

Order of Worship
First Church Congregational
An Open and Affirming Congregation of the
United Church of Christ
Fairfield, Connecticut

DECEMBER 20, 2020



Fourth Sunday in Advent

Prelude

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Melody of the 13th Century

Welcome and Announcements

We seek to extend the extravagant love of God to all people, all the time. Regardless of your race, class, ancestry, gender identity, marital status, ability, age, immigration status, political orientation, or sexual orientation -who you love - you are always welcome at First Church, online, or eventually in the Sanctuary and Chapel. God loves you just as you are. So do we!

Musical Interlude

Prepare the Way, O Zion

Mikael Franzen

Call to Worship

Based on II Samuel 7; Luke 1:47-55 and Luke 1:26-38

Leader: Host of Hosts, from sunrise to sunrise, and generation to generation, we are your people.

People: You have been with us wherever we have gone and will be with us wherever we go.

Leader: You planted us in a land flowing with milk and honey,

People: Then you planted our salvation in Mary's womb.

Leader: We pray that Jesus, who is the Christ,

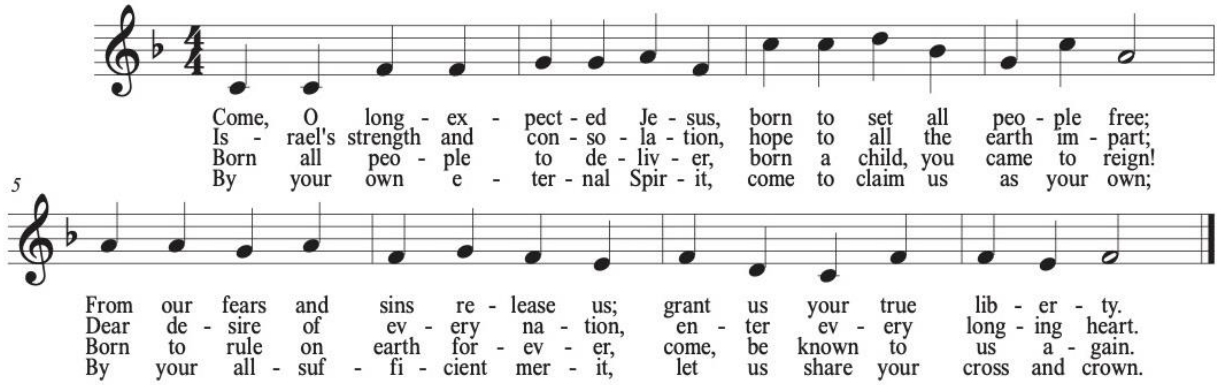
People: Will be planted firmly in each one of us.

Leader: That our souls may join in magnifying you, the Holy One.

People: Our spirits rejoice in you, O God, our Savior! Amen.

Hymn

“Come, O Long-Expected Jesus”



Unison Prayer of Invocation and Lord’s Prayer

Almighty God, when we were lost and in exile, you dwelled with us wherever we went. When we were afflicted, you comforted us in your mercy. When we were like sheep that were scattered, you gathered us to you. So, in this pregnant time of waiting, we pray in the name of the One whose birth we anticipate: 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Children’s Sermon

Advent Candle of Love

Chris and Alex Ackley and their children Sam and Jacen

Sung Response

“When God Is a Child”



Musical Interlude *The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came* Edgar Pettman and John Wickham

Scripture

Luke 1:26-38

Sermon “I Still Believe”

The Reverend David W. Spollett

A Time for Silent Reflection

Hymn

“My Heart Sings Out in Joyful Praise”

My heart sings out with joy - ful praise to God who rais - es me, _____
 The arm of God is strong and just to scat - ter all the proud. _____
 The prom - ise made in a - ges past at last has come to be, _____

4
 Who came to me when I was low and changed my des - ti - ny. _____
 The ty - rants tum - ble from their thrones and van - ish like a cloud. _____
 for God has come in power to save, to set all peo - ple free. _____

8
 The Ho - ly One, the Liv - ing God, is al - ways full of grace _____
 The hun - gry all are sat - is - fied; the rich are sent a - way. _____
 Re - mem - bering those who wait to see sal - va - tion's dawn - ing day, _____

12
 to those who seek their Mak - er's will in ev - ery time and place. _____
 The poor of earth who suf - fer long will wel - come God's new day. _____
 Our Sav - ior comes to all who weep to wipe their tears a - way. _____

Joys and Concerns

A donation to the Deacons' Fund, in lieu of flowers, has been made to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Frederick and Amy Spollett and Edward and Thelma Radowiecki by David and Geri Spollett and their family.

The Prayers of the People

Invitation to the Offering and Prayer of Dedication

Benediction

God Be With You

God be with you till we meet a - gain; by good coun - sel guide, up - hold you,
 With a shep - herd's care en - fold you; God be with you till we meet a - gain. A - men.

