



# Hope

*The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight.*

—O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

THE SON OF GOD IS COME. 1 JOHN 5:20

# *The First Congregational Church in Worcester*

*United Church of Christ  
First Sunday of Advent*

You are invited to a time of quiet preparation during the Prelude

Welcome

Rev. Jack Jones

Pastor: No matter where you are on life's journey,  
**Congregation: you are welcome here.**

**Prelude**

*Two Settings of "Cranham" ~ arr. Weber, Young*

**Ringing of the Chimes**

**Call to Worship**

*Pastor:* In the midst of night's shadows and anguish,

**Congregation: We pray earnestly to experience your presence.**

*Pastor:* As dawn slips into the horizon and relieves night of its reign,

**Congregation: We pray earnestly to sense your presence.**

*Pastor:* As daylight grows into noontime, filled with the glow of sun's light,

**Congregation: We pray earnestly to know your presence.**

**Hymn of Adoration ~ #110 (please stand)**

*O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

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, who orderest all things mightily;  
To us the path of knowledge show, and teach us in her ways to go.  
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

O come, Desire of nations, bind in one the hearts of all mankind;  
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease, and be Thyself our king of Peace.  
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

**Apostles' Creed (Everyone) I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting, Amen.**

## **Prayer of Transformation**

**(Congregation)** God of the Possible and Probable, gloom often encapsulates us when life is confusing and conflict is great. Our faith is rattled, and we are swallowed by shadows of fear. The world often feels like the end is near even when a new beginning is around the corner.

## **Prayer of Grace**

*Pastor:* Take comfort, dear friends, that God's grace will fill our hearts with joy as we know that light grows ahead. May we cling to the crumbs of hope as we step into the nighttime with faith, knowing Divine Bliss accompanies us in each step.

*Pastor:* The peace of the Lord be with you.

**Congregation:** And also, with you.

## **Passing of the Peace**

(Please refrain from shaking hands during this season of viruses, flus, colds and such.)

## **Old Testament Lesson**

*Jeremiah 33:14-16*

## **New Testament Lesson**

*1 Thessalonians 3:9-13*

## **Gospel Lesson**

*Luke 21:25-36*

## **Sermon**

*"Never Fear"*

Rev. Jack Jones

## **Hymn ~ #128 (please stand)**

*In the Bleak Midwinter*

In the bleak midwinter frosty wind made moan, earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone:  
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow, in the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;  
heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign:  
in the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed the Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there, cherubim and seraphim thronged the air,  
but only his mother, in her maiden bliss, worshiped the Beloved with a kiss.

What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb,  
if I were a wise man I would do my part, yet what I can I give him, give my heart.

## **Sharing Celebrations and Concerns for Community Prayer**

### **Pastoral Prayer**

### **Moment of Silence for Personal Prayer**

### **Lord's Prayer (Everyone)**

**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

### Lighting of the Advent Wreath by Bob & Marianne Bourgault: Hope for God's Presence

Prayer Response (*Everyone*)

*Away in a Manger*

**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.**

### Invitation to Generosity

God continues to increase love in our hearts for our neighbors within our congregation, community, and world. Through our various gifts, we are able to strengthen our connections and grow with our God, Holy Crafter of Gifts.

### Giving of our Offerings

Offertory

*Jesus, Jesus, Rest Your Head ~ arr. Whitworth*

Doxology (*Everyone & Please Stand*)

*W Zlobie Lezy*

**Glory be to God the Father, glory be to Christ the Son,  
Glory to the Holy spirit, glory to the Three in One.  
Here we offer to you gladly all the gifts that you impart,  
As we glory in your Presence, giving from a grateful heart.**

### Prayer of Dedication

*Pastor:* Joyous God, Originator of all Gifts, This day and always, we celebrate the gifts of our hands and hearts. We share our talents and time, knowing our energy builds the world with love. We share our treasures, knowing that all gifts we entrust to your Church will build your Realm. With joy, we devote our first fruits to loving you and your children. Amen.

### Invitation

#### Communion Prayer

*Pastor:* God be with you.

**Congregation: And also with you.**

*Pastor:* Lift up your hearts.

**Congregation: We lift them up to the Lord.**

*Pastor:* Let us give thanks to God, most high.

**Congregation: It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

### Sharing of Elements

### Announcements

Sending Forth Hymn ~ #114 (*Please Stand*)

*Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates*

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates; behold, the King of glory waits;  
the King of kings is drawing near; the Savior of the world is here!

Fling wide the portals of your heart; make it a temple, set apart  
from earthly use for heaven's employ, adorned with prayer and love and joy.

Redeemer, come! I open wide my heart to Thee; here, Lord, abide!  
Let me Thy inner presence feel, Thy grace and love in me reveal.

So come, my Sov' reign; enter in! Let new and nobler life begin;  
Thy Holy Spirit guide us on, until the glorious crown be won.

**Benediction** *(Please Remain Standing)*

As we open the doors to the dawn of this season,  
May the Creator of Our Hearts fill us with Joy,  
May the Light of Christ fill our hearts with Hope,  
And may the Spirit of Tranquility assure our souls with Strength. Amen.

