

Christmas Eve

December 24, 2024



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 “prayground” 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.

In-Person Office Hours: Cassidy (church admin) in office Thursdays. If you need to meet, please contact her at 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



Angel Flora, 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 24, 2024

11:00 AM

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

Christmas Eve: Being Present with Light
 **We Celebrate Our Presence Together: Gathering** 

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund

Lighting the Advent Candles and Christ Candle

Choir:

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

Bonnie Bomer

Let us pray:

**Holy Living God,
you are our Light.**

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

Unwrap and open our hearts.

May it be so.

Amen.

Opening Hymn

"Joy to the World" #132

New Century Hymnal

The Peace Moment Video

What Child is This?

Sean Baker

*Peace Video by Alice Rutherford and Sean Baker

📖 The Word Present Among Us: Proclaiming 📖

The Gift of Children

Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund and Bonnie Bomer

Carol

"Away in a Manger" #124

New Century Hymnal

First Reading

Sean Baker

Isaiah 9: 2-8, excerpts

Reader: We have been reading the words of the prophet Isaiah in the past few weeks as we begin to understand why we are called to be fully present with one another. Isaiah wrote in a time of occupation and exile of his people and by the end of the Book of Isaiah, the people have been freed. But the scripture we read tonight is toward the beginning of the book and the people are scattered and afraid, feeling alone and despondent. Isaiah speaks what perhaps felt like an impossible prophetic word to remind the people that God is present with them always. Let us read responsively:

*The people walking in darkness are seeing a brilliant light —
upon those who dwell in a land of deep shadows light is shining!
God, you have made the nation greater — you have brought them
abundant joy!*

***They celebrate in your presence as with the harvest
celebrations...***

*For a child is born to us, an heir is given us,
upon whose shoulders dominion will rest.*

This One shall be called:

***Wonderful Counselor, the Strength of God,
Eternal Protector, Champion of Peace.***

This dominion, and this peace, will grow without end,

***with David's throne and realm sustained with justice and fairness,
now and forever.***

Carol

"It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" #131

New Century Hymnal

Gospel Reading

Angel Flora

Luke 2: 1-14, (15-20)

Reader: As we have considered the presence of God, we have encountered an image that winds itself through the scriptures — that of the gentle presence of the Holy holding us close as a shepherd holds a lamb. And tonight the image of those shepherds — who know how to care deeply in each present moment with the flock — are again at the center of the story. They are the ones who first hear the Good News. And while the light initially frightens them, they run toward it, not away. Hear the story from the Gospel of Luke:

In those days, Caesar Augustus published a decree ordering a census of the whole Roman world. This first census took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All the people were instructed to go back to the towns of their birth to register. And so Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to "the city of David" — Bethlehem, in Judea, because Joseph was of the house and lineage of David; he went to register with Mary, his espoused wife, who was pregnant. While they were there, the time came for her delivery. She gave birth to her firstborn, a son; she put him in a simple cloth wrapped like a receiving blanket, and laid him in a feeding trough for cattle, because there was no room for them at the inn. There were shepherds in the area living in the fields and keeping night watch by turns over their flock. The angel of God appeared to them, and the glory of God shone around them; they were very much afraid. The angel said to them, "You have nothing to fear! I come to proclaim good news to you — news of a

great joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in David's city, a savior — the Messiah — has been born to you. Let this be a sign to you: you'll find an infant wrapped in a simple cloth, lying in a manger." Suddenly, there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in high heaven! And on earth, peace to those on whom God's favor rests." When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go straight to Bethlehem and see this event that God has made known to us." They hurried and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger; once they saw this, they reported what they had been told concerning the child. All who heard about it were astonished at the report given by the shepherds. Mary treasured all these things and reflected on them in her heart. The shepherds went away glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as they had been told.

Carol

"Angels We Have Heard on High (Deo)" #125 *New Century Hymnal*

Anthem

Sermon

Being Present with Light

Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund

 **Fully Present in the Moment: Praying** 

Christmas Prayer

Bonnie Bomer

PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR (from UCC Book of Worship)

Our God in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us

from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Choir: *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.*

Christmas Offering

Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund

 **Present to the World: Sending** 

Community Candle Lighting

Please use care and caution when lighting your individual candle. The wax is hot and drips.

Closing Carol

"Silent Night" #134

New Century Hymnal

Benediction

Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund

Postlude

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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.

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 GenderNexus



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**