



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

**EPIPHANY SUNDAY**

*January 5, 2025 – 10:00 a.m.*

Children are invited to Sunday School at 10:00 a.m. returning to worship after the offering. Nursery care is available during worship; please ask an usher.

Note: We will lift prayers of joy and concern this morning in worship. You may submit a prayer to be read on a slip found in the pew folders, returning it to the prayer box in the Narthex or give it to a Deacon before our prayer time.

**PREPARING FOR WORSHIP**

PRELUDE                      ERMUNTRE DICH, arr. Callahan                      Tracy Wilson  
FRAMING WORDS / WELCOME                      Rev. Brent Damrow

**GATHERING IN WORSHIP**

INTROIT                      *From a Distant Home* Puerto Rican carol                      Choir

\*CALL TO WORSHIP Calvin Institute of Christian Worship                      Tim Bosworth

One: O come, let us worship the Lord and consider what wondrous things God has done:

**All: The Magi who study the heavens follow a guiding star!**

One: O come, let us worship the Lord and consider what wondrous things God has done:

**All: The peoples who live in the shadows see a glorious light!**

One: O come, let us worship the Lord and consider what wondrous things God has done:

**All: The Christ who embodies the Word unveils the hidden plan,  
making us joint heirs of the promise of salvation through the gospel!**

One: O come, let us worship the Lord,

**All: for God has done wondrous things!**

**THE GIFT OF THE WORD**

CONTEMPORARY READING from *The Singing Wilderness*, by Sigurd Olson  
Holland Eaton

The sun was trembling now on the edge of the ridge. It was alive, almost fluid and pulsating. As I watched it sink, I could feel the earth turning from it, actually feel its rotation. Over all was the silence of the wilderness, that sense of oneness which comes only when there are no distracting sights or sounds, when we listen with inward ears and see with inward eyes, when we feel and are aware with our entire beings rather than our senses. I thought as I sat there, "Be still and know I am God," and knew that without stillness there can be not knowing, we cannot know what spirit means.

SONG (please remain seated) *Arise, Your Light is Come*, vs. 1 See page 5

SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 2:1-12 Susan Moor

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

"And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who is to shepherd my people Israel." '

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then,

continued

opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

SERMON

Pastor Brent

\*HYMN

*Arise, Your Light is Come*, vss. 2-4

See page 5

## OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

CALL TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM *The Three Kings*, Peter Cornelius, arr. Atkins

John Demler, soloist

\*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.**

BRINGING OUR PRAYERS

UNISON EPIPHANY PRAYER written by Jeanie Gushee (adapted)

Gary Cilley

**Beloved Jesus, give us the faith and insight of the Magi,  
who, when faced with an ancient hope of a foreign people  
and the appearance of a remarkable star,  
grasped the connection, and went and followed that star.**

**As we stand now at the border of a new year,  
which is like an unknown country.**

**Lead us, like the Magi, on a quest of faithfulness and worship,  
of hopefulness and giving, and always unto Yourself.**

**Meet our needs with your strength. Meet our neighbors with your love.  
Meet the seeming impossible with your possibility. Amen.**

PRAYER RESPONSE *Great Amen for Epiphany*, by David Anderegg

TIME WITH CHILDREN *Food for the Journey*

\*SHARING OF THE PEACE

## GATHERING AT THE TABLE

CONFESSION / ASSURANCE by Rev. Nancy J.

**God of light and darkness, we have seen the glimmer of your star-light beckoning to us, but we have turned away and followed other paths.**

**We confess that we have not loved you with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.**

**Forgive us, Holy One. Strengthen our faltering steps and guide us in your holy way of peace. Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

Pastor Brent

SHARING THE STORY AND BLESSING THE FEAST

*We will be sharing communion in the pews.*

MUSIC DURING DISTRIBUTION *We Three Kings of Orient Are*

*The congregation is invited to join in the refrain following each verse:*

**O star of wonder, star of night,  
Star with royal beauty bright;  
Westward leading, still proceeding,  
Guide us to thy perfect light!**

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING Sung Lord's Prayer

See page 6

ACTIVE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

*We invite you to support our neighbors in need. This month we are supporting the Pop-Up Pantry. Tubs are available for any food items you have brought.*

## GOING FORTH INTO THE WORLD

INVITATIONS

\*HYMN

*What Star is This*

Pew hymnal #68

\*BENEDICTION

Pastor Brent

POSTLUDE

UNE JEUNE PUCELLE, arr. Callahan

*Isa. 60:1; 61:1-2; Luke 4:14-21**Ruth Duck, 1973*

1 A - rise, your light is come! The Spir - it's call o - bey;  
 2 A - rise, your light is come! Fling wide the pris - on door;  
 3 A - rise, your light is come! All you in sor - row born,  
 4 A - rise, your light is come! The moun-tains burst in song!

