

WELCOME TO ADVENT AT  
FIRST  
CONGREGATIONAL  
UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST



FCINDY.ORG

ADVENT IS THE SEASON WHEN WE  
PREPARE AND AWAKEN TO THE SIGNS  
OF GOD'S LOVE AND JUSTICE  
UNFOLDING IN OUR MIDST. WE AWAIT  
THE BIRTH OF THE CHRIST-CHILD WITH  
HOPE, PEACE, JOY, AND LOVE.

SUN, DEC 1, 2024 – TUE, DEC 24, 2024



The Gift of  
Being Present

Whether you choose to join us online or in-person, we believe we are called together by Jesus to be a transforming presence for God in the world. **We are a place to belong, a place to heal and a place to love.** At First Congregational we recognize God as a loving, creating, all-encompassing Spirit who is not limited by usual human boundaries. Therefore, we practice the use of inclusive, expansive, and non-gendered language when speaking of and to God.

We welcome all who worship with us today and include **all ages** in our hybrid worship service. We invite guests and members to fill out a Welcome/Prayer card found in the pew holder, and put it in the offering plate. Children are invited to play quietly in the “pryground” at the front of the church, or use a “Quiet Bag” found in the Narthex.

**\*Disclaimer:** Today’s worship service is being live-streamed. While the focus will be on the worship leaders, anything you say or do may be on film. If you have any questions or need to ensure you are not on camera please speak with our minister.

**Pastoral Care:** You may reach out to **Pastor Sarah for Pastoral Care**, including home visits, hospital visits, home communion, prayer and conversation. She may be reached by text or phone at (386) 478-9012 or [pastorsarah@fcindy.org](mailto:pastorsarah@fcindy.org).

**In-Person Office Hours:** Cassidy (church admin) in office Thursdays. If you need to meet, please contact her at [cassidy@fcindy.org](mailto:cassidy@fcindy.org)

## **We celebrate our worship leaders today:**

Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund (she/her), Worship Leader and preacher

Bonnie Bomer (she/her), Student Pastor

Sean Baker (he/him), Music Director

Scott Semester (he/him), Worship Song Leader

Mayflower Singers

Ben James (he/him), Media Technician

susanna-judith rae, Liturgist

\*\*\*Student Minister Bonnie Bomer has a guide dog named Fiesta. Please do not touch Fiesta while she is working and wearing her harness. When her harness is off, Bonnie invites us to engage with Fiesta and pet her.

**December 1, 2024**

**11:00 AM**

*Please speak the **bold**-printed words in unison.*

### **Advent One: Being Present with Hope**

### **We Celebrate Being Together: Gathering**

Prelude            Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn

Welcome and Announcements

Becoming Present — an Advent Ritual

*Reader:* We unwrap a present on this first Sunday of Advent with great anticipation for the gift that God will reveal.

***People:* We open our hearts as we open the gift!**

*Reader:* The promise of Hope is the Divine Gift we receive.

**People: And what will we do with it?**

*Reader:* The gift of hope is an essential survival tool because it reminds us hard times do not have the last word. Hope is not simply a wish. Hope calls us into action believing that things can be different.

We can work to create a better world that we hope for.

**People: We light this Candle of Hope as a sign that we will be Present with Hope in the world.**

**What can I give Him, poor as I am?**

**If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;**

**If I were a Wise [One], I would do my part;**

**Yet what can I give Him: I will give my heart.**

Prayer of Presence

Let us pray:

**Holy Living Light of God,  
you are our Hopeful Presence.**

**Let this hope grow in our lives each day,  
so we can be a Present of Hope to others.**

**Unwrap and open our hearts.**

**May it be so. Amen.**

Opening Hymn #370

*“What Gift Can We Bring”*

New Century Hymnal

The Peace

# 📖 The Word Present Among Us: Proclaiming 📖

Message for All Ages

First Readings      *Psalm 80: 1-2 and 1 Corinthians 1: 4-7*

*Reader:* The book of Psalms was the songbook of the Hebrew people. Psalm 80 was written in a time when the people were exiled from their homeland. In it we hear the conviction and hope that God will restore the people. Let us read responsively:

*Shepherd of Israel, hear us,  
you who lead Joseph like a flock!  
**You who are enthroned on the cherubim, shine out!**  
*Shine out before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh!*  
**Awaken your power and come to save us!**  
*O God, return to us — let your face smile on us,  
**and we will be saved!****

Another community at a later time — the early Christians — also lived in a time of oppression by the Roman occupiers. The letters that circulated among them gave them hope for the future. Hear this excerpt from the First Letter to the Corinthians:

*I continually thank my God for you because of the gift bestowed on you in Christ Jesus, in whom you have been richly endowed with every gift of speech and knowledge. In the same way, the testimony about Christ has been so*

*confirmed among you that you lack no spiritual gift, as you wait for the revelation of our Savior Jesus Christ.*

Witness to the Word

Gospel Reading

*Mark 13: 24-37*

susanna-judith rae

Sermon

Being Present With Hope

Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund

 **Fully Present in the Moment: Praying** 

Joys and Concerns

Prayers of the People

*“Right Here, Right Now”*

*Right here and right now we open our senses  
to see and perceive the gifts we’ve been given,  
to know and believe that what we must do  
is open our hearts to let all gifts flow through.*

The first question is this: Who was a gift of presence to you this week? Did you experience their attention in a way that felt like a special connection?

Take a moment to recall this in your mind’s eye, seeing it emerge like opening a gift. If you cannot recall such a moment, it is OK... this week you will notice these moments more deeply.

The second question is this: How did you offer yourself as a gift of presence? What did it feel like to extend your attentiveness and

availability beyond yourself? Did you notice how it made a difference to someone else for you to be truly present to them?

The third question is this: Is it possible that God's presence is felt more acutely in these moments when we truly tend to one another? What could you do this coming week that would allow God's gift of Hope to flow through you to someone else? It may be as simple as finding opportunities to speak an encouraging word. Or as complex as actually lifting up someone's circumstances through volunteering or donating.

***Right here and right now we open our senses  
to see and perceive the gifts we've been given,  
to know and believe that what we must do  
is open our hearts to let all gifts flow through.***

In this prayerful, present moment, we train our attention on those  
who are in distress.  
We pray this week for...

In this prayerful, present moment, we train our attention on  
thanksgiving and joy.  
We give thanks this week for...

In this prayerful, present moment we ask you, Christ Jesus, the  
Greatest Gift of All,  
to help us savor our journey toward the celebration of Christmas.

Help us recognize and create moments of sweet presence  
rather than filling the voids with the things that do not last.  
Help us to stop, notice what we are experiencing,  
and accept it with open hearts and minds.

In doing this, we allow you to meet us  
in the right here, right now, right where we are.  
Amen.

***Right here and right now we open our senses  
to see and perceive the gifts we've been given,  
to know and believe that what we must do  
is open our hearts to let all gifts flow through.***

Offering

Communion

 **Present to the World: Sending** 

Closing Carol #131 *"It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"*  
New Century Hymnal

Benediction

Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund

Postlude

Jesu, Joy of Our Desiring



## **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**Join Us for Blue Christmas** on Tuesday, December 17 at 7:00 PM as we honor the difficulty in this time of year.

**Join Us for the Christmas Eve candlelight service** on Tuesday, December 24 at 7:00 PM.

**FORGOT 2025 PLEDGE?** I forgot to turn in my 2025 pledge, is it too late? The answer is “NO”. You still have time to get it turned in. Just mail it in to the church or drop it in the collection plate on Sunday. No pledge is too small or too large. No matter how large or small, your pledge helps us all.

**Ways to Connect & Serve:** Interested in participating with a small group at First Congregational? Check out the Connect & Serve cards in the pews, and take one with you, if you like! Looking for an activity that isn't there - contact Wendy Baldwin.

**Food Donations to Northside Pantry** – Help those with hunger insecurity by bringing donations of canned or boxed food, and place in the baskets in the Narthex.

**The Flower Calendar** is on the bulletin board by the garden doors. Please sign up for any occasion. The flowers can come from your garden, store or florist. For more information see **Sally Coombs**.

**Cards to Our Church Family** – Please sign the cards on our “card stand”, for those celebrating birthdays, or in need of prayers.

**Sunday Mornings at 10:00 AM** – Several options are available on Sundays before worship. Join our Adult Ed group for thoughtful study

and discussion (upstairs at church). Or go to choir practice to rehearse for that morning's singing; all skill levels welcome!



Thank You for Your Financial Gifts! Our current Covenant Outreach focus is related to our Mental Health Covenant that includes support for the following organizations: the UCC Mental Health Network, The Julian Center, and GenderNexu



### **Mental Health Support:**

**The 988 Lifeline:** 988 is now active across the United States. (call or text) **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI.ORG):** information: 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) **The Trevor Project hotline** offers support for LGBTQIA+ youth and families struggling with mental health challenges at 1-866-4-U-TREVOR (488-7386) and **[www.theTrevorProject.org](http://www.theTrevorProject.org)**