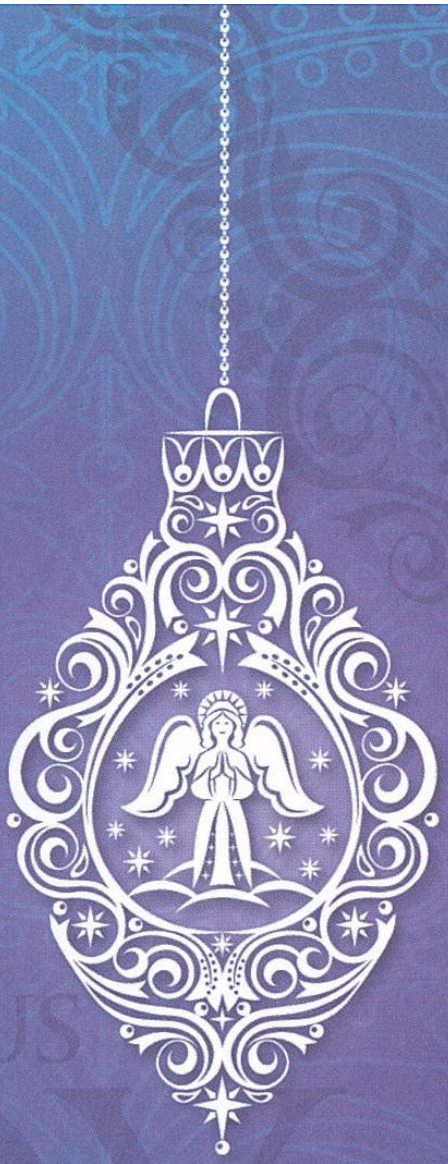


WONDROUS JOY

Good news...

great joy

Luke 2:10

Morning Worship

Third Sunday of Advent

December 13, 2020 8:30 & 10:00 AM

No matter who you are, whom you love, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

*If it is comfortable for you to do so, please stand

APPROACH TO GOD

Let us keep silence as we prepare for worship.

TOWER CHIME (10:00) Norma MacKinley-Smith

MEDITATION "The truth is of course that what one calls the interruptions are precisely one's real life -- the new life God offers us one to another." C.S. Lewis

PRELUDE *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme* J. S. Bach
Awake, calls us the voice *(1685 – 1750)*

CALL TO WORSHIP (inspired by Psalm 126)

Leader: The Lord be with you.
People: And also with you.
Leader: When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.
People: Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy.
Leader: When the Lord raised Jesus from the dead, we were like those who dream.
People: Now our mouths are filled with laughter, and our tongues with shouts of joy.
Leader: The Lord has done great things for us, and we rejoice.
People: May all those who have sowed in tears reap with shouts of gladness.

If comfortable to do so, please join in singing our hymns and sung responses during worship, while wearing your mask.

***HYMN #108** *Wake, Awake, For Night Is Flying* WACHET AUF

Over for page 2

3 Now let all the heavens adore thee,
And men and angels sing before thee
With harp and cymbal's clearest tone;
Of one pearl each shining portal,
Where we shall join the choirs immortal
In praises round thy glorious throne;
No vision ever brought,
No ear hath ever caught
Such great glory!
Therefore will we, eternally,
Sing hymns of joy and praise to thee.

*__PRAYER OF CONFESSION__(Unison)

O God most high and most near, open the deep places of our hearts so that our joy may grow in this time of Christ's coming. Take from us all that is sinful, broken, and fearful, and transform us by Your amazing grace. Deliver us from lukewarm faith, and set us free to live an abundant life with a joy greater than we expect or deserve. Lead us in quiet reflection, and show us where we refuse Your rule in our lives.

A time of silence for personal confession

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: Hear the Good News, children of God: In Jesus Christ, God forgives those who turn to Him in faith with love. Live by the Spirit and rejoice in the freedom of new life.

People: Thanks be to God.

***PRAISE #131/2** *Isaiah, 'twas Foretold It* ES IST EIN ROS' ENTSPRUNGEN

Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the Rose I have in mind,
With Mary we behold it, the Virgin Mother kind.
To show God's love aright, she bore to men a Savior,
When half spent was the night.

