



First Congregational Church

Founded in 1680

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

Christmas Eve - December 24, 2021 - 6:00pm
A Service of Readings, Carols and Candles

Meditation

"For unto us a Child is born..."

Prelude

"In Dulci Jubilo, Nun Singet"

J.S Bach

Bringing Forth the Light of Christ

Avery Walsh & Ellie Donovan

Lighting of the Advent Candles

The Christ Candle

Evans Family

- Leader: Good evening! On this Christmas Eve we are gathered as God's people to celebrate again what Christ's coming means to the world. We join with Christians all over the world who are celebrating tonight.
- Reader 1: For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulders, and his name will be called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6)
- Reader 2: And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will come to all the people; "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among all people with whom God is pleased!" (Luke 2:10,14)
- Leader: Tonight, we relight the four Advent candles and recall what the good news means. *(The candles are lit one at a time while saying each word, hope, peace, love, and joy.)* Jesus Christ is the greatest gift who makes all these other gifts possible. So, we light the Christ candle now, as we think about what Christ's coming means to each one of us. *(Now, the central Christ candle is lit.)*
- Leader: Let us pray,
 We thank you, God, for your gift of Jesus Christ to entire world. We thank you that Christ's coming makes hope, peace, love, and joy possible for every person in every nation. Encourage us to do our part to bring goodwill and peace to our families, our churches, our neighborhoods, and the world. Now let your Spirit put us in touch with you, the living God, through the words and music we hear tonight. In the name of Christ, we pray Amen.

***Call to Worship**

Leader: Tonight, on Christmas Eve we kneel with families all over the earth in the presence of the Most High.

People: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.

Leader: As we have been invaded by light, let us enlighten.

People: As we have been found, let us seek out the lost.

Leader: As we have been liberated, let us set the captives free.

ALL: For to us a child is born, One whom God sends to bring peace and light, freedom and reconciliation. Thanks be to God. Amen.

***Carol**

“O Come All Ye Faithful”

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; 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; O Come, let us adore Him,

O Come let us adore Him, O Come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

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?

O Come, let us adore Him, O Come let us adore Him, O Come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

***Prayer of Preparation**

We await fulfillment of your promise, O God. May the child, born to be Wonderful Counselor and Prince of Peace be born in us this night. May the shepherds' response represent our reordered priorities. Save us from those passions that draw us away from your purposes for us, and fill us with zeal for our appointed tasks, which honor you. Amen.

The First Reading

The Prophecy

Isaiah 9:2b, 6-7

Carol

“Lo How a Rose e'er Blooming”

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung!

Of Jesse's lineage coming by faithful prophets sung.

It came, a flower-et bright, amid the cold of winter, when half spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it, The Rose I have in mind;

With Mary we beheld it, the virgin mother kind.

To show God's love aright, she bore to us a savior, when half spent was the night.

Second Reading

The Birth Foretold

Luke 1:26-38

Carol

“Away in a Manger”

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.

The stars in the sky look 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 'til morning is nigh.

Third Reading	Mary and Elizabeth	Luke 1:39-45
Choir Anthem	<i>“The Angel Gabriel from heaven came”</i>	Edgar Pettman
Fourth Reading	The Magnificat ~ Mary's Song of Praise	Luke 1:46-56
Special Music	<i>“Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella”</i>	

*Bring a torch, Jeanette, Isabella! Bring a torch, to the cradle run!
It is Jesus, good folk of the village; Christ is born and Mary's calling.
Ah! ah! beautiful is the Mother! Ah! ah! beautiful is her Son!*

*It is wrong when the child is sleeping, It is wrong to talk so loud;
Silence, all, as you gather around, Lest your noise should waken Jesus.
Hush! hush! see how fast He slumbers; Hush! hush! see how fast He sleeps!*

*Softly to the little stable. Softly for a moment come;
Look and see how charming is Jesus, How He is warm, His cheeks are rosy.
Hush! hush! see how the child is sleeping; Hush! hush! see how He smiles in dreams.*

Fifth Reading	The Birth of Jesus	Luke 2:1-7
Carol	<i>“What Child is This, Who Laid to Rest”</i>	

*What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste, to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.*

*Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christians, fear: for sinners here The silent Word is pleading.
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste, to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.*

Sixth Reading	The Shepherds and the Angels	Luke 2:8-20
Carol	<i>“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”</i>	

*Hark! the herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!
Joyful, all ye nations, rise; Join the triumph of the skies;
With th'angelic host proclaim, Christ is born in Bethlehem!
Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”*

*Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, Ris'n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, Born that man no more may die;
Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”*

Seventh Reading

The Visit of the Wise Men

Matthew 2:1-12

Carol

“We Three Kings”

*We three kings of Orient are, Bearing gifts we traverse a far,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain, Following yonder star.
O’ star of wonder, star of night, Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to thy perfect light.*

*Born a king on Bethlehem’s plain, Gold I bring to crown him again,
King forever, ceasing never Over us all to reign.
O’ star of wonder, star of night, Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to thy perfect light.*

Our Christmas Offering

Choral Anthem

“O Holy Night”

Placide Cappeau

The Doxology

**Praise God with songs that never cease
Praise God who fills the earth with peace
Praise God for love and joy within
The Holy Child is born again.**

The Prayer of Dedication

Loving God, may the offerings we make tonight carry to others glad tidings of peace, tidings of comfort and joy. Let our generosity be as great as it would if we were kneeling before the Christ child on the night of his birth. Receive our gifts as carols of praise and statements of faith. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen

The Pastor’s Christmas Prayer

Our 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.

