



# First Congregational

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**“With Hope in our Hearts”  
1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Christmas  
December 27, 2020  
10:30 a.m. Facebook Live Service**

*Following Jesus, our mission is to serve God  
by building an inclusive community where uplifting worship  
and relevant messages deepen spirituality  
and inspire acts of justice, service, and compassion.*

***Our Church’s Mission Statement***

Rev. Dr. Laura Miller-Purrenhage, Pastor  
Angela Spialek, Office Administrator  
Nicole Finney, Child Care  
Sue Sackett, Custodian  
Rev. John Baumgartner, Pastor Emeritus

Judy Nielsen, Organist  
Darlene Banks, Bell Choir Director  
Brandon Frost, Choir Director  
Chuck Byam, Choir Accompanist

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## Welcome to First Congregational United Church of Christ!

*As you look over the bulletin, please notice that you are invited to read aloud **bold** text.*

### MOMENT FOR CENTERING

#### GREETING

One: The grace of Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**Many: And also with you.**

### INTRODUCTIONS and ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### INTROIT

“Bring the Torch Jeanette Isabella”

*(Judy Nielsen)*

### CALL TO WORSHIP

One: When Jesus is born to Mary and Joseph,

**Many: God is there.**

One: When they present Jesus at the temple,

**Many: God is there.**

One: When Simeon holds Jesus in his arms,

**Many: God is there.**

One: When Anna recognizes Jesus as the answer to prayer,

**Many: God is there.**

One: This very morning,

**Many: God is here.**

One: In the future we cannot see,

**Many: God is there. Let us worship God!**

#### OPENING HYMN

“Angels We Have Heard On High”

*(please feel free to sing loud and strong from your place at home)*

#### GATHERING PRAYER

(Used with permission from Rev. Susan Blain, Copyright 2020 Justice and Local Church Ministries, Faith INFO Ministry Team, United Church of Christ)

One: Please join me in prayer:

**Many: O God, in the sweetness of the story we tell today, we feel the movement of your Spirit making all things new. Awaken us to your presence in this moment as we seek Christ in our midst: Let us recognize God-with-us, a light to the nations, your glory revealed. In Jesus' name we pray.**

### PASSING OF THE PEACE

#### ANTHEM

“New Christmas/New Year's Song”

*(Mark Miller)*

### FRESH PERSPECTIVES

Rev. Dr. Virginia Schiefelbein

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Isaiah 61:10-11 & 62:1-3 NRSV(pg. 678)

GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 25:31-46 NRSV (pg. 904)

One: Words from the past, made new for us today.

**Many: Thanks be to God.**

SUNG RESPONSE # 129

“Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”

**Good Christian friends rejoice  
with heart and soul and voice;  
Now give heed to what we say:  
Jesus Christ is born today;  
Ox and ass before him bow,  
asleep within the manger now.  
Christ is born today!  
Christ is born today!**

HOMILY

“With Hope in our Hearts”  
(Karen Holcomb-Merrill)

MUSICAL REFLECTION

“He Is Born the Divine Christ Child”  
(Judy Nielsen)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

*(Since our services are posted publicly on Facebook, we ask that you either leave people unnamed in your prayer requests [ex: prayers for a friend who is in his last stages of life] or that you obtain permission from anyone you wish to name in prayer.)*

OFFERING MOMENT

*Please give what you can by mail or through prayers.  
If you have any questions, please reach out to Lynn Hart [hartacre3@aol.com](mailto:hartacre3@aol.com)*

CLOSING HYMN #154

*(please feel free to sing loud and strong from your place at home)*

“Go, Tell It On the Mountain”

BENEDICTION

CHORAL RESPONSE

“In the Lord I’ll be Ever Thankful” (sung once)

**In the Lord I’ll be ever thankful  
In the Lord, I will rejoice!  
Look to God, do not be afraid.  
Lift up your voices, the Lord is near.  
Lift up your voices, the Lord is near.**

POSTLUDE

“Jesu Joy of Man’s Desiring”  
(Judy Nielsen)

Please join us for a short fellowship time on Zoom at 12 noon.

## CREDITS

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- Service Prayers for Advent 1 Year B 2020 was written by an intergenerational family team: the late Rev. Dr. Robert George, retired minister ordained in the Presbyterian Church of the USA and Karen George, retired Christian educator, from Broad Bay Congregational UCC of Waldoboro, Maine, and Judy Colby-George, carrying on the family tradition as Christian educator at First Parish Church of Freeport, Maine. Prayers were adapted for 2020 by Susan A. Blain, minister for Worship and Gospel Arts. Copyright 2020 Local Church Ministries, Faith INFO Ministry Team, United Church of Christ, 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115-1100. Permission granted to reproduce or adapt this material for use in services of worship or church education. All publishing rights reserved.
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- **Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring**  
(#16385, Contributors: Bach, arr. Robert J. Hughes, Bach, arr. Robert J. Hughes)

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## SUNDAY ROSTER

**Liturgist** – John Miller-Purrenhage

**Fresh Perspective** – Rev. Dr. Virginia Schiefelbein

**Homily** – Karen Holcomb-Merrill

**Virtual Coordinator** – Rev. Dr. Laura Miller-Purrenhage

**Organist** – Judy Nielsen

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- If you're struggling to find hope amidst all of the troubles of our world right now, one source that maybe be helpful is this: <https://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/>

## Go Tell It on the Mountain

154

African-American spiritual  
 Arr. John W. Work II, 1907

Luke 2:8–20; Isa. 18:3; 52:7

*Refrain*

G D7 G

Go tell it on the moun - tain, o - ver the hill and ev - ery - where.

G Em C G/D D7 Last time, end G

Go tell it on the moun - tain, that Je - sus Christ is born!

G D7 G

1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,  
 2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when lo! a - bove the earth  
 3 Down in a low - ly man - ger the hum - ble Christ was born,

G A7 D7 to Refrain

Be - hold through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.  
 Rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.  
 And God sent us sal - va - tion that bless - ed Christ-mas morn.

This is one of the few spirituals heard inside as well as outside African-American churches. It was adapted by John Wesley Work II, who is remembered as the director of the Jubilee Singers of Fisk University.

Tune: African-American spiritual  
 Adapt. Joyce Finch Johnson, 1992

### **Isaiah 61:10-11 & 62:1-3**

I will greatly rejoice in God, my whole being shall exult in my God; for God has clothed me with the garments of salvation, God has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch.

The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of God will give.

You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of God, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

## **Matthew 25:31-46**

<sup>31</sup> “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, <sup>33</sup> and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. <sup>34</sup> Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; <sup>35</sup> for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup> I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ <sup>37</sup> Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? <sup>38</sup> And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? <sup>39</sup> And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ <sup>40</sup> And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’ <sup>41</sup> Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; <sup>42</sup> for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ <sup>44</sup> Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’ <sup>45</sup> Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ <sup>46</sup> And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”