Postlude

My Lord What A Morning

Spiritual

Go in peace and strength to love and serve the Lord and all God's people

+ + +

LEADING US IN WORSHIP

The Reverend David W. Spollett

The Reverend Vanessa Rose

Mr. Robert Codio, Worship Music Leader

Ms. Cheri Evan, Minister of Congregational Life

Worship Tech Team: David McKinnis, Andrew McKinnis, and Alan Fuehring

Please hold in your prayers...

Disciples at First Church: Sandy Bromer, Ken and Betsy Dalling, Michael Dyslin, Bill Gatto, Sonia Gutierrez and Henry Hernandez, Gayle Hand, Joyce Hutchings, Christy Jefremow, Cathy Kane and her brother Scott and great niece Amelia, Adelaide Kitchen, Alice and Jerry Krenke, Lillian Klein, Gerry Kuroghlian, Mimi Maniscalco, Stu Nazzaro, Kathy O'Brien, Jack Robinson, Charlie Simmons, Donna Schmidt, Esther Sotolongo, Rachel Spollett, Joe and Lauren Strickland's five grandsons in Libya, Rev. Arlene Studer, Joann Van Esselstyn, Bill Verdier, Elinor Wilber, and Edith Zambo.

Serving in the military: James Classy, Sam Classy, Trevor Dawson, David Elmore, Alec Lee, Sean Lomnitzer, and Chris Muschett.

Those on the Front Lines of COVID-19:

Members of First Church: Eric Anderson, Michelle Baker, Laura Burr, Pertrinea Cash, Brooke Hine, Greg Jefremow, Kristin Koch, Kristin Lupo, Beth McKinnis, Kim Chaffee Trupp, Edite Weddle; *and Friends of First Church:* Elizabeth Brennan, Raquel Canete, Marguerite Dolan, Fairfield EMS, Ericka Gordon, Stephen Huelskamp, Tracie and Devon Lingenfelter, Lauren Redler McGrath, Maria Pellegrino, Diane Marble, Casey Redler, Maria Sutton, Anna Taft, Westport EMS, and Ann Yergeau.

Family and Friends: Gabe, George, Gloria and Eric, John Anderson, Brenda Baker, Nick Bandanza, Anne Barnes, Walter Beck, Doreen Birdsell, Michelle Browser, Kevin Butler, Jaret Chase, Meg Cavanaugh, Amber Chiang, Clara Chokenea, David Ciaburro, Aristodemo Ciabatta, Elizabeth Clark, Charlotte Cole, Jan Craig, Tedi Crawford, The Daly Family, Steve Daniels, Brandon Deedon, The DiGioia Family, Jacqueline Geoffroy, Greenawalt and Darnall Families, Linda Drew, Tom Dwyer, Janet Faller, LaTonya Franklin, Scott Ferguson, Allen Freedman, Lauren Frey and Brian's parents, Joan Grabowski, Dave Gurrieri, Ira Jane Han-Cajegas, Nancy Huber, Robert Huber, Keli Imperatori, Mary Jean Jacob, Norma Jenkins and Family, Barton Jones, Art Keller, Patricia Keller, Bernie Keller, Steve Kinne, Nancy Kovacs, Jeannette Lazarus, Desmond Leach, Jan MacMillen, Michael Maxwell, Eileen Maloney, Tim Marble, Verne Marble, Nicole Mateo and her grandmother Bunny Deubner, Peter J. McGuinness, Lyn McCullers, MaKayla and John McGovern, Claire McMonagle, Matilda, Moeller and Schumann families, Michael Moran, Kathy Murdock, Joelle Murphy, Anne and George Noel, Morgan Paige, Parus Family, Erika Pascarello, Amadeu Pereira, Mike Platt, Dimitri Psachoulis,, Katie Pieterse, Sara

Redeghieri,, Dick Reese, Hilarys Rivera, Sally and Paul Robinson, Katelyn S., Greg Sago, Larry Lawrence, Ken Sawicki, Violet, JoAnn Sharnick, Darlene Scaia, Kristin Schleiter, Louise M. Schmidt, Levi Schmidt, Sergei, Connie Sokalsky, Ryan Steward, Seth Sullivan, Steven Szymczak and family, Paul Taylor, Jenny and Mike Tkacz, Harumi Ishihara Sugiyama, Danielle Taal and her five sons, Max Varalli, Sarah Wakeman, Andy Yuan, Virginia MacDonald and her children Linda Hotchkiss, Dan MacDonald, Sydney West and family, Holly Wheeler, Brian Zagorski, Reva Zamero, and James Zamora's family.

