

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
United Church of Christ
December 24, 2016
Christmas Eve

Gathering Music

Welcome & Announcements

Mary Menzies

Opening Prayer

Prelude "Ave Maria"

Bach/Gunod

*Carol #249 "O Come, All Ye Faithful!"

Lighting the Advent Candles: *Bob and Alice Muh*

One: Once upon a time, when the world lay in sorrow,
God sent a baby to be the world's Hope.

**All: Come, little baby, come to your manger,
Hope of the world, we wait for your birth.**

One: Once upon a time, when the whole world was fighting,
God sent a baby to be the world's Peace.

**All: Come, little baby, come to your manger,
Peace of the world, we wait for your birth.**

One: Once upon a time, when the world lay in sadness,
God sent a baby to be the world's Joy.

**All: Come, little baby, come to your manger,
Joy of the world, we wait for your birth.**

One: Once upon a time, when the whole world was lonely,
God sent a baby to be the world's Love.

**All: Come, little baby, come to your manger,
Love of the world, we wait for your birth.**

(Lighting of the four Advent candles)

One: Beautiful Child, we wait for your coming,
lighting these candles and lifting our prayer:

**All: Jesus, we wait in the darkness of winter; Jesus, we wait
in the cold of the night; Jesus we wait in a world that still
needs you. Come to your manger; come to your world; come
to your people; dear Jesus, we long for the day when your
brightness will shatter the darkness, and all shall be well,
and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well.**

(Lighting of the Christ Candle.)

Choir Anthem: "Still, Still, Still" *Arr. Luboff*

Reading: Luke 2:1-7

Carol #250 "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

Reading: Luke 2:8-14

Carol #251 "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"

Reading Luke 2:15-19

Homily "Yet in Thy Dark Streets Shineth . . ."

Choir Anthem "Mary, Did You Know"

Reading Matthew 2:1-12

Carol #288 "We Three Kings" vs. 1, 5

Worship of God with our Offerings

*Offertory "In the Bleak Midwinter" *Rossetti/Holst*

*Doxology

Pastoral Prayer Lord's Prayer (trespasses)

Carol #253 "Silent Night"

Benediction

*Carol #270 "Joy to the World!"

*Ministry of the Acolyte and Postlude

Announcements: Tonight, we're going to rise for the first and last carol, as indicated by the asterisk (*). For the rest of the carols, we'll remain seated.

Our offering this evening goes to the fuel assistance program of Catholic Charities.

A special thanks to those who took part in this service:

Lead Deacon: Mary Menzies

Choir Director: Dorothy Morton

The First Congregational Church Choir

Advent Candle Lighters: Bob and Alice Muh

Readers: Bob LaFleur and Mary Menzies

Mary, Joseph and Jesus: Lindsey, Ryan and Oliver Clarke

Shepherds: Bob O'Leary and David Weddington

Angel: Wilma Weddington

Wise Men: Ron Bolt, Lars Nielson and Dennis Sharpe

Soloists: Jo Beth Dudley, flute; Kristjar Nielson, soprano

Greeters: Reg and Emily LaFlam

Guidelines for Lighting Candles:

1. If you are holding a lit candle, keep it upright (so no wax will spill).
2. To light your candle, turn it sideways and light it from your neighbor's candle.
3. From then on, hold your candle upright (so no wax will spill).
4. Turn and let your neighbor light his or her candle from the flame of your upright candle.
5. And so on.

You're welcome to take your candle home, if you like.

Please leave the plastic candle-holders in the boxes at the doors of the sanctuary.

Thanks for helping us have a safe and joyful Christmas Eve service.