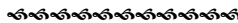
Show forth the glo - ry of your God which shines on you to - day!  
 Pro - claim the cap-tive's lib - er - ty, good tid - ings to the poor.  
 Bind up the bro - ken - heart-ed ones and com - fort those who mourn.  
 Rise up like ea - gles on the wing; God's power will make us strong.

*This hymn was first published by the Ecumenical Women's Center of Chicago in the 1974 collection of hymn adaptations, Because We Are One People. Ruth Duck later included it in her own collection, Dancing in the Universe.*

Tune: FESTAL SONG S.M.  
 William Walter, 1872

Words Copyright © 1992 by G.I.A. Publications, Inc.

*The New Century Hymnal (1995)*



*For the active prayer of Thanksgiving we encourage you to bring non-perishable food items and/or money for food, to support our Pop-Up Pantry. If you wish to contribute by check, please make payable to The First Congregational Church, memo line: Pop-Up Pantry.*

*We look forward to responding to Christ's offering of spiritual food at communion by giving generously to our neighbors' need for physical nourishment.*

# Lord's Prayer

Mark Miller

*mp*  
Our God, in hea-ven, ho-ly is your name, your  
reign come, your will done, on earth as in hea-ven.

*slower*  
Give us to-day our dai-ly bread, and help us for-give, as we have been for-giv-en.

*mf*  
In the time of tri-al lead us in-to light, for yours is the kin-dom, and the  
po-wer, and the glo-ry, for-e-ver. Our God, in  
*f* *mp*  
hea-ven, ho-ly is your name, ho-ly is your name.

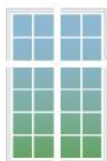
## Music Notes

The Huron carol is Canada's oldest Christmas carol, written probably in 1642 by Jean de Brebeuf, a Jesuit missionary at Sainte-Marie among the Hurons in Canada. He wrote the lyrics in the native language of the Huron/Wendat people. The melody is based on a traditional French folk song *Une Jeune Pucelle*. The English lyrics were written in 1926 by Jesse Edgar Middleton. Note the imagery reflecting the Huron religious concepts: Jesus is born in a "lodge of broken bark" and wrapped in a "robe of rabbit skin". He is surrounded by hunters rather than shepherds and the Magi are portrayed as "chiefs from afar" who bring gifts of "fox and beaver pelts" rather than gold, frankincense and myrrh. The English translation uses a traditional Algonquian Gitchi Manitou for God.

~ Tracy Wilson, Minister of Music pro tem, with thanks to Wikipedia



**Thank you** to all who helped with today's service, including Deacons Gary Cilly and Elizabeth Young; readers Tim Bosworth, Holland Eaton, and Susan Moor; usher Jo Ann Levitt; fellowship Liza Catino and Marion Pomeroy; greeter Charlotte Rodgers; storytellers Kim Ruffing and Jeremy Ridenour. Will Curtiss is running the Livestream and Rae Geddes is in the nursery.



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
— Stockbridge, Massachusetts —

## News and Upcoming Events

**Community dinner** - all are welcome on the Second Wednesday of every month for dinner beginning at 5:30pm and wrapping up at 6:45. We provide main dishes including vegetarian options. Folks are welcome to bring **nut-free** side dishes or desserts but not required. Questions – call the church office. Next up: **Chili Bar** on January 8.

Come join the **Supper Book Club!** We are kicking off this new venture with former local pastor Mark Longhurst's wonderful new book, *The Holy Ordinary*.

Copies of the book are available in the church office. We will gather for a potluck meal on Wednesday January 22 at 6:00pm to cover the first two sections of the book. Give Pastor Brent a call to learn more.

**Applause** is a wonderful reaction to events that bring us joy, and is often given in recognition of being entertained. In church, where we are worshipping God, however, applause can be a distraction from the celebration of the Holy Spirit. To express appreciation for music that is part of worship, we ask that applause be saved until after the postlude (when worship is over).

We do encourage applause as an expression of joyful approval following some activities that occur during church service, such as welcoming new members, recognizing significant milestones (birthdays, anniversaries), or appreciating a special gift to the congregation. At these moments, the pastor will encourage applause, or ask "Do I hear an Amen?"

We are pleased that you are with us today and are grateful for your presence during this worship service.

*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.*

(413) 298-3137 | office@stockbridgeucc.org | stockbridgeucc.org

All hymns reprinted under OneLicense.net A-723107