Carol

“Angels We Have Heard On High”

*Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o’er the plains,
And the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.
Glo—ri-a, in excelsis Deo, Glo—ri-a in excelsis Deo.*

*Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
Say what may the tidings be which inspire your heavenly song?
Glo—ri-a, in excelsis Deo, Glo—ri-a in excelsis Deo.*

Eighth Reading

The Word Becomes Flesh

John 1:1-14

Candle Lighting Ceremony

(At this time, we invite you to pass the light of Christ from the Christ candle to one another. Once your candle is lit, you may pass the light to your neighbor. Please remember: The lighted candle remains upright, and the unlit candle is tipped to be lighted. Parents please assist and watch your children. Thank you!)

Carol

“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.*

The Final Reading

“The Declaration”

Isaiah 55:12-13

A Christmas Blessing

Closing Carol of Joy

“Joy to the World”

(let us go forth into the night in joy and celebration)

*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 earth! The Savior reigns: Let men 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 His righteousness, And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love, And wonders, wonders of His love.*

Carrying the Light of Christ into the World

Acolytes

Merry Christmas Everyone!

~ Our celebrant this evening is the Reverend Deborah Tate Breault ~

~ Organist / Music Director is Mr. Adam Schneider ~

~ Our acolytes today are Avery Walsh & Ellie Donovan ~

~ Our greeter today is Doug Harrington ~



Today's Christmas Flowers are

In Loving Memory of

Robert T. Archibald
Deborah P. Wiacek
Deborah P. Wiacek
Bromley & Phil Baril
Our Grandparents
John Evans
Dr. Anne Fiske Lee
Frances & Louis Evans
Elizabeth & Raymond Fiske
E. Stuart & Jean Braden
George & Lorraire Temple
Marina Schmeckebier
Dr. Augustine & Anne Ramos
Fr. J. Garland Teasley
Fr. Alan Magnard
Mrs. Ruth Johnson
Mr. & Mrs. George Schaefer
Mr. Otto Schneider
Corey P. Schneider
Louise Moore
Ms. Frances Whitney
Barney & Peg Harcourt
Bernard & Yvonne Gingras
Gordon & Ruth Frantti
Uno & Ann Halt

Given By

Ann Archibald
Edward Wiacek
Matt, Steve and Family
Jen & Chris Johnson
Jen & Chris Johnson
The Evans family
The Evans Family
The Evans Family
The Evans Family
The Temple Family
The Temple Family
Ruth Fisher
Chuck & Lynne Ramos
Adam Schneider
Adam Schneider
Adam Schneider
Adam Schneider
Adam Schneider
Adam Schneider
Adam Schneider
Adam Schneider
Harcourt & Halt Family
Harcourt & Halt Family
Harcourt & Halt Family
Harcourt & Halt Family

In Honor of

Mike Oglo
Randy Stone

Given By

Betsey Gamwell
Meredith Stone & James Sapp

Sources and Credits: Hymn tune names - as well as composers of the music and authors of the text - are listed in the hymnals with each hymn. CCLI License #1958911 and One License.Net #A-728124.

Announcements

- December 26, 2021 Sunday Worship with Old Fashion Hymn Sing
- December 31, 2021 Office Closed
- January 2, 2021 Sunday Worship w/ Sacrament of communion
- January 4, 2022 Prayer Shawl **Circle** 6:30pm Zoom
- January 5, 2022 Facility meeting 7pm ZOOM
- January 13, 2022 Deacons Meeting 6:30pm Zoom
- January 12, 2022 FoodFest
- January 20, 2022 Church Council meeting 7pm ZOOM
- January 22, 2022 Bristol's Stone Church Coffee House
- January 30, 2022 Annual Budget meeting open to all church members after worship

Please visit our web site for more information about the Church and Events
At the First Congregational Church in Bristol, RI: go to **fccbristol.org**

Church Office Hours are Tuesday – Friday 8:30am – 3pm

Pastoral Office Hours Thursday & Friday 9:30am – 1:00pm

You may also schedule an appointment by contacting Rev. Deborah directly.

Private office line 401/253-3680 or cell 401/712-2651 or e-mail at revdtb@fccbristol.org

Special Holiday hours

The office will be Closed on December 31st 2021

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