

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

**December 24, 2023 ~ 10:00 a.m.  
Fourth Sunday in Advent**

**In Person & Live Streamed**



*For it is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas,  
when its mighty Founder was a child himself. ~Charles Dickens*



**First Congregational Church**  
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[www.cantoncenterchurch.org](http://www.cantoncenterchurch.org)

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

## WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENT

*Brief announcements are welcome, please be in the front pews at the start of the announcements.  
Offerings and prayer request on the yellow prayer cards found in the pews may be placed in the offering plate at the time of the offering or in the designated boxes on the back table.*

## PRELUDE

*In a Lowly Manger*

Timothy Shaw

## CALL TO WORSHIP

Let our joy be complete. The Spirit comes to us in Emmanuel.  
Reap the gifts and blessings of bountiful goodness and grace from heaven's harvest.

**Strangers and neighbors, foreigners and family  
come together united by the love of Jesus.**

Gather round, I have a story to tell. The One who reached inside Himself  
and scattered the world with love is here with us, in our presence.

**Come, let us make a joyful noise unto the Lord!**

Accept this gift of love as it is for you.

It is all you need or will ever need and there is enough to change the whole world!

**Let us rejoice and sing with shouts of exultation  
in the hope, peace, joy, and love of Almighty God.**

## \*HYMN

*Go, Tell It on the Mountain*

Hymnal, (red), 488

## \*GATHERING PRAYER & \*THE LORD'S PRAYER

Almighty God, our source of hope, peace, joy, and love, we gather together with hearts aglow on the threshold of a day overflowing with love. We lift our hearts in prayer for a young babe, nestled in a humble stable who amazingly offers us the gift of salvation. The news of this blessing has been long whispered across the ages that offers a beacon of hope for all human-kind. Guide each of us and this church united to be a lit candle shining in the darkness as true instruments of peace in a world yearning to be united and healed. May the light of Christmas shine brightly within us every day. In the holy name of Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Savior, our Lord. Amen.

**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.**

**\*Gloria Patri**

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost,  
as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,  
world without end, Amen, Amen.*

**LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE – LOVE**     Noah Herbek & Tim Lundgren

**OFFERING**

We sit in stillness and peacefulness as we turn our thoughts inward. What are you and I grateful for in this moment? In our appreciation for all God has blessed us with let us offer our prayer of thankfulness as we receive our morning offering. It is not the amount that is important but what we feel in our hearts as we give back to God a percentage of what we have received from our Creator. May our contributions, however big or small, be like ripples on a pond, sending waves of compassion and support outward into the world. Let us act with generosity, knowing that true giving comes from the heart. Let us now receive our Sunday morning offering.



**OFFERTORY**

*Celtic Christmas Lullaby*     Joel Raney from Have You Heard  
Senior Choir

**\*Doxology**

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise God, all creatures here below,  
Praise God for all that love has done,  
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.*

## **\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

We offer these gifts, humble tokens of our appreciation,  
acknowledging that all we have comes from You.  
May these gifts, fruits of our labor and expressions  
of our love, be used to bring comfort to the afflicted,  
hope to the despairing, and strength to the weary.  
May they build bridges of understanding and compassion,  
nurture seeds of faith and love,  
and may all glory be to Your Holy Name.  
In Jesus we pray, Amen

## **SCRIPTURE**



1 John 4:7-10    Pew Bible pg. 991  
John 15:9-17    Pew Bible pg. 878

## **SERMON**

*The Greatest Commandment*

## **PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH**

*Joys & Concerns*  
*Moment of Silence*  
*Pastoral Prayer*

## **\*HYMN**

*Angels We Have Heard on High*

Chalice, (blue), 155

## **\*BENEDICTION**

## **\*BENEDICTION RESPONSE**

*Amen*

## **\*POSTLUDE**

*Gloria in Excelsis Deo*

Llord Larson

*The Worship is ended...Our Service Now Begins*

## WELCOME

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 church office during the week.