**Benediction Response** *(Please Remain Standing)*

*Greensleeves*

**This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and Angels sing;  
Haste, haste, to bring Him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary.**

**Chimes**

**Postlude**

*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing ~ arr. Smith*

*Please join us at Coffee Hour in the parlor immediately following the service.  
Our thanks go out to **Sue Anderson** for hosting Coffee Hour today!*

**Prayer Requests**

Ellen Dalbeck requests prayers for her nephew, *Tyler McDermott* and his family. Tyler is undergoing treatment for cancer. Connie MacInnes requests prayers for her niece *Linda*, and for *Russell Mohamed*, who is home and recovering from an auto accident. Mark Leslie requests prayers for his wife, *Carol*. Sue & Norman Anderson request prayers for their daughter, *Melanie*; Sue's brother, *Danny Waskevich*, and their friend, *Roger Waite*. Please also pray for their doctor, *Dr. Phillip Fournier*, as he continues cancer treatment. Dawn & Matt Ahaesy request prayers for *Gina Ahaesy*; The Deacons request prayers for *Ann Scherdell*, *Dolores Trzcinski*, *Jeanne Fassett*, *Paul Scherdell*, and *Joyce & Armand Thienel*. Kristin Olson requests prayers for *Mitch Bourque*. Prayers also continue for *Erika Vecsey*, and also for *Jane Boggs*.

*If you would like to add a prayer concern or update our list, please email the church office at [office@fcc-worcester.org](mailto:office@fcc-worcester.org) or call the office at 508-752-4635.*

## Announcements

**Hospitality** ~ Please join us in the parlor for coffee and goodies every Sunday after worship. If you are able to host a coffee hour, there is a sign-up sheet on the table. If you bring the goodies, we provide the coffee and other beverages, and the paper goods. If you'd like, two or more people can sign up together to make it a little easier. Our thanks go out to **Sue Anderson** for hosting today's Coffee Hour.

**Christmas Eve** ~ Please plan now to join us for our Christmas Eve Service, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2024, 7:00 p.m., for candles, candle lighting, Silent Night, more special music, and the Service of Lessons and Carols.

**M.S.P.C.C Christmas Tags** ~ The gift tags for M.S.P.C.C. are all taken. Thank you to everyone for taking these tags so quickly! Wrapped gifts must be returned by Sunday, December 8, 2024. Thank you for helping in this Christmas outreach sponsored by the Missions committee!

### **Poinsettias**

The poinsettia order form is included with your bulletin today. Please print all the information just as you would like it written up in the bulletin. Be sure to leave us your contact information!

**Carpet Fund Collection** ~ Our new carpeting looks beautiful! Please continue your contributions to our teddy bear so we can finish the carpeting in the sanctuary.

**Friendly Messenger** ~ If you would like a copy of our newsletter, you can pick one up from the table in the narthex.

**Church Directory** ~ Directories are available in the church office.

*Connect With Us ~ Would you like to get more connected with the happenings at First Church? Simply fill out one of our "Welcome Home!" cards located in the pew back in front of you and place it in the offering basket this morning. Thank you for joining us today!*

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## *The First Congregational Church in Worcester*

### *United Church of Christ*

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## Weekly Calendar

<b>Today</b>	10:00am	FCC Worship Service ( <i>Sanctuary</i> ) Communion Sunday ~ Carty Cupboard Collection ~ Deacons Fund Collection
	10:00am	Family Christian Church of God ( <i>Hall</i> )
	11:00am	Ghanian Resurrection Ministries ( <i>Upper level</i> )
	1:00pm	Iglesia Pentecostal Casa de Vida ( <i>Sanctuary</i> )
	6:45pm	AA Meeting ( <i>Hall</i> )
<b>Monday</b>	7:00pm	AA Meeting ( <i>Hall</i> )
	10-2pm	Church Office Open
	7:00pm	Bible Study ( <i>Conference Room</i> )
<b>Tuesday</b>	6:30pm	AA Meeting ( <i>Hall</i> )
<b>Wednesday</b>	10:00am	Fellowship ~ Advent Program with Pastor Jack ( <i>Parlor</i> )
	7:00pm	Iglesia Pentecostal Casa de Vida ( <i>Sanctuary</i> )
	7:00pm	Autobiographical Writing ( <i>Conference Room</i> )
<b>Thursday</b>	6:45pm	AA Meeting ( <i>Hall</i> )
	10-2pm	Church Office Open
<b>Friday</b>		Church Office Open
	7:00pm	Iglesia Pentecostal Casa de Vida ( <i>Sanctuary</i> )
<b>Saturday</b>	10:00am	New Hope SDA ( <i>Sanctuary &amp; Parlor</i> )
	12:00pm	Church of God ( <i>Hall</i> )
<b>Sunday</b>	10:00am	FCC Worship Service ( <i>Sanctuary</i> )
	10:00am	Family Christian Church of God ( <i>Hall</i> )
	11:00am	Ghanian Resurrection Ministries ( <i>Upper level</i> )
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