

**THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
CANTON CENTER, CT**



December 24, 2021 - 7:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF CANTON CENTER
United Church of Christ

December 24, 2021

CHRISTMAS EVE

7:00 p.m.

All who are able, please stand. **Bold denotes unison voice*

CHIMES

Karen Needham

WELCOME

PRELUDE

Gloria

Francis Callahan

The Cherry Brook Chimes Handbell Choir

CALL TO WORSHIP

Night of beauty, night of silence,

night of praying, night of wonder....

This night calls to our spirits and speaks to our hearts,

awakens our souls and deepens our faith.

This night is for hope and peace, for joy and love.

**This night is for welcoming Christ again,
into ourselves and into our world.**

***CAROL**

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Pilgrim (red), 132

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,

O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;

Come and behold him, born the king of angels;

Refrain: O come, let us adore him, O come let us adore him,

O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,

Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!

Glory to God, all glory in the highest;

Refrain

Child, for us sinners, poor and in the manger,

We would embrace thee with love and awe;

Who would not love thee, loving us so dearly:

Refrain

*Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,
Jesus, to thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;
Refrain*

***PRAYER FOR CHRISTMAS EVE & THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Ali Hager

God of Christmas, Spirit of Love, as we gather tonight
may it be with a remembering that you are here in this place,
as you are everywhere, in all places;
that your love for us and for this world
is within us, among us, around us.
May the words and sounds and sights of this night,
may the remembering of an ancient story
that tells itself to us again,
gentle our spirits and awaken our hearts,
stirring our memories and kindling our hopes,
as we welcome Christmas and welcome Christ.
We pray in the name of the Child, 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 CHRIST CANDLE

The Sealand family: Evelyn, Bev, Diane

Through the season of Advent, we have remembered
what it means to be people straining forward:
watching and waiting, trusting and praying,
for the coming of God's light into the world.

We give thanks for days of Advent preparation,
when our hearts have learned again to awaken to God.

**We have lit the candles of hope, peace, joy and love,
longing for the day when the things of darkness --
selfishness and greed, hate and violence --
are not the way of the world.**

Tonight we light the Christ candle, and remember the birth of the one
who bears God's light to us.

**We pray that as we follow him in the ways of love that is brave,
the light will be born anew in us and in our world.**

May Christ be our light upon the past,

that we might learn from it with thankfulness;

our light in the present,

that we might live in it with love;

our light for the future,

that we might work for it with hope.

The Christ candle is lit.

ANTHEM

Mary, Did You Know

Jerry Alonzy-soloist, Scott Neumann-guitar

LITANY

Ali Hager

This is the story that tells itself to us again, at every Christmas,
in every year:

**that the light comes into the world,
the same light that was from the beginning,
and no darkness overcomes it.**

We remember that Mary felt unsettled and pondered her role,
as we are sometimes unsettled and ponder ours.

But the light comes—holy, precious, embracing everything,
God's own love, given to all.

The Word makes itself known in our world,

it becomes flesh and lives where we live:

Glory we can see with our own eyes,

whether we are shepherds or kings,

big people or little people,

whether we feel ready, or worthy, or not.

What comes into the world is light...

light to live by, that nothing can hide.

What comes into the world is love,

love to live by, that nothing can kill.

This is the story that tells itself to us again, at every Christmas
in every year.

Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

Celtic Christmas Lullaby

Joel Raney

The Senior Choir, Cindy Webb-flute

READING FROM SCRIPTURE

Luke 2:1-20

Casey Levine

REFLECTION FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

Christmas Re-lig-ion

THE OFFERING

The Christmas Eve offering will be for the Canton Fuel Bank.

Thank you for your gifts that will help to serve a true need in our community this winter.

Please make checks payable to First Congregational Church, Canton Center.

Offertory anthem: *Our Joy and Heart's Delight*

The Senior Choir

Based on Somerset Wassail,

arr. Benjamin Harlin

***Sung by all:** (*"In the Bleak Midwinter,"* v. 4)

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.

But what I can, I give him...give my heart.

*** Prayer of Dedication**

ANTHEM

We Three Kings

The Cherry Brook Chimes Handbell Choir

CHRISTMAS PRAYERS

THE LIGHTING OF CANDLES

The light is passed from the Christ candle into the congregation, symbolizing the light of Christ within us, among us, and throughout the world. As you pass the light to the next person, please tip unlit candles only and be sure that the lit candle remains upright. For safety purposes, we ask that children under the age of 10 not handle lit candles by themselves.

ANTHEM

O Holy Night
Bill Thomas, soloist

Adolphe Adams

CAROL (seated)

Silent Night

*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, 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, 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, Jesus, Lord at thy birth.*

BENEDICTION

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE (sung by all)** *Joy to the World* Pilgrim (red), 130
Vss. 1 & 3

*Joy to the world! The Lord is come: Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.*

*He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness, and wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.*

***POSTLUDE** Please remain in place for the sung postlude

Come, Rejoice
Jim Todd, soloist

Judy Collins

*Thank you for joining us on this Christmas Eve, we welcome you warmly
and wish you and your families a peaceful, safe and blessed Christmas.*

*Thank you to all those who gave poinsettias for our Christmas services.
You may take them after tonight's service.*

And thanks to:

*Marianne Burbank and Tim LeGeyt for providing for our Christmas tree
in memory of Marianne's grandfather, Harry Humphrey, and father, Sam Humphrey,
and Tim's grandfather Mort Bristol. The tree was donated by Case's Lawn Service.*

*Jim Potter and family, who have decorated the church for the season,
and Nancy Alford for the seasonal arrangements on the front steps.*

Karen Needham, who has loaned the crèche set on our Communion table.

Pastor: The Rev. Dr. Brenda Pelc-Faszczka

Director of Music: Mary Lou Keefe

Sexton: Walt LeGeyt

Ministers: Every Member

Office Manager: Kristen DiMattia

Duty Deacons: Vicki Rees & Ali Hager

Duty Trustees: Phil LeGeyt & Dave Heyer

Assisting: Kendall Rees, Mitchell Buckley, Mason Buckley, Confirmands

Lights Operator: Hugh Anderson

Camera: Casey Levine

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.



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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