GREETINGS

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE (10:00)

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE OF JOY

Reader 1: In a world of despair, where depression rates run high, where there has been so much sadness and loss, God, we call upon you to come.

Reader 2: In a world where joy is a distant memory, we call upon you, Great God of Joy, to come.

Reader 1: In this season of Advent, we wait for the coming of Joy into our world. We await the birth of the Anointed One, the Promised Child, who comes into our lives in a new way.

Reader 2: Come, Messiah, Come, and Save Us.

Prayer: Dear God, we pray for the joy that is found in Jesus, that those who seek it may truly find it. May we celebrate in the joy found in You. Amen.

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE READINGS **Isaiah 61:1–4, 8–11**

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion— to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.

They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

Luke 1:26-37

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God."

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.
People: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL RESPONSE *Thanks Be to Thee* T. Tallis
ADVENT SEPTET *(1505 – 1585)*

VOLUNTARY *Now Sing We, Now Rejoice, Op. 17* P. Manz
(10:00) IN DULCI JUBILO *(1919 – 2009)*

SERMON "Let it Be" Rev. Dr. Andrew Armstrong

RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD

PRAYER CONCERNS

SILENT PRAYERS and PASTORAL PRAYER

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.

PRAYER RESPONSE *In Dulci Jubilo* M. Dupré
(10:00) from *Seventy-Nine Chorales, Op. 28* *(1886 – 1971)*

OFFERTORY *Magnificat* H. Murrill
(1909 – 1952)

