



Est. 1639

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ



Festival of Lights, John August Swanson

December 8, 2024

10:15 a.m.

Second Sunday of Advent

Welcome!

Welcome to our guests! Thank you for being here. It is such a joy to worship with you. Please speak to any member of the Pastoral Team if you would like to explore how our church may become your spiritual home. As an **Open and Affirming** congregation we seek to extend the extravagant welcome of God to all people, all the time. Regardless of your race, class, ancestry, gender identity, marital status, ability, age, immigration status, or sexual orientation, you are always welcome at First Church. We affirm your inherent dignity as a child of God. God created you just as you are and loves you just as you are. We do, too!

Children's Ministries: Children's Ministries: Babies are always welcome in the Sanctuary during worship. We also have a nursery (accessible through the "baby breezeway" in the back of the Sanctuary). First Church offers child care (for ages 3 months to 3 years) with professional nursery staff on Sundays @ 9:45am-11:45am. Sunday School classes are known as "Disciple Road" (age 4 through 5th grade) and "Middle Road" (6th grade and up). We also have a children's choir. Reach out to Kim Feeney (kfeeney@firstchurchfairfield.org) for more information about our children's ministries & faith formation programs.

We have a **hearing assist system** for those with Bluetooth enabled hearing aids available and also have receivers with earpieces available. Please speak to an usher for assistance.

Leading Us in Worship

The Rev. Kathy Williamson, Liturgist

The Rev. Vanessa Rose, Pastor

Kim Feeney, Minister of Children and Families

Dr. Frank Martignetti, Director of Music & Organist

Chancel Choir & Bell Choir

Deacons: Greg Jefremow & Celeste McGeehan

Ushers: Amy Allison-Ward & Tom Croarkin

Worship leaders speak the text in regular type.

All the People of God speak the text in boldface.

Italic Text provides explanation or instruction.

* Please stand if you are able.

WE GATHER TO HEAR GOD'S WORD

Prelude

My Lord, What a Morning

arr. Jason W. Krug

Welcome and Announcements

Friendship Register

Lighting the Advent Candle of Hope

Sung to the familiar tune "Picardy"
Shine on us, O God of justice;
Guide our path through gloom of night;
Bear within us Wisdom's glory;
Come to us, O Christ the Light.
Glory be to God and peace on earth
Christ is born! Alleluia!

***Call to Worship**

One: God will restore the fortunes of Zion

All: We are like those who dreamed

One: Our mouths filled with laughter, our hearts filled with songs

All: We are like those who dreamed

One: Those who sow with tears and reap with songs of joy

All: We are like those who dreamed

One: For Peace, Hope, Joy and Love

All: We are like those who dreamed.

***Hymn**

Now Bless the God of Israel

110 New Century Hymnal

***Prayer of Invocation and the Lord's Prayer**

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.

***Passing the Peace**

One: May the peace of God be with you!

All: And also with you!

We greet one another with a sign of peace

GOD'S WORD IS PROCLAIMED

Gloria

***Hymn of Praise**

Music: Jacques Berthier, 1982

1 Dm Gm C F 2 Dm Gm C F

Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, in ex - cel - sis De - o!
 Glo-ry to God, glo-ry to God, glo - ry in the high - est!

3 Dm Gm C F 4 Dm Gm C F

Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
 Glo-ry to God, glo-ry to God, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

Sacrament of Baptism

Sophia Diana Thomas, daughter of Rosalinda Yoatzín Rodriguez and Jack Livingston Thomas

Godparents: Sarah Megan Beaudry and Matthew Vincent Bertolino

Baptismal Prayer

We give you thanks, O Holy One, for this your child and for the grace acknowledged here today in water and the Holy Spirit. Embrace us all as sons and daughters in the one household of your love. Grant us the grace to receive, nurture, and befriend this new member of the body of Christ. Give to Sophia strength for life's journey, courage in time of suffering, the joy of faith, the freedom of love, and the hope of new life; through Jesus Christ, who makes us one. Amen

Hymn

Child of Blessing, Child of Promise

325 New Century Hymnal

Following the baptism, children may go to Disciple Road.

Scripture

Malachi 3:1-4 and Luke 3:1-6

Sermon

The Rev. Kathy Williamson

*Hymn

The Baptist Shouts on Jordan's Shore

115 *New Century Hymnal*

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Joys and Concerns

Today's flowers are donated in loving memory of Cynthia and William Barone & Arlene and J Philip Dwyer by their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren: Debby, Phil, Scott, Mark, Amanda, Jack and Robbie Dwyer.

Prayers of the People

Invitation to Offering

Offertory

Carol of the Advent (French)

arr. Philip Dietterich

People, look east. The time is near
Of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
Trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the guest, is on the way.

Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,
One more seed is planted there:
Give up your strength the seed to
nourish,
That in course the flower may flourish.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the rose, is on the way.

