

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
United Church of Christ
December 24, 2018
Christmas Eve

Those who are able may stand where marked ()*

Gathering Music

Welcome, Announcements and Opening Prayer *Mary Menzies*

Prelude "Gesù Bambino" *Yon*

Lighting the Advent Candles: *Dan and Kathy Kiefer*

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 welcome 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 welcome 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 welcome 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 welcome your birth.**

**Unison: 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 welcome your birth.**

(Lighting of the Christ Candle.)

Carol "In the Bleak Midwinter"
In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone.
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter, long ago.

What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part; yet
What I can I give him—give my heart.

Reading Luke 2:1-7

Anthem "Mary Went A-Riding" *Martin*

Reading Luke 2:8-14

Carol #278 "Angels We Have Heard on High" vs. 1, 3, 4

Reading Luke 2:15-19

Special Moment "A Christmas Answer" *Martin*

Homily "Love Came Down"

Reading Matthew 2:1-12

Carol #290 "As with Gladness Men of Old"

Worship of God with our Offerings

*Offertory "The King Shall Come" *Martin*

*Doxology

Pastoral Prayer Lord's Prayer (trespasses)

Carol #253 “Silent Night! Holy Night!”

Benediction

*Carol #270 “Joy to the World!”

*Postlude

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

Our offering will support the Fuel Assistance Program of Catholic Charities.

A special thanks to those who are taking part in this service:

Lead Deacon: Mary Menzies
Choir Director: Dorothy Morton
The First Congregational Church Choir
Readers: Amy Sharpe and Phil Krill
Flutist: Jo Beth Dudley
Dancer: Kim Smith
Soloist: Kristjar Nielson
Greeters: Reg and Emily LaFlam

Our Special Music tonight is from “Rhapsody in Bluegrass” by Joseph M. Martin.

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.