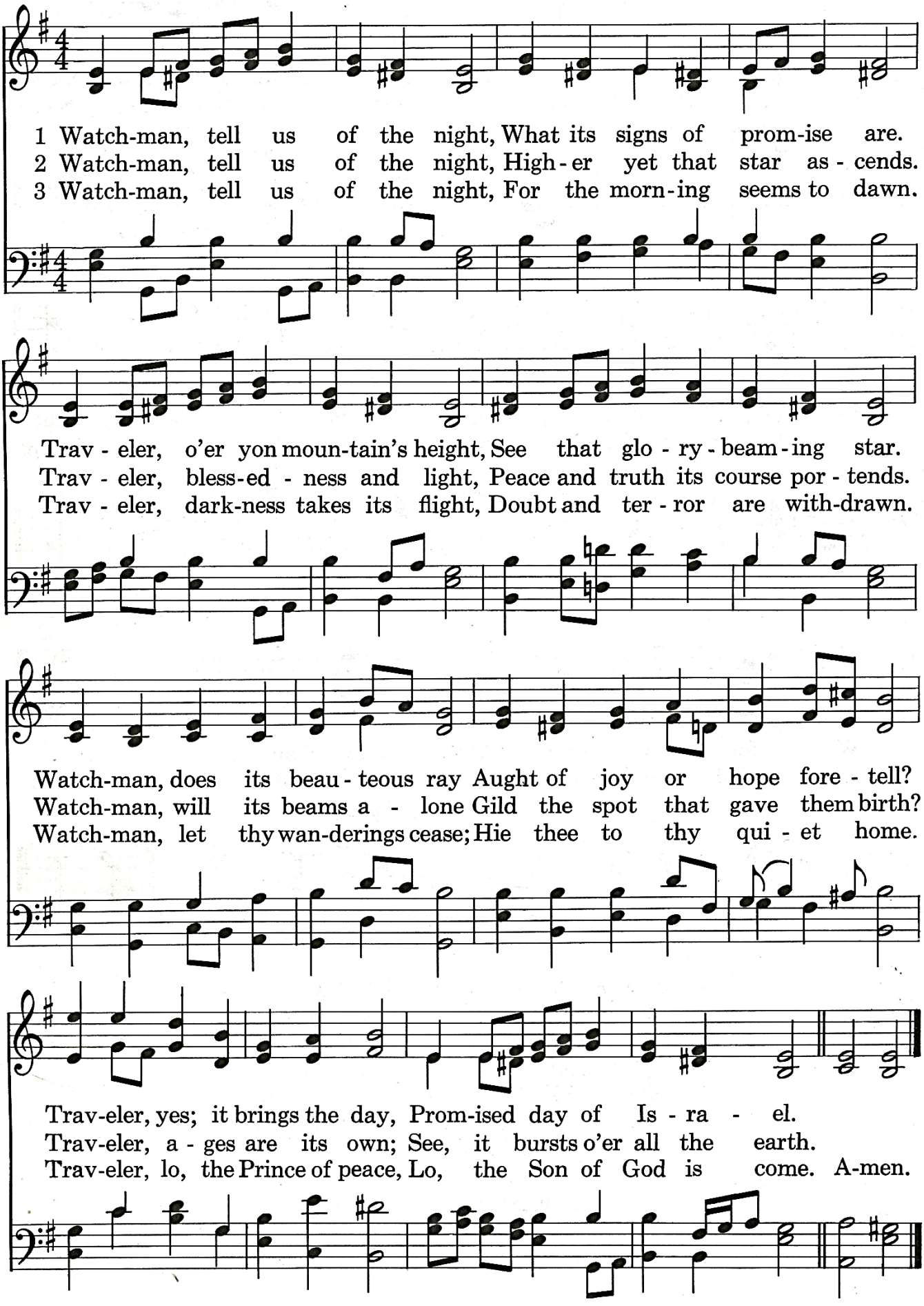
***ADVENT DOXOLOGY** OLD HUNDRETH LM

All praise, eternal Christ to Thee,
Whose Advent sets Thy people free;
once more upon Thy people shine,
and fill the world with love divine. Amen.

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (Unison)

Holy God, you have given each of us gifts to use as members of the body of Christ. Here are our gifts – the work of our hands, our hearts, and our lives. We pray that they may help to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to our world, today and always, here and everywhere. Amen.

***HYMN #109** *Watchman, Tell Us of the Night* ABERSTWYTH



DISMISSAL

Kindly be seated after the Benedictus and remain seated for the Postlude. After the Postlude, ushers will dismiss the congregation row by row.
We ask you to exit through the rear sanctuary door closest to your pew section.
Those in need of handicap accessibility are welcome to use the link and elevator.

***BENEDICTION**

BENEDICTUS *Rejoice!* VENI EMMANUEL

POSTLUDE *In Dulci Jubilo,* BWV 729 J. S. Bach
In quiet joy *(1685 – 1750)*

OUR WORSHIP HAS ENDED; OUR SERVICE BEGINS

ADVENT SEPTET: Susan Cobb & Janet Poisson, soprano; Brianne Biastoff & Nicole Plummer, alto; Timothy Ayres-Kerr & Craig Plummer, tenor; Joseph R. Olefirowicz, bass
DEACON OF THE DAY: Gary Lambert
HYMNS: Pilgrim Hymnal, CCLI#3034682

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PLEASE USE THE VARIOUS CARDS IN THE PEW RACKS TO HELP KEEP THE STAFF INFORMED OF YOUR PASTORAL NEEDS.

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Have you remembered First Church in your will?

THE 10:00 AM SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE IS LIVE-STREAMED AND IS AVAILABLE ON OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL.
IT ALSO AIRS ON WSMN RADIO AM 1590 and FM 95.3

Masks must be worn at all times inside the building.
Social distancing practices are expected of the attendees for indoor worship.

The church office is closed at this time. The staff is available to take your phone calls between 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM, Monday-Friday.

Foundations in Christian Formation

Nursery care is temporarily suspended due to COVID-19.

Parent to Parent-Tot to Teen meets on Google Meet every other Thursday, from 8:00-9:00 PM. You will need a personal Google email address. Contact LeeAnne for the link and if you have any questions. The next meeting is on December 17.

Confirmation- Sunday December 20 - Project proposals and required paperwork due for Confirmands and Mentors. Thank you for your attention to this important work.

Advent Boxes are available while they last at the welcome center on Sunday mornings and by appointment in the church office. Speak to LeeAnne or Sue.

Advent Packets including Advent Wreath Ceremony Readings to do at home, coloring and activity pages are at the welcome center or can be downloaded from the church website.

