

**First Congregational Church
Our Church in Worship**

December 15, 2024 10:00 AM
Third Sunday of Advent

PRELUDE *Silent Night* – arr. Gunther M Göttische Adam Peithmann

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS Rev. Christopher Stevens

*OPENING HYMN NO. 119 *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

CALL TO WORSHIP (Responsive) Pamela LeBlanc & Craig Finefrock
Lighting of the Third Advent Candle

Leader: The third candle is the candle of JOY.

People: We light the Joy candle today to remind us of the great Joy in giving.

Leader: Because of this joy, it is better to give than receive.

People: God had great joy when he gave His Son Jesus to us to be our savior,

Leader: And at Christmastime, we celebrate His gift to us by giving gifts to each other.

People: The joy of the season is in giving.

Leader: And when [the wise men] had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”

All: Let us give the gift of Christ to all!

ADVENT WREATH SONG NO. 128, v. 3 *One Candle Is Lit*

Come, festively sing while awaiting the birth, join angels in dancing from heaven to earth. Wave banners of good news, lift high thankful praise. One candle is lit for the joy of these days.

ADVENT PRAYER (Unison) Rev. Christopher Stevens

**At Christmas, Lord,
there are packages to be opened,
gifts to be unwrapped.
We look to them with anticipation.
Yet, this Christmas,
may we be so blessed
as to see beyond the wrapping paper.**

**May we learn anew
what this joyous celebration is all about:
your gift to us, in Christ,
and our gifts to others, in return.
Amen.**

MUSICAL OFFERING “Heavenly Peace” from Hope Cantata – Joel Raney
Chancel Choir & Bridget Thornton-Smith, soloist
Away in a manger, no crib for a bed, the little Lord Jesus lay down his sweet head; while the stars in the sky looked down where he lay, 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 tonight. Starlight is gleaming, angels are singing while shepherds are leaving their sheep. Sing “Noel, noel,” glad tidings tell. Bow down and worship, the newborn King, worship the King! Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay close by me forever, and love me, I pray. Bless all the children in thy tender care, and fit us for heaven to live with you there. Starlight is gleaming angels are singing, “Glory to God on high.” Rejoice and sing! Come and adore him. Christ, the newborn King. Away in a manger, no crib for a bed. Sleep in heavenly peace.

Those involved with Sunday Friends may leave for their activity.

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.

*HYMN NO. 155 *Angels We Have Heard on High*

OUR MORNING OFFERING Rev. Barbara Papagian

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)

Lord of Light, you gave yourself to this world by the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ. Center us on the King of Glory during these prayerful moments of giving. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING Isaiah 9:6-7 Craig Finefrock

SERMON "Who? Me?" Rev. Stephen Cushing

*CLOSING HYMN NO. 143 *Joy to the World*

BENEDICTION Rev. Stephen Cushing

POSTLUDE *Toccata* – Richard Keys Biggs

*You are invited to stand if you wish.

SCRIPTURE READING:

Isaiah 9:6-7 (English Standard Version)

⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

***Rev. Stephen Cushing** is Executive Director and Senior Chaplain at New England Seafarers Mission. As part of the Evangelical Covenant Church, the Seafarers Mission provides physical and spiritual assistance for crew members of commercial ships. During his tenure at NESM, Rev. Cushing has met individuals from 166 nations and NESM as an organization has interacted with 500,000 seafarers. Stephen and his wife Sharon live in Wakefield, MA and have 2 adult children, Tim and Julia.*

First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
508 Union Street • Manchester, New Hampshire
FCCManchesterNH.org • 603-625-5093
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