



First Congregational Church UCC - Founded 1812
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*Come with hope or despair, expectation, or disappointment,
and seek God even as God seeks you.*

**ORDER OF WORSHIP
THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

December 15, 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

The Coventry Carol
Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

arr. Lasky
arr. Page

WELCOME

CHORAL INTROIT

One Candle is Lit

Kirkpatrick

Come, festively sing while awaiting the birth, join angels in dancing from heaven to earth. Wave banners of good news, lift high thankful praise. One candle is lit for the joy of these days.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE OF PEACE

One: The third candle of Advent is the candle of Joy. When the angel Gabriel told Mary that a special child would be born to her she was filled with joy.

All: Just as the birth of Jesus gave great joy to his mother, so his presence in the world brought "good news of a great joy which will come to all people."

One: "Joy to the world, the Lord is come!"

(The candle of Joy is lit.)

*CALL TO WORSHIP (responsively)

One: Come! Let us gather together in wonder and awe of all God has done!

All: Let us revel in the Christmas story!

One: May this ancient story be made new in our hearts today.

All: May we have hearts that are open to receive the joy of the Lord! May we be strengthened by His joy as we walk thru winter's dark days!

*HYMN

Joy to the world

143

*GATHERING PRAYER (unison)

Thank you, Lord, for the gift of Your Son and His joy! Prepare our hearts, Holy Spirit, that when Jesus knocks, He hears a resounding "Come in!" May our lives always have plenty of room for Him! Amen.

CHILDREN'S TIME FOR ALL AGES & 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 *Behold, a Tiny Baby!* Lightfoot

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel.
Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!
Behold, a tiny baby, behold, a tiny child.
Behold him in a manger, so peaceful and so mild.
The angels sang his glory! The shepherds saw the sign,
That blessed light which guided them to the holy child divine!
Sing, "Gloria!" Hosanna in excelsis!
O come, desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (unison)

Lord, as we review a story that we have reviewed a thousand times before, please give us fresh eyes to see it anew. Holy Spirit, stir our hearts to the miracle of Christmas once more! Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Old Testament	Isaiah 12:2-6	pew Bible p.601 OT
Gospel	Luke 3:15-18	pew Bible p.52 NT

SERMON **Is There Room in Your Heart?** Rev. McDonald

*HYMN *Good Christian friends, rejoice* 164

MORNING PRAYERS

Joys & Concerns
Silent Prayer & Pastoral Prayer
Prayer for those Celebrating Birthdays & Anniversaries:
Evan, Jeramy, Jane & Tom
Choral Response *Dresden Amen* Naumann

OFFERING OUR GIFTS & TITHES

OFFERTORY *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear* Willis

*DOXOLOGY 46

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)

In this time of shopping, feasting and making wishlists, may we maintain grateful hearts—never forgetting from whom our blessings come! As we accumulate more things this holiday season, may we stay humble—giving You glory for your provision, never failing to bring back to you what is yours, never failing to be kind and generous to the world around us. Please accept our offering today, to the furtherance of Your Kingdom! Amen.

*HYMN *How Great Our Joy!* 170

BENEDICTION (please be seated)

In all your comings and goings, may the joy of the Lord be your strength!
Amen.

CHORAL RESPONSE *Go forth to serve* Tallis

Go forth to serve the Lord of Life, go forth to do His holy will.
His name sing out along your way, who was, and is forevermore. Amen.

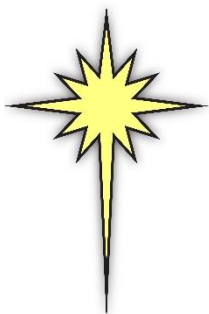
POSTLUDE *Good King Wenceslas* arr. Lasky

One Candle is Lit, music William J. Kirkpatrick 1895 | Public Domain
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Behold, a Tiny Baby! words & music Mary Lynn Lightfoot
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Go forth to serve, text unknown, tune TALLIS' CANON Thomas Tallis c. 1561 | Public Domain

Lynn Hall, *Organist*
Nancy Sargent, *Choral Director*
Mary & Chris Turner, *Advent Candle*
Myrna Vallette, *Liturgist*
Rev. Cassandra McDonald, *Guest Minister*
Cindy & Charlie Sargent, *Ushers*
Lois Stevens, *Greeter*
Katharine Schrader, *December Deacon*
Ruth & Troy Tainter, *Facebook, WDEA & Zoom*



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE - Tuesday, December 24, at 7 p.m. Everyone is invited to attend the traditional Service of Lessons & Carols, where we hear familiar passages from Scripture and sing beloved carols. The McIntyres will be our musical guests. We will conclude with candle-lighting throughout the congregation as we sing “Silent night”. The service will broadcast live through WDEA AM 1370, Facebook, and Zoom to worship at home.

THE WELCOME TABLE SERVED 115 MEALS ON DECEMBER 11.

Serving Wednesdays 2:30 - 4 p.m., take-out only

WELCOME TABLE, our free community meal, serves take-out only.

Please call the church on Wednesdays **before noon**, 667-8321, to reserve a meal. Donations always gratefully received.

We will not serve a meal on Wednesday, December 25.

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