Today we Light the Candles of Hope, Peace and Joy for the Third Sunday of Advent.
Focus on The Crèche
This week I honor our beautiful Crèche. Look. Look closely to the olivewood carvings beneath our great tree: mastercraft works from artists in our Holy Land selected and given by some of our own. Our nuanced Crèche pieces represent the parts played by everyday people like you and me. There are shepherds and wise ones, beasts and angels joined with The Holy Family. Tangible reminders of God's miracle. This very moment is what we have, what we know and what we share. We are followers of The Way of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, born in Bethlehem, City of David, son of Mary and Joseph.

How do we move from "That's impossible"! to "How can this be?" as we hear the words of Mary. "How can this be?" Great things happen when we pause and notice God in the everyday. Simple elegance captured prayerfully in olive wood reminds us to believe and experience Joy in Jesus and what is possible from humble beginning with the help of God.

Church Happenings and Outreach - New/Current

Women's Wisdom and Spirituality will meet via Zoom today, from 12:00 to 1:30 PM. Contact Rev. Jami for the link.

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Midweek Devotions - Each Wednesday, through December 23, the First Church Ministry Team will provide a mid-week devotion to help us reclaim our spiritual center and restore our inner calm. Messages are uploaded every Wednesday on Facebook, First Church You Tube Station and www.tfcucc.org. Please like our messages and spread the Word!

Today is the last day to order flowers for Christmas Sunday, December 20. If you wish to purchase a red or white poinsettia, please fill out the form in today's bulletin and return it, with payment, to church office or place it in the collection plate. Feel free to contact Sue in the church office with any questions.

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Carols and Campfire in the Courtyard - Thursday December 17th at 5:00 PM
Join Revs. Andy and Jami and ministry team members for Christmas Caroling in the Courtyard. We'll have a campfire going in the courtyard for a safe, outdoors, masked, socially distanced carol sing. There will also be Christmas treats and activities that you can take home with you to keep the festive spirit alive. Feel free to invite your friends. We'll have plenty of spill over space beyond the courtyard.

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The Stewardship Committee requests that you please return your pledge card as soon as possible. Cards are available at the back of the sanctuary, at the welcome center, by contacting the church office, or by going online at https://tfcucc.org/2021-online-pledge-card/
ACH-Direct Deposit Pledgers, please be sure to submit your 2021 pledge cards to let us know if your transactions remain the same or if there are any changes or updates you wish to make.

Contact Dianne Smigliani in the church office if you have any questions.

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Year-End Reminder - All contributions for the 2020 tax year must be in the church office by December 31, 2020 or mailed in letter postmarked December 31, 2020. Contact Dianne Smigliani with any questions.

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Church Cancellation Policy - In the event of inclement weather, a power outage, or severe weather advisory, First Church may cancel the 8:30 service or both services. Expect a robocall from Rev. Andy. Visit the church webpage (www.tfcucc.org), or Facebook Page (First Church Nashua UCC) for any cancellation notices or you can also check media outlets WMUR Channel 9, or WZID 95.7 FM under the heading First Church Nashua. The notifications will be announced by 6:00 AM on the Sunday in question.

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January newsletter deadline: Monday, December 14 - Please submit articles to Sue in the church office.

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Annual Mitten Tree Drive to Start in January - At the start of the new year we will be collecting mittens to benefit the children at three of our neighborhood schools: Mt. Pleasant Elementary, Broad St. Elementary and Adult Learning Center Day Care.

We gratefully receive handmade and purchased mittens. All children sizes are needed.
For further information, contact Susan Testa.

Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and Emergency Fund

"For Such a Time as This" Esther 4:14

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

Over the past nine months, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the emergency financial needs of many who serve the church have increased dramatically. In such a time as this, the need for the Christmas Fund is more urgent than ever.

United Church of Christ congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need.

We will receive the offering on Sunday, December 20. For your convenience, offering envelopes are provided in the December newsletter and they may be mailed to the church office. Donations may also be made directly and securely online at: www.christmasfund.org.

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Thank You Project's 6th Annual Water Walk - This year's virtual 3K event will be held **through December 31, 2020.** The organization supports the third Water Well in Nigeria and also provides scholarships to Nigerian students who would not otherwise be able to afford to go to college. Visit the Thank You Project's website for more information about the organization and their mission. Please gather your family and friends and participate in this virtual walk. Take pictures and videos of your walks and share them on your Facebook page for everyone to see.

