

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



December 24, 2022 - 7:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF CANTON CENTER

December 24, 2022

CHRISTMAS EVE

7:00 p.m.

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

CHIMES

WELCOME

PRELUDE *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly* *Traditional Polish carol* arr. Karen Buckwalter
The Cherry Brook Chimes Handbell Choir with piano

CALL TO WORSHIP

Eric Herbek

Night of beauty, night of silence,
night of stillness, 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**

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 among us, around us, and within us all.

In word and song, may our remembering of an ancient story
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.

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE *The Hammond and Collins families*

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 toward it with hope.

The Christ candle is 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!

ANTHEM *Child of the Poor*
Jerry Alonzy and Judy Robinson, vocal duet

LITANY

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 and Cindy Webb, flute

ANTHEM

The Shepherd's Carol
The Senior Choir

Traditional Austrian carol
arr. Dan Forest

REFLECTION FOR CHRISTMAS EVE *It's Love***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:

Come Rejoice
Jim Todd, vocal soloist

Judy Collins

***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****CHRISTMAS PRAYERS****THE LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES**

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

ANTHEM

O Holy Night
Bill Thomas, vocal soloist

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** *Donkey Carol*

John Rutter

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.

CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE, 10 a.m.

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

**Thank you to all those who have given poinsettias for our Christmas services.
You may take them after tonight's service, or leave them for tomorrow's service.**

And our thanks to:

Marianne Burbank and **Tim LeGeyt** for providing for our Christmas tree, from Case's Farm,
in memory of Marianne's grandfather, Harry Humphrey,
and father, Sam Humphrey, and Tim's grandfather Mort Bristol.

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

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

The Senior Choir & Cherry Brook Handbell Choir, for beautiful special music in this season.

The church office will be closed on Dec. 26 & 27; Messages will be monitored.
Rev. Brenda will be on vacation Dec. 26 through Jan. 2. Kristen will be on vacation Dec. 21 through Dec. 27.

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

THANK YOU TO THE SENIOR CHOIR

SOPRANOS	ALTOS	TENORS	BASSES
Donna Hammond	Gert Delin *	Jerry Alonzy	Art Dewey
Megan Keefe *	Kathleen Lundgren	Tim LeGeyt	Dan LeGeyt
Marilyn Larose	Linda McAllister	Scott Neumann *	Paul Stansel
Gina Magennis *	Karen Needham		Jim Todd
Judy Robinson	Kathy Pickrell		
Kathy Todd	Clare Workman		

* 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

Pastor: The Rev. Dr. Brenda Pelc-Faszczka

Dir. of Faith Formation: Dr. Hollace Bristol

Asst. Dir. of Faith Formation: Karen Needham

Sexton: Walt LeGeyt

Ministers: Every Member

Director of Music: Mary Lou Keefe

Office Manager: Kristen DiMattia

Duty Deacons: All Deacons **Lights Operator:** Walt LeGeyt **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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