

**First Congregational Church**  
**Our Church in Worship**

December 1, 2024 10:00 AM  
First Sunday of Advent

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PRELUDE *Angels We Have Heard On High* – arr. G. M. Göttsche Adam Peithmann

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS Rev. Christopher Stevens

LIGHTING THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE (Responsive) The Candle of Hope

Leader: On this first Sunday of Advent, we light the candle of hope.

**People: Hope is our assurance that God will finish all He has started.**

Leader: Hope is our confidence that He will do all He has promised.

**People: All the promises of God are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He is our hope, today and forever!**

Leader: Ephesians 1:17-18 <sup>17</sup> I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. <sup>18</sup> I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.

**All: Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift of Hope!**

ADVENT WREATH SONG NO. 128, v. 1 *One Candle Is Lit*

ADVENT PRAYER (Unison)

**Lord, we are waiting. We've been waiting for a long, long time; waiting for love that breaks down hostile walls, and light that brightens darkened minds; waiting for peace that always seems at hand, yet never quite arrives; waiting for abstract qualities like truth and justice to become concrete: the Word made flesh, dwelling among us. Lord, thank you for Advent, for this time of preparation that makes the waiting all worthwhile. Amen.**

\*OPENING HYMN NO. 136 Christians All, Your Lord Is Coming

*Those involved with Sunday Friends may leave for their activity*

CALL TO CONFESSION

Rev. Christopher Stevens

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Unison)

**There are many roads to choose from; yet only one leads to life. God, we confess our desire to choose roads that lead to so many things that keep us from you. We**

**are so easily distracted, tempted by paths that seem to lead to good things – wealth, prosperity, health -- and yet they never satisfy. Keep us on the path that leads to you. Give us a desire for the things that are of you, that we know will bring us ultimate joy and to you, great glory. Thank you for never leaving us behind when we wander. Draw us back to you. Amen.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

How blessed we are to have a High Priest who understands our weakness, hears our prayer and responds with mercy to our sincere confession. Friends, receive the good news that in Jesus Christ, you are forgiven! Amen.

MUSICAL OFFERING Movement 1 from "Hope" Cantata – Joel Raney Chancel Choir

Mary had a baby, O my Lord! Rejoice and sing praises to the newborn King. Join the angel chorus singing "Glory to God in the highest."

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice. Christ is born today! The little Lord, Jesus, asleep on the hay.

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...Christ, the Lord.

PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Barbara Papagian

OUR PRAYER CONCERNS Response... "Hear Our Prayer"

SILENT MEDITATION

OUR LORD'S PRAYER (Unison)

**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 debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

OUR MORNING OFFERING

OFFERTORY MUSIC

\*DOXOLOGY Hymn No. 46

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heavenly host: Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (Unison)

**O God, we offer you these gifts and tithes. We pray that these funds may abound in love for one another throughout the world. Strengthen our hearts in holiness as we faithfully give, so that our ways may be directed by you. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 3:1-12

Karen Hawver

SERMON

*Building Bridges: We All, Like Little Cows, Have Gone Astray*

Rev. Christopher Stevens

SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

*Everyone who sincerely desires a closer relationship with God through Jesus Christ is welcome to join in this Sacrament celebrated with juice and bread (rice cakes for those with wheat sensitivity) We hold the bread and the cup and commune in unity.*

\*COMMUNION HYMN NO. 124 *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*

CALL TO COMMUNION AND COMMUNION PRAYER

SHARING THE BREAD AND THE CUP

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (Unison)

**We thank you gracious God for this meal which you have given us. As we gather around our own tables in the days ahead, might we be reminded of this table, where all are welcome, where trust always overcomes fear and love always is the answer to hate. Amen.**

\*CLOSING HYMN NO. 125 *Come, O Long-expected Jesus*

BENEDICTION

My friends, as you go forth from this place, remember the Light of the World who is to come. Remember the light of Christ who will show us what a life of love looks like. May the Lord, therefore, bless you, and make your love increase and overflow for each other this day and always. Amen.

POSTLUDE

*Go, Tell it On the Mountain – arr. J. Behnke*

\*You are invited to stand if you wish.

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<p><b>First Congregational Church</b>          United Church of Christ          508 Union Street • Manchester, New Hampshire          FCCManchesterNH.org • 603-625-5093  <i>You are welcome here! • We are an Open &amp; Affirming Congregation</i></p>
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