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Office and Building use - The church office is closed at this time. The staff is available to take your phone calls between 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM, Monday-Friday. The First Church remains closed to all outside group use for the foreseeable future.

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Music in Worship Next Week

Sunday, December 20, 2020

4th Sunday in Advent / Christmas Sunday
Christmas at First
Bach Cantata 147

9:00 & 11:00 AM

Staff Singer Quartet & Guests
Janet Poisson, soprano
Mauri Tetrault, mezzo soprano
Timothy Ayres-Kerr, tenor
Mark A. Cleveland, bass
Muddy Brook Chamber Orchestra

DECEMBER 2020 WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Worship services are in-person.
The 10:00 service (11:00 on December 20)
is live streamed and is available on our YouTube channel.
It also airs on WSMN Radio AM 1590 and FM 95.3

December 20 - Christmas Sunday
Christmas at First - Bach's Cantata 147
9:00am: Worship
11:00am: Worship

Thursday, December 24 - Christmas Eve
4:00 PM: Families and Children of all ages*
6:00 PM: Contemplative Christmas
8:00 PM: Service of Lessons and Carols
11:00 PM: Service of Lessons and Carols*
**(4PM and 11PM services will be live streamed online as well)*

December 27 - *First Sunday after Christmas*
10:00am only: Worship
Our nursery is closed and there will be no childcare provided for the services.

FRIDAYS at FIRST
ORGAN SERIES

Recitals will be on the first three Fridays of the
Advent season and will begin at 12:15 p.m.

Regional organists will perform FREE 30-minute programs
on our 4,000-pipe, 1926 Anderson Memorial Organ—each designed
to replenish the soul with beautiful music for the workday
or to get the weekend off to a great start.

DECEMBER RECITALS

04 **Michael Havay**
Congregational Church of Amherst, Amherst, NH

11 **George Bozeman**
First Congregational Church, Pembroke, NH

18 **Nicholas White,** Master of Chapel Music
St. Paul's School, Concord, NH

Parking behind the church building.
Handicap accessibility / elevator access is in the courtyard
between old and new buildings.

Please bring your masks and enjoy the ample socially distanced seating.

THE FIRST CHURCH
1 Concord Street • Nashua, NH

For more information:
FIRST-MUSIC.ORG
603.882.4861

FIRST MUSIC
FM
CONCERT SERIES 2020–21 SEASON

FIRST MUSIC
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CONCERT SERIES 2020–21 SEASON

SEASON XIII
MUSIC ALIVE!

