In Our Prayers

Deborah Masella (new cancer diagnosis)**Family and friends of Claire Fowler** Tina Caldwell**Paul and Melissa Masi and friends mourning the loss of Hayden Steinhilper**Kim Baldwin (Lori Folk-Barron's friend)**Those recovering from natural disasters**Diane Geiss** Shirley Breedlove (Tina Caldwell's mom)** Sharon Geil**Sally Coleman** Amanda Otfinoski, victim of a hit and run** Megan Perkowski **Alexander Karacsonyi **Cousin Jean Farrell and Aunt Joyce Gorsky (the McKenna Family) **A Friend Diagnosed with Pancreatic Cancer** Mark and Lynn Bailey (friends of John and Sherry Perkowski)** Tim Keogh** Charmaine Craggs** Ashley Sibley (Bernie and Tony's great-niece)**Tom Jastermsky** Connie Ferrara (Sue Keogh's mom)** Gabe and Jude Heidenis (Bernie and Tony's grandsons)**Jack Grotti (friend of Sally Coleman)** Wendy Riddle, sister of Sandy Weekes ** Cathy Kovi** Holly Arce (Daughter-in-law of Manuael Arce and Deborah Sinon)** Kyle Denson (friend of Kristen Hinckley)** Sandy McCume** Betsy-Sue Eisenman** Hazel Rickes (Kristen Hinckley's grandmother) **Anne Stevens (Ken's mother)** Judy and Eric Rickes (Kristen Hinckley's parents)**Janice Frey**David Lick** Beverly Lastig** Those around the world who live in areas of conflict.



The First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ

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gross7jeanette1@gmail.com (Minister of Music)

Website: www.firstchurchwallingford.org



To make a gift to First Church



At the First Congregational Church, UCC of Wallingford, CT, we have discerned the following vision and mission for our faith lives together:

<u>Vision</u>

Our faith — rooted in the compassion and teachings of Jesus Christ — is the foundation of our love for one another and service to the world around us.

We offer a home for those seeking deeper meaning or purpose in their lives through the exploration of Jesus Christ's teachings. The love and compassion found in those teachings commit us to up lift each individual and celebrate our shared humanity.

Mission

We will foster spiritual growth, loving communication, and mutual care, thereby empowering us to confront issues that impact our community and the world, including poverty, isolation, and exclusion.

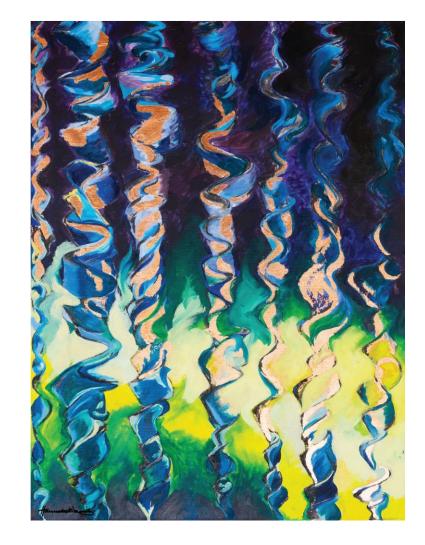
We commit to developing a nurturing environment where all are loved, valued, and inspired to meaningful participation in the life of the church. Through our Christian faith, compassion, and service, we will dedicate ourselves to making a positive impact on the lives of people in our community and beyond.

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First Congregational Church Wallingford, CT



"Watercourses" by Hannah Garrity

Third Sunday of Advent December 17, 2023 How does a weary world rejoice?

Be open to awe and wonder!

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 17, 2023
ORDER OF WORSHIP

+ Please rise in body or in spirit

PRELUDE A Spiritual Maiden William Byrd Bernardo Storace Settings from the 16-17th Centuries

WELCOME

CENTERING MUSIC Lo, How a Rose Is Growing Setting by John Leavitt

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Our God can part the sea.

P: God can bring water from a rock, and provide bread in the desert.

L: Our God can walk on water.

P: He can heal the sick, and turn water into wine.

L: Our God sets the stars in the sky.

P: God hears our voice when we cry, and is closer than our own breath.

L: There is nothing our God cannot do.

P: Let us stand in awe. Let us worship God with wonder.

+HYMN O How Glorious, Full of Wonder NCH #558

LIGHTING OF THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE – JOY Jennifer and Ben Hally

L: How does a weary world practice joy?

P: By dancing, and throwing birthday parties.

L: By hanging Christmas lights, and holding sleepy babies. By singing loudly, and looking for good news.

P: By telling the story of Jesus, and showing up for our community.

L: There are a million ways to practice joy.

So today we light the candle of joy as a reminder and a charge.

P: With God's help, may we bring joy into a weary world. Amen.

TIME WITH THE CHILDREN – Creating the Old Old Story

CALL TO REFLECTION

PRAYER OF REFLECTION

Holy God, somewhere in our childhood we face pressure to outgrow awe. We turn into adults who obsess over data and facts. We praise those who have answers, and assume that wonder is an answerless game. Forgive us for closing that door to you. Remind us that the kingdom of God belongs to children. Teach us the ways of awe and wonder, so that like Zechariah, when we find ourselves speechless, our first words will be words of praise. With hearts open wide, we pray, amen.

MOMENT OF QUIET PRAYER

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S LOVE

SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

READING FROM THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE Psalm 126 (Pew Bible OT p. 584)

ANTHEM Within the Darkest Night Derek K. Hakes
The Handbell Choir

READING FROM THE CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURE Luke 1:57-66 (Pew Bible NT p. 54)

THE MESSAGE

HYMN How Great Thou Art (insert) CHL # 33
PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE 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 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.

INVITATION TO GIVE

OFFERTORY

+DOXOLOGY (melody: In the Bleak Midwinter)

Praise the one creator, praise the living Christ.

Praise the Holy Spirit, praise both day and night.

Praise when you are weary, praise and times of joy.

Praise my soul, with all your strength and your heart and voice.

+PRAYER OF DEDICATION

+HYMN O Come, O Come Emmanuel

NCH #116

COMMISSION AND BENEDICTION

RESPONSE Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord

CHL # 121

POSTLUDE Veni Emmanuel Adolphus Hailstork

Announcements

Welcome to the First Congregational Church of Wallingford! If you are visiting with us this morning, we extend a special welcome and greeting to you. First Church is a part of the United Church of Christ. No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!

The flowers on the altar are given in memory of my husband, Arthur Mansfield, on our 45th wedding anniversary by Cindy Mansfield.

Serving the church today: (8:00) Charmaine Craggs, Louise Zemina, Greeters; (10:00) Tony Annunziata, Liturgist; Lois Doherty, Steve & Cathy Knight, Bruce & Katherine Ollodart, Ushers; Russ Hinckley, Chimes.

Join our Ashlar friends at a **Service of Lessons and Carols, Thursday, December 21 at Ashlar Village.** Enter through Bridge House to Auditoriums A & B.

Next Sunday, December 24, is the Fourth Sunday of Advent and also Christmas Eve! Our annual **Christmas Pageant** will be offered at the 10 AM service. Our Christmas Eve experience will begin with an extended **Prelude of Christmas Music** beginning at 10:15. **A Service of Carols, Candlelight and Communion** will begin at 11:00 PM. **Come and worship with us!** (and bring your family and friends)

Join us for our **Hot Chocolate Bar and Cookies**, Sunday December 24 following the **Pageant**. Celebrate the holiday with your church family!

HYMN When God is a Child (insert) (vs.1, 2, 3) CHL #132