

First Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
Ellsworth, Maine



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

**ORDER FOR WORSHIP  
CHRISTMAS EVE**

**December 24, 2024**

**7 p.m.**

PRELUDE

WORDS OF WELCOME

ORGAN INTROIT

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

**One:** We come this evening with seekers all over the world. We look for the fulfillment of God’s promises made to us through angel messengers and through prophets of old.

**All: We who have walked in darkness have seen a great light. We who have lived in a land of deep darkness—on us light is shining.**

**One:** For a child has been born for us, an infant given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders, who is named wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

**All: Come, O God, and by the power of your Holy Spirit show us the way to Bethlehem, that we too might kneel and pay homage to this newborn King, come to be the Savior of the world.**

**\*CAROL**                                *O come, all ye faithful*                                148

**READING**                                **THE PROPHECY**                                Isaiah 9:2-7

**CAROL**                                *O come, O come, Emmanuel*                                119

**READING**                                **THE ANNUNCIATION**                                Luke 1:26-38

**CAROL**                                *Once in royal David’s city*                                165

READING

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

Luke 2:1-7

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

One: We light the Christ candle to symbolize God's promise fulfilled.

**All: Give to us, this holy night, the courage to lay ourselves open to the wonder and healing of your coming.**

\*CAROL

*Joy to the world*

143

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER & 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.**

READING

THE ANGELS SING THE STORY

Luke 2:8-20

DUET

*A Hallelujah Christmas*

READING

THE STAR GUIDES US

Matthew 2:1-12

CAROL

*O holy night* (v1 only)

Cappeau

**O holy night, the stars are brightly shining,**

**It is the night of the dear Savior's birth.**

**Long lay the world in sin and error pining,**

**till he appeared and the soul felt its worth.**

**A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices,**

**for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!**

**Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!**

**O night divine! O night when Christ was born!**

**O night divine! O night, O night divine!**

## INVITATION TO THE CHRISTMAS OFFERING

## OFFERTORY

## DOXOLOGY

Tune: CRANHAM

**What can I give him, poor as I am?  
 If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;  
 If I were a wise man, I would do my part;  
 Yet what I can give him: give my heart.**

## \*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)

**God of every good and perfect gift, we thank you for your greatest gift, your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. How fitting, and wondrous, that we may now bring gifts to you! May all that we give, and all that we are, glorify you and build your kingdom of love and light. Amen.**

## READING

## THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

John 1:1-5, 9-14

## CAROL

*Hark! the herald angels sing*

150

## RECEIVING AND SHARING THE LIGHT

We will now share the light of Christ. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." As Christ's light spreads among us, let us pray that the light of God's love will shine above us and within us and below us and all about us. We pray that the light of love will fill everyone's heart this night. (Persons nearest the aisles will light their candles from the ushers' candles, and pass on the light in the pews. Please hold candles upright as we sing and extinguish them at the end of the carol).

\*CAROL

*Silent night, holy night*

145

Silent night, holy night, all is calm,  
all is bright round yon virgin mother and child,  
Holy infant so tender and mild; sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night holy night, shepherds quake at the sight,  
glories stream from heaven afar,  
Heavenly hosts sing alleluia; Christ, the Savior is born!

Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light  
radiant beams from thy holy face,  
With the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus, Lord at thy birth.

Silent night, holy night, wondrous star, lend thy light;  
with the angels let us sing,  
Alleluia to our King; Christ, the Savior is born.

\*PRAYER (unison)

**O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray.  
Cast out our sin and enter in, be born is us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell,  
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord, Emmanuel. Amen.**

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

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O holy night, words & music Placide Cappeau 1847, translation John S. Dwight | Public Domain

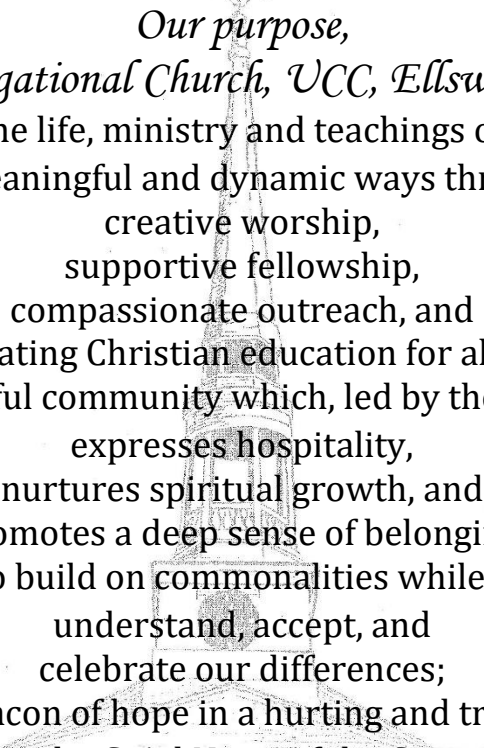
*What can I give him*, words Christina Rossetti 1872, tune CRANHAM Gustav Holst 1906 | Public Domain

Laura & David McIntyre, *Guest Musicians*  
Lynn Hall, *Organist*  
Rev. Keith Bowie, *Transitional Minister*  
Bonnie Carter, Tim Carter, Michael Hall, Katharine Schrader, and  
Myrna Vallette, *Readers*  
The Carters, *Advent Candle Lighters*  
Cindy & Charlie Sargent, *Ushers*  
Lois Stevens, *Greeter*  
Katharine Schrader, *December Deacon*  
Ruth & Troy Tainter, *WDEA, Facebook & Zoom*

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The offering supports the Christmas Fund of the United Church of Christ, used to provide emergency grants, pension and health supplementation to low-income retired clergy and lay employees.

Please join us next Sunday, December 29, for regular Sunday worship at 10 o'clock.



*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 - Founded 1812**

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