The Needs of God's Beloved World:

- All who have suffered and died in the wildfires, hurricanes, and storms of recent months
- All who have suffered from the COVID-19 pandemic: nearly 1.8 million deaths worldwide; and over 70 million afflicted, many living with chronic conditions; and ~**3,000 deaths** per day and over more than **305,000 deaths** in the US
- Those who are suffering financially in the economic crisis brought on by the pandemic: those who are unemployed and underemployed, those who businesses have been severely affected or lost, and those at risk of foreclosure or eviction
- Thanksgiving for the scientists and government officials who have worked so hard to create effective and safe Coronavirus vaccines in record time
- Health care professionals who provide care for COVID-19 patients as new cases surge
- Essential workers who have continued to work in spite of the risk
- Parents and all who are involved in education: teachers, administrators, and staff who are doing the best they can juggling schedules, rules, COVID-19 testing, and shutdowns
- Those who are lonely, anxious, afraid, and isolated in this time of social separation
- All who suffer from depression, anxiety, and all mental illnesses and their families
- Mental health providers who care for all who are suffering mentally and emotionally
- All who work to prevent domestic violence and to care for the victims of such violence
- People targeted by hatred of all kinds, including anti-Black, anti-Migrant, anti-Gay, anti-Trans, anti-Semitic, anti-Islamic, anti-Christian prejudice, and actions
- All who are committed to the work of antiracism and the eradication of white supremacy
- Survivors of sexual assault, abuse, and harassment and those who love them
- The world's 71 million refugees, especially children & immigrants at risk of deportation
- Uighur Muslims in China and Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar and Bangladesh
- Those who are addicted and their loved ones; those who have died and those in recovery
- Victims of war in Iraq, Sudan, the DR of Congo, Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, & Libya, especially the grandsons of Joe and Lauren Strickland,
- Our Brothers and Sisters at the First Baptist Church of Stratford
- Our community partners: Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport, School Volunteer Association, Mercy Learning Center, Operation Hope, Westbridge, Simply Smiles, Make the Road Connecticut, and the Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigrants
- First, we pray and then we work for justice and its fruit which is peace

This Week

Sunday, Dec. 20 Advent-Love

9:00am Bible Study on Zoom
9:30am Disciple Road on Zoom
10:15am Worship Facebook Live
10:30am Middle Road
11:30am Confirmation, Wakeman Hall
4:00pm Christmas Caroling

Monday, Dec. 21

7:30pm Blue Christmas via Zoom

Tuesday, Dec. 22

12:30pm Pastoral Team Meeting

Wednesday, Dec. 23

7:00pm Lessons and Carols Online
Facebook Live and Website

Thursday, Dec. 24 Christmas Eve

4:00pm Pageant Premiere Online
Facebook and Website

Friday, Dec. 25



Sunday, Dec. 27

9:00am Bible Study via Zoom
10:15am Worship Facebook Live

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/firstchurchffld>

Website:

www.firstchurchfairfield.org

The 2021 pledge envelopes are on the table in the back of Wakeman Hall. If you don't see your name please give Maria a call. Thanks, Maria
(cell) 203-394-8738 (office) 203-259-8396 x 106



You Can Help!!

Deliver Non-Perishable Food, Diapers, Checks, and Gift Cards
to Wakeman Hall

By **Thursday Noon** for delivery

to the Food Pantry at Mercy Learning Center on Friday Morning!!

These are basic items that will help right now:

- bags of rice and bags of any type of dried beans, lentils, etc.
- tomato paste, tomato sauce, or diced tomatoes
- oatmeal, cream of wheat, corn meal,
- pasta, cooking oil, flour
- powdered or evaporated milk
- canned meats, canned fruit, canned vegetables
- toilet paper, bars of soap, other toiletries
- Diapers: sizes 4, 5, and *especially* 6
- Gift cards: Stop and Shop, Shop Rite, Walgreens, CVS
- Financial Donations: Mail to First Church, check payable to Mercy Learning Center.

Covenant to Care will be collecting Christmas gifts for the children in the Social Worker's care. We don't yet have the exact names and ages, but whoever wishes to donate a gift can contact us for the specifics as we receive them and for instructions. We will put information in the church bulletins when we have it.

Thank you for your continued generosity and support of this important ministry.

Blessings to all for a safe and happy Holiday Season.

Marilyn, Kim and Jessie.

(203) 255-5296

marilynhenry18@optonline.net



Blue Christmas via Zoom
Monday, December 21
7:30PM

We will gather on the longest night of the year, to share our sorrows with God, open our aching hearts to God's comforting and encouraging Spirit, and find in our fellowship strength for the journey. A journey that is hard, yes, but that also leads to the Bethlehem of our spirits, that Christ may be born anew.

The link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87014141495pwd=SWcxcmtvdUZuMkJER3lYb0Iwd0xvUT09>

Meeting ID: 870 1414 1495 Passcode: 135960

Dial: 1-929-436-2866

Meeting ID: 870 1414 1495 Passcode: 135960

***Please have communion elements and 5 candles ready for use during this service.**

You can view these worship services on our Facebook page and on our website.

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/firstchurchffd>

Website:

www.firstchurchfairfield.org

