

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH CANTON CENTER, CT

United Church of Christ



December 18, 2022 ~ 10:00 a.m.

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

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ORDER OF WORSHIP

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

CHIMES

Karen Needham

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENT

*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

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly
Cherry Brook Chimes Handbell choir

Traditional Polish Carol
arr. Karen Buckwalter

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 trusting.

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 will truly welcome Christ.
Today, this week, and always, may the Child be born again –
in us and among us, that together we might be the beloved community
you have made 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.**

LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE: LOVE

Chris, Josephine & Silvie Hager and Siena & Isla Jamieson

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 Jesus, 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.

***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!

FOOD COLLECTION FOR THE CANTON FOOD BANK

Children will collect donations, and then will go to church school.

READING FROM SCRIPTURE Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Unison reading #114, Pilgrim Hymnal, p. 541

ANTHEM

Coventry Carol

Cherry Brook Chimes Handbell Choir

Traditional English

arr. Cynthia Dobrinski

READING FROM SCRIPTURE Matthew 1:18-25

Pew Bible, p. 783

ANTHEM

Mid-Night Hymn

Senior Choir & guest singers; Cindy Webb, flute

Roger Atkins

READING “The Blessing of Hope,” by Jan Richardson

ANTHEM

Angel’s Carol

Senior Choir & guest singers

John Rutter

DEDICATION OF OFFERINGS

The God of every goodness blesses us abundantly,
giving us gifts to use for the blessing of the world.
From our own lives into the lives of others,
**may the offerings we make, in all the forms they take,
help us be the hands and feet of Christ in the world.**

***Doxology** (*From "In the Bleak Midwinter"*)

*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, I give him.... give my heart.*

***Prayer of Dedication**

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Joys & Concerns, Pastoral Prayer

ANTHEM *The Snow Lay on the Ground* Traditional English
Senior Choir & Guest Singers arr. Jody Lindh

***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** *Pat-a-Pan* Traditional French

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The flowers are give by Curt & Holly Johnson in celebration and loving remembrance of their family members, relatives and friends and of the happiness that they enjoyed during their journey through life. May the fond and loving memories we have of each of them live on!

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE, 7:00 p.m.

Candlelighting service with Choral and Handbell Choirs

CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE, 10 a.m.

An abbreviated service, with readings, prayers, and a carol sing

For those interested in joining the Church, January 8 & 29 - Our next process for receiving new members will be in January. The preparatory meeting for those interested will be held on **Jan. 8**, right after the service (with pastor and Deacons), and the Sunday for joining (during the regular service) is planned for **Jan. 29**. **If interested, please let Rev. Brenda, or a Deacon, know of your plans to attend. Inquirers welcome, without obligation, at the meeting on Jan. 8.**

Hat & Glove Collection - We will be continuing our long-standing tradition of collecting warm hats and gloves to decorate the Christmas tree in the sanctuary. Please bring items in a plastic bag to avoid sap on them. These will be donated to Canton Social Services and Gifts of Love.

Brian's Angels - On Jan. 20, we will meet from 10:00 to approximately 12:30 to make a hot meal. Sign-up sheets on the kitchen door. Thank you for helping with this important mission.

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! We also have plenty of Walmart & Target cards in stock to send to Wellmore. Thanks for your support!

Christmas Dinner at DISH 'n Dat ~ Sunday 12/25, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Dish 'n DAT American Eatery, 144 Albany Tpk., Canton, is partnering with the local community to feed & gift 400 people in need on Christmas Day. Full, hot holiday meal served, as well as toys for kids, gift cards & non-perishable food items to take.

****Please RSVP with the Avon Social Services Department at (860) 409-4346.****

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're visiting, we invite you to fill out a visitor's card (found in the pews or on the back tables) and place it in an offering box, to help us better connect with you.

Looking for more information about the church?

Please feel free to ask the pastor or contact the church office during the week.

An Open and Affirming Congregation

THANK YOU TO THE SENIOR CHOIR

SOPRANOS

Donna Hammond
Megan Keefe *
Marilyn Larose
Gina Magennis *
Judy Robinson
Kathy Todd

ALTOS

Gert Delin *
Kathleen Lundgren
Linda McAllister
Karen Needham
Kathy Pickrell
Clare Workman

TENORS

Jerry Alonzy
Tim LeGeyt
Scott Neumann *

BASSES

Art Dewey
Dan LeGeyt
Paul Stansel
Jim Todd

* denotes guest singers

THANK YOU TO THE CHERRY BROOK CHIMES HANDBELL CHOIR

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

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING ~ SUNDAY, JANUARY 15, 2023

NOTICE OF A SPECIAL MEETING: of the First Congregational Church, Canton Center, Sunday, January 15, 2023 after the 10 am service, *OR* on subsequent Sundays until a Quorum is obtained.

AGENDA

1. Approval of the proposed 2023 budget.
2. Any other business proper to come before said meeting.

Respectfully Submitted, *Bev Sealand*, Clerk

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

Pastor: The Rev. Dr. Brenda Pelc-Faszczka

Director of Music: Mary Lou Keefe

Dir. of Faith Formation: Sarah Pradhan

Ministers: Every Member

Office Manager: Kristen DiMattia

Sexton: Walt LeGeyt

Duty Deacons: Bev Sealand & Tim Lungren

Coffee Hour Host: Music & Nominating Committee

Camera: Craig McAllister



THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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