BRINGING the JOY of MUSIC to the GATE CITY

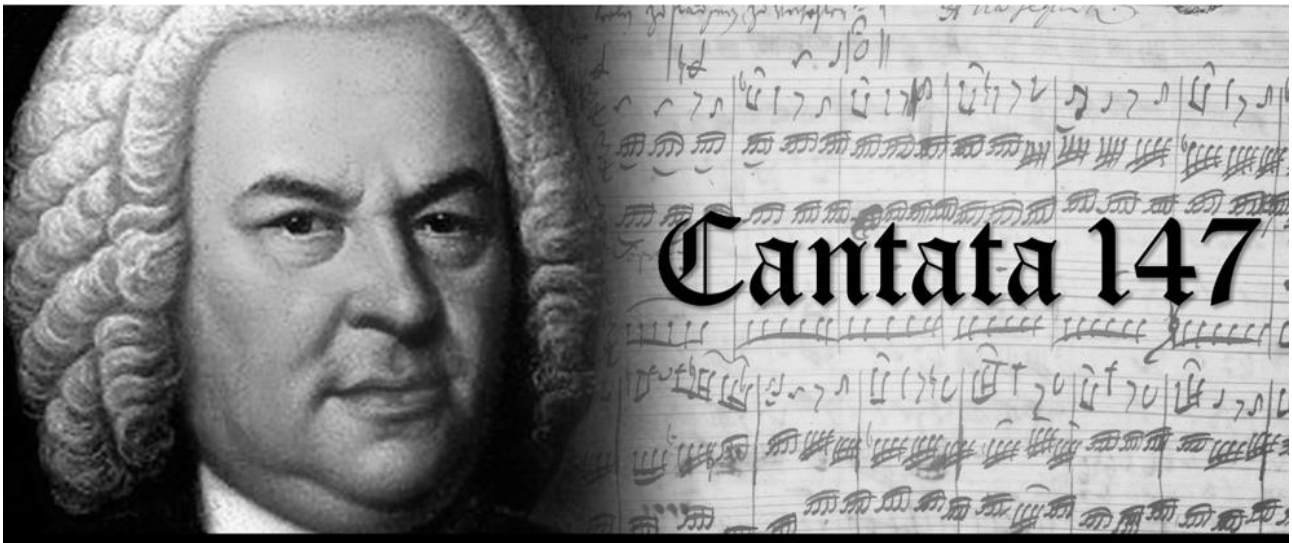
4th ADVENT WORSHIP SERVICES

CHRISTMAS at FIRST

THE FIRST CHURCH STAFF SINGER QUARTET

MUDDY BROOK CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

JOSEPH R. OLEFIROWICZ conductor



Please bring your masks and enjoy the ample socially distanced seating.

SUNDAY DEC 20

OPEN TO THE **PUBLIC**

ALL ARE WELCOME

9 & 11 AM

THE FIRST CHURCH

1 Concord Street
Nashua, NH

FIRST-MUSIC.ORG
603.882.4861

THE FIRST CHURCH

STAFF

Senior Minister, *Rev. Dr. Andrew W. Armstrong*, aarmstrong@tfcucc.org
Associate Minister for Congregational Care, *Rev. Jami D. Boyle*, jboyle@tfcucc.org
Minister of Music, *Joseph R. Olefirowicz, CAGO*, jolefirowicz@tfcucc.org
Director of Christian Formation, *LeeAnne Steenhoek*, lsteenhoek@tfcucc.org
Church Business and Marketing Manager, *Dianne Smigliani*, dsmigliani@tfcucc.org
Secretary/Receptionist, *Susan T. Englander*, senglander@tfcucc.org
Sexton, *Bruce Lund*

Pastors Emeriti, *Rev. James S. Chaloner and Rev. Dr. Jeffrey C. Evans*

WELCOME

A warm welcome is extended to all who are attending this worship service. A special greeting to those who are visiting or worshiping for the first time. Please sign the guest book in the back of the sanctuary or fill out the **visitor card** found in the pew racks. Fill out the back of the card, and put it in the offering plate or hand it to a minister, Usher or Deacon so we may acknowledge your visit. Join in the time of fellowship, in Fellowship Hall, following worship. If you have any questions about the life and ministry of First Church please seek out the individuals wearing colored name tags; they are members of the various boards and committees.

INFORMATION

First Church was gathered on December 16, 1685 as The Church of Christ in Dunstable. On the same day Thomas Weld was ordained and settled as minister of the church. The current building, built in 1894, is the tenth building to house the First Church community. In 1961, the church entered fellowship with the United Church of Christ. We welcome into our membership any who will own the covenant of First Church and seek to continue the ministry of Jesus Christ in the community and world. Those interested in joining the church should contact the church office for information. The Sacrament of Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of the month and the Sacrament of Baptism on the last. First Church is supported almost entirely by pledges. Every member is expected to make a financial pledge according to their ability.

PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral Care is available to all in need. Please keep the ministers informed of occasions of sickness, sorrow, and joy. Let the church office know if you or family member or friend is hospitalized.

COMMUNICATIONS

If you have a change of address, phone number, or email address, please let the church office know so that we may keep our records current.

All information for the weekly bulletin must be in the office by noon on Wednesday. All information for the monthly newsletter must be in the office by 4:30 PM on the second Monday of the month.

<u>All use of the building must be scheduled by the Secretary.</u>

The First Church * One Concord Street * Nashua, New Hampshire 03064 * 882-4861

Office Hours: The office is currently closed to visitors.
The staff is available for phone calls, Monday- Friday, 9:00am-noon & 1:00-4:00pm

Visit our web site at www.tfcucc.org
Find us on Facebook