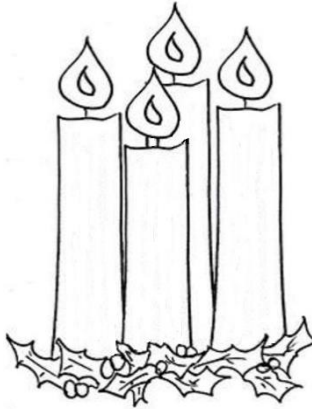


First Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
Ellsworth, Maine



*Founded in 1812*

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



**Welcome all who have come to worship with us  
this Fourth Sunday of Advent.**

**We pray that your experience today  
will enrich and sustain you in the week ahead.  
If you are visiting, we hope you will introduce yourself  
to those around you and to the Pastor.**

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Members of the Busy Bodies made  
pocket-size prayer squares  
for anyone who would like one.

Each one has a little cross on it and a tag that says:

*This Prayer Square was made for you by a member of  
the First Congregational Church UCC of Ellsworth.*

*It is filled with love and prayers.*

*Carry it in your purse or pocket to bring you comfort and peace.*

**The prayer squares are available in baskets at each entrance  
to the sanctuary for anyone who would like to have one.**

**ORDER FOR WORSHIP  
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**December 22, 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

*O Little Town of Bethlehem  
Angels We Have Heard on High*

arr. Lasky  
arr. Lasky

WELCOME

CHORAL INTROIT *Love Came Down at Christmas*

Carter

Love shall be our token, love be yours and love be mine,  
Love to God and all men, love for plea and gift and sign.  
Love came down at Christmas, love all lovely, love divine.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE OF PEACE

**One:** We light this candle as a symbol of the love to be found in God's kingdom on earth.

**All:** **For the Lord elevates the lowly, releases the captive, and brings sight to the blind. We rejoice in God's justice and mercy, faithful to all generations. Come, Lord Jesus, come!**

(The candle of Love is lit.)

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP (responsively)**

One: Let us come together and worship, drawn by the promises of God:

**All: That we are being saved from our enemies, and may serve God without fear.**

One: That we will receive knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of our sins.

**All: That the dawn from on high will break upon us.**

One: To give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,

**All: To guide our feet into the way of peace.**

**\*HYMN**

*While shepherds watched their flocks*

154

**\*GATHERING PRAYER (unison)**

**We praise you, God of promise, and give you thanks for Mary, a daughter of Israel, who sang the songs of David, who knew the deeds of Judith, and held in her heart the burning words of Isaiah. We pray as Mary did: may your name be holy, may the hungry be filled, may the proud be scattered and the oppressed raised, may your love be ever with your people. May all that we do in this season shine forth with your love. Let Christ be seen in us. We make our prayers through Mary's child, Jesus who is the Christ, forever and ever. Amen.**

**BLESSING OF THE PRAYER SQUARES (unison)**

**Our heavenly God, we ask you to bless these prayer squares. May those who receive them keep them close as a reminder of your presence in their lives, and that they feel love, comfort, hope, and peace. Amen.**

**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 *O Precious Child of Bethlehem*

Courtney

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (unison)

**Holy One, giver of life and light, as your word is read and proclaimed, illumine our hearts and minds, that by the power of the Holy Spirit, our lives may reflect God's glory. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Old Testament

Psalm 146:5-10

pew Bible p.545 OT

Gospel

Luke 1:46b-55

pew Bible p.49 NT

SERMON

**Blessed Are You, Mary, Among Women**

Rev. Bowie

\*HYMN

*My soul gives glory to my God*

130

MORNING PRAYERS

Joys & Concerns

Silent Prayer & Pastoral Prayer

Prayer for those Celebrating Birthdays & Anniversaries:

Irv, Brett, David, Jenn, Katy, Bill & Leita, Bill & Julie, Allen & Elaine

Choral Response

*Amen*

Danish

OFFERING OUR GIFTS & TITHES

OFFERTORY

*I Wonder as I Wander*

arr. Walz

\*DOXOLOGY

46

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)

\*HYMN

*O little town of Bethlehem*

144

BENEDICTION

CHORAL RESPONSE

*Dona nobis pacem*

trad.

POSTLUDE

*Joy to the World*

arr. Lasky

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*Love Came Down at Christmas*, text Christina G. Rossetti | Public Domain  
Music John Carter ©1986 Hope Publishing Co. | CCLI license # 11546442 Streaming # 20543232

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Lynn Hall, *Organist & Flautist*

Nancy Sargent, *Choral Director*

Lynn & Michale Hall, *Advent Candle*

Michael Hall, *Liturgist*

Rev. Keith Bowie, *Transitional Minister*

Sue & Peter Bedard, *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.

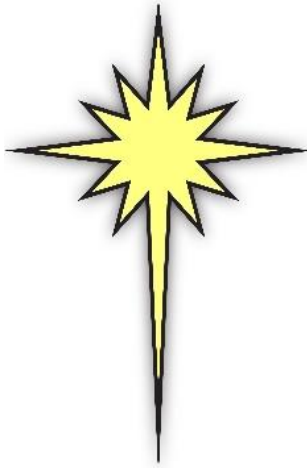
**THE WELCOME TABLE SERVED 115 MEALS ON DECEMBER 18.**

**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, nor on Wednesday January 1, 2025.**



**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 worship with candle-lighting throughout the congregation as we sing “Silent night”. The service will broadcast live through WDEA AM 1370.



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

Be the Light

## Healing

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:

*We were always doing ministry, always serving (others)... I always say about people like (us), who heals the healer?*



*Very often... we don't know how to go about asking for help to get the support we need...*

- *Veronica Kyle, member of Covenant UCC  
South Holland, IL*

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.

Will you donate this year to bring the joy of the Christmas season to our ministers and church workers all year long?

Visit [christmasfund.org](http://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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ellsworthucc.org facebook.com/fccellsworth