

First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Ellsworth, Maine



Founded in 1812

*Come with hope or despair,
expectation, or disappointment, and
seek God even as God seeks you.*

ORDER OF WORSHIP
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT & HOLY COMMUNION

December 1, 2024

10 a.m.

*Hearing devices and large print hymnals are available—
please ask an usher if you require them.*

Thank you for turning off electronic devices before worship begins.

**Please stand if you are able.*

RINGING THE BELL

9:45 a.m.

LIGHTING THE CANDLES

PRELUDE

Be Still My Soul

arr. Rodriguez

Near to the Heart of God

arr. Rodriguez

WELCOME

CHORAL INTROIT

We come as guests invited

Steurlein

You may follow the text on page 386 in the hymnal.

LIGHTING THE CANDLE OF HOPE

One: Today, we begin our celebration of Advent. For these next four Sundays, we will eagerly anticipate the gift that is ours in Jesus Christ. On this first Sunday of Advent, we light the candle of hope.

All: We rejoice that in Jesus Christ, God is with us, Emmanuel.

One: Hope is the assurance that God is with us even in the darkest of times.

All: Hope is our confidence that God's presence is felt around the world through the work of the Church. Gracious God, help each of us to bring hope into the lives of others. God is our hope today and forever! Thanks be to God.

***CALL TO WORSHIP (responsively)**

One: Come, let us worship God together.

All: For God has made us and the earth that nurtures us.

One: Let us rejoice in the love of God and the wonder of the story of Christmas.

All: May the joy of the Lord be our strength. Come, let us be renewed together.

***HYMN**

Come, O long-expected Jesus

125

***GATHERING PRAYER (unison)**

Gracious and eternal God, our hearts desire the warmth of your love, and our minds are searching for the light of your Word. Increase our longing for Christ our Savior, and give us the strength to grow in love, that the dawn of his coming may find us rejoicing in his presence and welcoming the light of his truth. As Jesus taught us, we pray ...

***THE LORD'S PRAYER (unison)**

Our Father, 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. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

CHORAL ANTHEM

For All Good Things

Martin & Courtney

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (unison)

On that first Christmas, the Word became flesh and lived among us, full of grace and truth. O God, please open your Word to us this day, and open us to your Word. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Old Testament	Psalm 25:1-10	pew Bible p.465 OT
Old Testament	Jeremiah 33:14-16	pew Bible p.696 OT
Gospel	Luke 21:25-36	pew Bible p.74 NT
Epistle	1 Thessalonians 3:6-13	pew Bible p.180 NT

SERMON

Emmanuel

Rev. Henry

*HYMN

O come, O come, Emmanuel

119

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

O God of righteousness and steadfast love, you have come very close, very close indeed. You see our joys, our sorrows, our dreams, our insecurities, our wounds, our hopes, our frustrations, our guilt, our self-justifications. You see everything. We hide nothing from you; rather, we throw ourselves upon your mercy and grace, in the name of Jesus our Savior and Lord. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

from Revelation 3:20-21

Jesus says, "Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me. To the one who conquers I will give a place with me on my throne, just as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne."

OFFERING OUR GIFTS & TITHES

OFFERTORY

*My Soul Gives Glory to My God
Blessed Be the God of Israel*

Webb
Hopson

*DOXOLOGY

46

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation

Hymn *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence* (vs. 1-2) 124

Prayers of the People & Communion Prayer

Sharing the Bread & the Cup

Prayer of Thanksgiving (unison)

God of grace, thank you for the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, God with us. In this season of hope, may the meal we have shared together nourish us to be Christ's body in the world, your kingdom come, your will done on earth as it is in heaven. With the angels in heaven we join in singing your praises. Glory to God in the highest! Alleluia! Alleluia! Amen.

*HYMN *Hark! the herald angels sing* 150

BENEDICTION (please be seated)

RESPONSE *Blest be the tie that binds our hearts* 433

Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love:
The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.
When we are called to part, it gives us inward pain;
But we shall still be joined in heart, and hope to meet again.

POSTLUDE *Forest Green* arr. Rodriguez

The Prayer of Thanksgiving in the Sacrament of Holy Communion is adapted from the "Advent Communion Service" posted at leadinginworship.com (Copyright Carol Penner www.leadinginworship.com) Used with permission.

Blest be the tie, words John Fawcett 1872, tune DENNIS Johann Nageli 1828 | Public Domain

Nancy Sargent, *Pianist & Choral Director*
Katharine Schrader, *Advent Candle*
Rev. John A. Lacey, *Liturgist*
Rev. Dr. David P. Henry, *Guest Minister*
Cindy Sargent & Rev. John A. Lacey, *Communion Stewards*
Betty & Jim Kimbrell, *Ushers*
Lois Stevens, *Greeter*
Katharine Schrader, *December Deacon*
Ruth & Troy Tainter, *Facebook, WDEA & Zoom*



MASKING IS OPTIONAL IN THE CHURCH BUILDING.
We suggest physical distancing. Thank you for respecting the space of those who choose to mask.

THE WELCOME TABLE

is our free community meal we serve Wednesdays,
between 2:30-4 p.m. It is take-out only.
Please call the church on Wednesdays **before noon**, 667-8321,
to reserve a meal. Donations always gratefully received.



“ ...the Glory of God
shone around them...
Luke 2:9 ”

Be the Light

Blessings

Among the many letters and notes the Pension Boards receives from recipients of gifts made possible by contributions to the Christmas Fund were these words:

*As I have been blessed, I hope that this
gift will be a blessing to the many faithful servants
in the United Church of Christ - especially widows
and clergy families - in perpetuity.*



- Lydia Morrow
Annapolis, MD

Thanks to your generosity, last year the Christmas Fund provided over \$1.9 million in pension and health benefits, emergency grants, and thank-you checks to retired church servants and their families.

Every gift came from people like you. This year, please give what you can to continue supporting those who've devoted their lives to serving others.

This Christmas, celebrate the blessings in your life by making a gift to our ministers, church workers, and their families.

Visit christmasfund.org to learn more and donate online.



Donate Online Here!

Our purpose,
First Congregational Church, UCC, Ellsworth, Maine:
To embrace the life, ministry and teachings of Jesus Christ
In meaningful and dynamic ways through
creative worship,
supportive fellowship,
compassionate outreach, and
stimulating Christian education for all ages;
To be a faithful community which, led by the Holy Spirit,
expresses hospitality,
nurtures spiritual growth, and
promotes a deep sense of belonging;
To strive to build on commonalities while seeking to
understand, accept, and
celebrate our differences;
To stand as a beacon of hope in a hurting and troubled world by
sharing the Good News of the Gospel, and
practicing God's love as embodied by Jesus Christ.
We welcome all to walk with us on the journey of faith.
As adopted by the Congregation at its Annual Meeting – January 22, 2012



First Congregational Church UCC - Founded 1812
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