*An Open and Affirming Congregation*

*The flowers this morning are given by  
Ken & Pamela Thomas, Deb & John Walsh and Steve & Laura Thomas  
in loving memory of their parents, Bill & Ellie Thomas.*

*Thank you for joining us on this Christmas Eve morning, we welcome you warmly!*

*If you are visiting with us today,  
we extend our special welcome and hope you will worship with us again.*

*Merry Christmas to all!*

### **Do you need a little Christmas – Right this very minute?**

If you need a little something to fill around the edges, or perhaps a gift for a Christmas or New Year party, stop by the Scrip table during Coffee Hour. We have many cards in stock for you to take home today – plenty of \$10 and \$25 for various retailers and some larger ones too. Every gift card you purchase through Scrip gives a percentage back to the church. **Merry Christmas!!**

**Missions Box Collection for December** will be our traditional **new hats, gloves, mittens and scarves** for the Hands of Grace. Please place items in a plastic zip bag so they will not get full of needles, on or under the Christmas tree in the sanctuary. Items will be donated to local organizations in the Farmington Valley area. Also, **new or gently used, clean blankets** for the clients of Brian's Angels. Many of these folks are sleeping outside, in tents, or other places with limited shelter. There will be a bin by the Christmas tree for the blankets. (These don't need to be bagged.)

## 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*

## Christmas Eve Worship

*This evening ~ 5:00 pm*

*Candle lighting, Choral & Handbell Choirs*



*Offerings this evening will be donated to the Canton Fuel Bank.*

## **CONGREGATIONAL MEETING ~ SUNDAY, JANUARY 21, 2024**

NOTICE OF A SPECIAL MEETING: of the First Congregational Church, Canton Center, Sunday, January 21, 2024 after the 10 am service, *OR* on subsequent Sundays until a Quorum is obtained.

### AGENDA

1. Approval of the proposed 2024 budget.
2. Any other business proper to come before said meeting.

Respectfully Submitted, *Bev Sealand*, Clerk

**Interim Minister:** Rev. Kurt Satherlie

**Director of Music:** Mary Lou Keefe

**Asst. of Faith Formation:** Karen Needham

**Office Manager:** Kristen DiMattia

**Ministers:** Every Member

**Dir. of Faith Formation:** Dr. Hollace Bristol

**Sexton:** Walt LeGeyt

**Duty Deacons:** Kristin Oswald/Tim Lundgren

**Camera:** Hugh Anderson

**POINSETTIAS 2023**



**In Loving Memory Of:**

My parents, Sam & Mary Humphrey  
and Aunt Ruthie Humphrey

Our parents, Lester & Dorothy Chamberlin  
and Edward & Dorothy Keefe

Muriel LeGeyt

Chris Bibby

Leon & Vera Turner

Alden & Ruth Tyrol

Burton Turner

Norman, Barbara & Erick Erickson

Ev & Louise Erickson

Dick Berry

Jan Galusza, Eileen Lyons, Ken & Marge King

Bob Oswald - A wonderful husband,  
father and giving church member

Phil & Kathy Worley, with love

My sister, Holly Smith French

Marion & Henry Lundgren

Our parents, Margueriette Baran  
and Gwen and John Johnson

Patricia Ann Howson

Lt. Col. Richard G. Howson (USAF)

Our mothers, Ruth Wilkins and Joan Prince

**Given By:**

Marianne Burbank  
Marianne Burbank

Peter & Mary Lou Keefe  
Peter & Mary Lou Keefe

Tim & Cary LeGeyt

Peggy & Bill Borchert

Susan Turner

Susan Turner

Susan Turner

Susan Turner

Susan Turner

Susan Turner

Susan Turner

The Oswald Family

The McCormick Family

Mary Lee Dunn

Kathleen Lundgren

Craig & Linda McAllister

Craig & Linda McAllister

Bob Howson

Bob Howson

Martha & Paul Stansel



## POINSETTIAS 2023



### In Loving Memory Of:

Casey LeGeyt  
Brett E. Hooper  
Denise Perkins Humphrey  
My Little Angel  
Mom & Dad

Ned Bunnell  
John & Anna Bunnell, Franklin & Helen Andrews

### In Celebration Of:

Abigail and John & Mallory

My family near and far

Our grandkids Will, Rob, John, Laila & Collin

Family and friends

My grandson, Greyson Penn

My family - past and present

Our family - past and present

Our family - past and present

Our daughters, Cailyn, Lauren and their families

### In Honor Of:

Pastor Kurt

### Given By:

Mommy & Daddy  
Mom & Dad  
Mom & Phil  
Daddy  
Phil LeGeyt

Geri Bunnell  
Geri Bunnell

### Given By:

Peggy & Bill Borchert

Jan Tanner

The Dunns'

Gail Macbeth

Darryl Haberern

Evelyn Sealand

Charles & Donna Hammond

Skip & Nancy Alford

Craig & Linda McAllister

### Given By:

The McCormick Family