

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH CANTON CENTER, CT

United Church of Christ



December 19, 2021 ~ 10:00 a.m.

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Please stand, if able. **Bold denotes unison response.*

CHIMES

Karen Needham

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Brief announcements from the congregation are welcome. **Those wishing to make an announcement** are asked to be in the front pews at the start of the announcement period.*

***Prayer request cards** may be found on the tables at the back of the church.*

***Offerings** may be placed in the marked boxes on the tables at the back of the church.*

PRELUDE

Rolling Downward Through the Midnight
Men's Quartet

Christopher Baker

CALL TO WORSHIP

People of Advent, let us gather our hearts and minds,
as today we continue to tell a sacred story:

a promise, a birth, a light, a hope.

In word and in song, in voice and in silence,
we remember what Advent teaches:

a patience, a watching, a waiting, a trust.

As Christmas draws closer, we remember its gift,

that the story of Jesus is the story of Love.

May that love speak to us, and in us, and through us,

as we welcome the birth of Emmanuel.

*HYMN

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear Pilgrim (red), 129

*It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold.
"Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heavn's all gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.*

*Still through the cloven skies they come,, with peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lonely plains they bend on hovering wing;
O rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing!*

*And you beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way, with painful steps and slow,
Look now, for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing;
O rest beside the weary road and hear the angels sing!*

*For lo, the days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old,
When with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold;
When peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world send back the song which now the angels sing.*

*GATHERING PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Creator God, Maker of all things,
today may our eyes and ears be open to your beauty,
our spirits open to your wisdom, our hearts open to your love,
so that as we welcome Christmas we truly welcome Christ.
Today, this week, and always, may the Child be born again –
within us, and among us, that together we might be
the beloved community he calls us to be.
We gather our prayers into one prayer, as we also say together:

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 debts
as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power
and the glory forever. Amen.

*SUNG RESPONSE

Gloria

① Dm Gm C F ② Dm Gm C F
Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, in ex - cel - sis De - o!

③ Dm Gm C F ④ Dm Gm C F
Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE: LOVE

Kate, Hunter and Declan St. Amand

On this last Sunday of Advent, we light the fourth candle, for love.
We remember the first candle, for hope; the second, for peace; the third, for joy.

Today, the light increases: *hope, peace & joy add love.*

We draw ever closer to the birth of the one who teaches us to know God's love
and to live it courageously,

across all the divides of our world.

The Christ Child grew to teach us this, to know love's power and to live it fully,

with each other and with all others.

Friends, may Christmas be for us a remembering...

...that God is love.

The four candles of Advent are lit.

ANTHEM *The Snow Lay on the Ground* (Venite Adoramus) Trad. English arr. Jody Lindh
The Senior Choir

READING FROM SCRIPTURE Isaiah 9:2, 6-7
Unison reading #114, Pilgrim Hymnal (red), p. 541

ANTHEM *Celtic Christmas Lullaby* Joel Raney
The Senior Choir, Cindy Webb-flute

READING FROM SCRIPTURE Matthew 1:18-25

THE ASSEMBLING OF THE CRECHE SCENE

Carol (seated) *O Little Town of Bethlehem* Pilgrim (red), 134
Verses 1, 2 and 3

As the carol is sung, figures for the creche scene will be brought forward.

*O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.*

*For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars together, proclaim the holy birth!
and praises sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth.*

*How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin
Where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.*

ANTHEM *Still, Still, Still* Trad. German Cathy Moglebust
The Cherry Brook Chimes Handbell Choir

DEDICATION OF OFFERINGS

**God of every goodness, may your spirit bless all the offerings we make,
that they might become love, compassion & justice in our world.
Through them, may we bear the light of Christ in all seasons. Amen.**

ANTHEM *Panis Angelicus (O Lord Most Holy)* Cesar Franck
Bill Thomas, soloist

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Joys & Concerns, Pastoral Prayer

ANTHEM *Gloria* arr. Francis Callahan
The Cherry Brook Chimes Handbell Choir

*HYMN *Angels We Have Heard on High* Pilgrim (red), 116

*Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply echo back their joyous strains.*

Refrain: Gloria, in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.

*Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
Say what may the tidings be which inspire your heavenly song.*

Refrain

*Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;
Come adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord, the newborn King.*

Refrain

*BENEDICTION

*POSTLUDE *Pan-a-Pan* Trad. French arr. Hart Morris

WELCOME

We're glad you've joined us for worship today. Please know that whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here! If you are visiting today, please help us get to know you better by filling out one of the visitor cards in the pews and placing it in the offering plate. Questions? Please feel free to ask the pastor, or call the church office during the week.

UPCOMING SERVICES

Rev. Brenda will be on vacation from Dec. 25 through Jan. 2.

Dec. 26 – The service will be led by Deacons, with a reflection offered by Tim LeGeyt.

Jan. 2 – Guest pastor will be the Rev. Terry Schmitt. Communion will be on Jan. 9.

DO YOU NEED A LITTLE CHRISTMAS – RIGHT THIS VERY MINUTE?

You're in luck! The Scrip table is a great place to do that last minute Christmas shopping. We have a supply of popular gift giving cards in stock for immediate purchase today during coffee hour. Stop by to see if you can check anyone else off your list! Thanks for your support!

Thank you to our Music Director: Mary Lou Keefe, and all of our **Choir Members:**

SENIOR CHOIR

Sopranos

Donna Hammond
Megan Keefe
Marilyn Larose
Judy Robinson

Altos

Kathleen Lundgren
Linda McAllister
Karen Needham
Kathy Pickrell
Clare Workman

Tenors

Jerry Alonzy
Tim LeGeyt

Basses

Art Dewey
Paul Stansel
Jim Todd

CHERRY BROOK CHIMES BELL CHOIR

Hugh Anderson, Donna Hammond, Megan Keefe, Gina Magennis,
Karen Needham, Kathy Pickrell, Allison Potter, Martha Stansel, Cindy Webb,

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

DECEMBER 24



7:00 p.m. , with music by vocal and handbell choirs.

THINKING AHEAD:

CONTACT-TRACING FORMS FOR CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

If you are going to have someone attending church with you on Christmas Eve for whom we would not already have a Covid contact-tracing form on file (the ones we use for every-Sunday check-in at the door),

please consider having forms for them filled out ahead of time and brought to the service that evening, to help us avoid congestion at the door.

You may pick up hard copies at the back of the church.

Pastor: The Rev. Dr. Brenda Pelc-Faszczka

Director of Music: Mary Lou Keefe

Dir. of Faith Formation: Sarah Pradhan

Duty Deacons: Vicki Rees & Tim LeGeyt

Coffee Hour Host: Cora Mutch

Ministers: Every Member

Office Manager Kristen DiMattia

Sexton: Walt LeGeyt

Duty Trustee: Scott Munson/Julius Ziembra

Camera: Kristin Oswald

Sunday 19	Monday 20	Tuesday 21	Wednesday 22	Thursday 23	Friday 24	Saturday 25
Worship 10:00 am	Sr. Choir 5:00 pm. ACA 7 pm	AA 7 pm			Christmas Eve Worship 7:00 pm	AA 11 pm

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We gather as a welcoming community in worship, learning, service and fellowship, to embody Christ's message of love, compassion and justice. Joining faith with action, both within and beyond our church, we strive to build a community that serves all.

An Open and Affirming Congregation



THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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