

First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
3 Gray Road, North Yarmouth, Maine 04097
Organized in 1806



Christmas Eve
December 24th, 2024 ~ 5:00 p.m.

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We Gather to Worship God

Prelude

Christmas Music

Peter Dickson

Welcome

Call to Worship

One: Christmas Eve, Jesus is With Us. Emmanuel is Here

Many: Season of Hope and Peace

One: The Prophets have foretold this birth

Many: Season of Joy and Love

One: The world rejoices

All: Joy to the World

***Hymn**

Joy to the World

CH #143

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.

Joy to the world, the savior reigns!

Let all their songs employ; while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

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

Lighting the Advent Candle of Hope

We light the first candle, the candle of hope and prophecy.

We remember the promise of good news, freedom, and salvation.

We remember Mary who prepared the way for Jesus.

We remember that God is with us in times of sorrow and struggle.

We pledge to tend the light and love of God.

Lighting Advent Candle of Peace

We light the second candle, the candle of Peace.

With this candle, we await the Prince of Peace, Our Guide in conflict.

We hold in our hearts everyone who has been touched by war and loss, remembering that through God's Love, we are one family.

In the words of the Prophet Isaiah,

"A Child has been born to us, and authority rests on his shoulders.

He has been named, 'The Mighty God is Planning Grace, Eternal Father, a Peaceable Ruler'.

Mercy will be firmly established in justice and in equity, now and evermore, on a throne of abundant grace and peace without limit."

Lighting the Advent Candle of Joy

We light the third candle, the candle of Joy.

May this flame set our souls alight with Joy and Gladness.

We celebrate the Psalmist's words.

"Make a joyful noise to the LORD, Worship the LORD with gladness; come into his presence with singing. For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations."

Lighting the Advent Candle of God's Love

We light the fourth candle, the candle of Love.

May this flame's steady light remind us of God's steadfast Love.

We celebrate the Apostle's words.

"Make a joyful noise to the LORD, Worship the LORD with gladness; come into his presence with singing. For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

***Hymn**

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

CH#119

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Thou Day-Spring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, o Israel!

O come, thou Wisdom from on high, and order all things, far and nigh; to us the
path of knowledge show, and cause us in her ways to go. Rejoice, rejoice,
Emmanuel shall come to thee, o Israel!

O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind; bid envy, strife and quarrels cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace. Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, o Israel!

Lighting the Christ Candle (in Unison)

We Light the Fifth candle, the Christ Candle

This candle symbolizes the presence of Jesus who is with us, now and forever.

On the day Jesus was baptized

the Holy Spirit descended as a dove and said,

“This Is My Son, the Beloved, and with him, I am well pleased.”

***Hymn**

O Little Town of Bethlehem

CH# 144

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 shin-eth 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. Your voices raise to God in praise; and peace to all on earth.

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

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray; cast out our sin, and enter in; be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell; O come to us, abide with us, our God, Emmanuel.

Pageant - The First Christmas

from Luke 1-2; Matthew 2

***Hymn**

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

CH# 150

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King!

Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled."

Joyful, all ye nations, rise, Join the triumph of the skies;

With the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem."

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King!

Christ, by highest heaven adored: Christ, the everlasting Lord;

Late in time behold him come, Offspring of the Virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh, the God-head see; Hail, the incarnate Deity,
Pleased, in flesh with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel!

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King!

Hail! the heaven-born Prince of peace! Hail! the Son of Righteousness! Light and
life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings, Mild he lays his glory by, born
that we no more may die, born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second
birth.

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King!"

Choir Anthem: *A Christmas Answer* - from Rhapsody in Bluegrass:
A Christmas Jubilee by Joseph M. Martin

Christmas Blessing

***Hymn** **Away in a Manger** **CH# 147**

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet
head. The stars in the sky looked down where he lay, the little Lord Jesus,
asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky, and stay by my cradle till
morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay close by me forever, and love me, I
pray. Bless all the dear children in thy tender care, and fit us for heaven to live
with thee there.

Christmas Offering While Shepherds Watched their Flocks Lani Smith

Christmas reminds us of the blessings and Gifts of God made manifest through
Jesus. We tell stories of Angels sharing their songs and Magi bringing great
treasures of Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh. Above all we remember the gifts of
the birth, life, and ministry of Jesus. May we be inspired by these gifts and to
share our blessings. The special Christmas Offering helps support retired clergy
and pastors in the United Church of Christ.

Born Is the Light of the World by Sally DeFord

(Christie Paul, Nora Krainis, David Myers-Wakeman, Jesse Myers-Wakeman)

Prayer of Dedication (Unison)

Beloved God, today we are filled with joy at your presence. On this Christmas Eve, may we remember the Grace you have given the world. May we remember how you loved us, became human, and traveled amongst us. Healing the sick, feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, giving everything for those in need. May we be inspired to live by your example. Let us spread the gifts of the spirit far and wide. Amen.

Lighting Our Candles

John 1:1-5

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of the people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.”

Please form a circle around the sanctuary. As we pass the light.

***Hymn**

Silent Night, Holy Night

CH# 145

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.

Silent night, holy night, wondrous star, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing, alleluia to our King;
Christ, the Savior, is born, Christ, the Savior, is born.

Benediction