.

*SENDING SONG *Go Tell it on the Mountain*

Pew hymnal #29

Music Notes

Today, David Anderegg and I are playing some Appalachian Christmas Carols by Vincent Persichetti based on the inspiration of John Jacob Niles (1892-1980) who was from Kentucky. Niles became a serious student of the region's folk music by transcribing traditional songs from oral sources. Our carols today are *Down in Yon Forest*, *The Cherry Tree*, *The Seven Joys of Mary*, *Jesus, Jesus, Rest Your Head*, *Jesus Born in Beth'ny*, *Lulla Lullay*, and *Jesus the Christ is Born*. ~ Tracy Wilson, Minister of Music pro tem

Thank you to all who helped with today's service, including Deacons David Anderegg and Sarah Conly; readers Ron Hanft, Susan Moor, and Jo Ann Levitt; usher Patty Fadding; fellowship hour Jake and Brent Damrow; greeter Rich Geiler. Will Curtiss is running the Livestream and Scarlett Ritcher and Rae Geddes are in the nursery.

The church office reopens on January 2.

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.

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