Birds, though you long have ceased to
build,
Guard the nest that must be filled.

Even the hour when wings are frozen
God for fledging time has chosen.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the bird, is on the way.

Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim
One more light the bowl shall brim,
Shining beyond the frosty weather,
Bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the star, is on the way.

Angels, announce with shouts of mirth
Christ who brings new life to earth.
Set every peak and valley humming
With the word, the Lord is coming.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Lord, is on the way.

***Doxology**

Sung to the familiar tune "Duke Street"

Praise God, the Source of life and birth;
Praise God, the Word, who came to earth;
Praise God, the Spirit, holy flame;
All glory, honor to God's name! Amen.

***Prayer of Dedication**

***Hymn**

Come, O Long-Expected Jesus

122 *New Century Hymnal*

***Benediction and Response**

Light Dawns on a Weary World

Rowan and Bringle

The trees shall clap their hands; the dry lands, gush with springs;
the hills and moun-tains shall break forth with sing - ing!
We shall go out in joy, and be led forth in peace,
as all the world in won - der ech - oes sha - lom.

Postlude

Besançon

French Carol, arr. Hobby

Please Hold in Your Prayers

We pray for the family and friends of Linda Corby, a former First Church member who passed away in Florida on December 1.

Disciples at First Church: We pray for Christian Bassett; Chris Bernd; Sandy Bromer; LaNeil Brown, Sr.; Dan Christianson; Linda Corby; Betsy Dalling; Fernando Destruge; Gloria Evans; Charlotte Jefremow; Christy Jefremow; Nancy Jones and family; Cathy Kane, her brother Scott and great niece Amelia; Adelaide Kitchen; Jerry Krenke; Penny Stevens; Joann Van Esselstyn; Kathy Verdier; Andrea Wakeman; Elinor Wilber; and Edith Zambo. We hold in our prayers all those who face living with memory loss and Alzheimer's disease and we pray for their caregivers. **Serving in the military:** James Classy, Sam Classy, Trevor Dawson, David Elmore, Andrew Holms, Charles Ikeda, Kelcy McKenzie, and Christopher Muschett.

Family and Friends: Connie Accomando (Jim's mom); Tracy Bloom (sister of Michael Traum); Diane Studwell Crawley; Brandon Deedon (Pertrinea Cash's son); Paul Douglas (Rita Skog's cousin); Lynelle Dupuis (sister of Bethany); Carter Faustini; Kimberly Fetteri (friend of the Gindek family); Anthony Gentile, Nate Gifford (Connie Sargent's cousin); Greenawalt and Darnall Families (Gindek family); Bill Fry (Penny Stevens' brother-in-law); David Green (friend of David McKinnis), Catherine Grover; Walter Haenn (brother of Madeline Lee); Yochai Harel, Melanie Rainbow-Harel and family (friends of Michelle Walker); Peter Hey (brother of Lin Clayton); Christina Holms (Connie and Bill Sargent's niece); Erol Kephelas (cousin of Rita Skog); Nancy King (Friend of Paul Cahill); Janice Klein and the family of Lillian Klein; Susan Labas (friend of Patty Bilotto); Peter Maloney; Verne Marble (Charlotte Dyslin's mother); Lila (friend of Beth McKinnis); Heather McNicholl (friend of Charlotte Dyslin), Dorothy Michalowski (friend of Connie and Bill Sargent); Andre Mirkine; Barbara Peterson (friend of Ted and Judy Andre); Artie Quinn; Dick Reese (father in law of Melissa Stanhewicz); Patty Roberts (cousin of Connie and Bill Sargent); Rosalie Rutkauskas (Jessie's Grandmother); Darlene and Bobby Scaia (Pat Bilotto's cousins); David Skog (son of Rita Skog); Stephen Stenberg (son of Jeanne Reed's college friend); John Anderson (David McKinnis' uncle); Mark, Crystal and baby Selene (friends of Beth McKinnis.); and John Walsh.

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Advent Devotional Series



December Wednesdays at 7 p.m. Wakeman Hall Kitchen

Please join the Rev. Vanessa Rose in our newly remodeled Wakeman Hall kitchen on Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. to help unpack the contents of our old kitchen and restock our new one to as we prepare it for the enjoyment of our congregation and the community. The evening will begin with a devotion. All church members are welcome to be part of this fun and uplifting project. Please email Vanessa with any questions.

Come! Celebrate Christmas
at First Church



December Sunday Services:
8:15 & 10:15 a.m.

Christmas Eve Pageant at 4 p.m.
Lessons & Carols at 10 p.m.

Christmas Day service in our parlor at 11. a.m.

Covenant to Care Holiday Gift Drive

Sign up & take gift tags at our Sunday, Dec. 1 & Dec. 8 services for delivery to social workers by Dec. 15

Help make the holiday season brighter by joining us to purchase gifts in the \$30 range for children in need this holiday season.



For details contact Marilyn Henry at 203- 255-5296.