THE FIRST CHURCH

Congregational – United Church of Christ

†

Gathered December 16, 1685

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

Morning Worship

First Sunday after Christmas

December 31, 2023 10:00 AM

*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 Jim Stone

MEDITATION "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:" - Ecclesiastes 3:1

PRELUDE *Das alte Jahr vergangen ist* J.S. Bach *(1685 – 1750)*

ANTIOCH Alfred V. Fedak
Joy to the World *(*1953)*

CALL TO WORSHIP

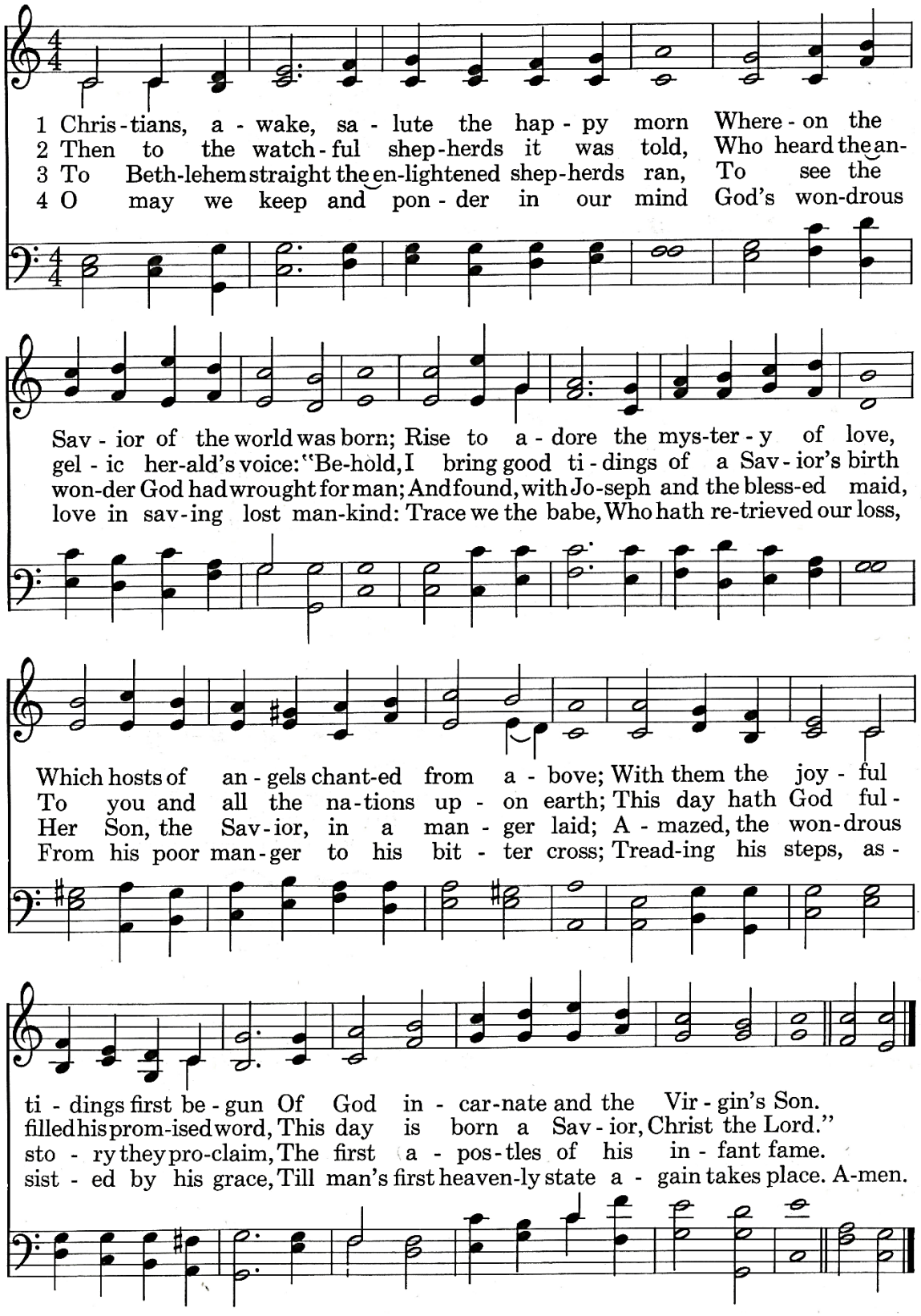
Leader: The lord be with you.
People: And also with you.
Leader: Come, praise the eternal God!
People: All you in the heavens, angels above—praise God!
Leader: Sun, moon, and stars in the sky—praise God!
People: Dolphins and whales, fish in the sea—praise God!
Leader: Lighting and thunder, snow and rain—praise God!
People: Mountains and hills, desert and prairie—praise God!
Leader: Fruit trees and cedars, flowers and weeds—praise God!
People: Kings and presidents, prime ministers and judges—praise God!
Leader: Men and women, young and old—praise God!
People: Let them all praise the name of God!
Leader: For God's name stands alone, above all others; God's glory shines over earth and heaven.
All: Let's worship God together!

***HYMN 127** *Christians Awake, Salute the Happy Morn* YORKSHIRE

Christians Awake, Salute the Happy Morn

John Byrom, 1692-1763

YORKSHIRE 10.10.10.10.10.10.
John Wainwright, c.1723-1768



CCLI #3034682

***OPENING PRAYER** (Unison)

Almighty God, we pray for Your blessing on your church. In Your presence, may the faithful find salvation and the careless be awakened. Here may the doubting find faith and the anxious be encouraged. Here may the tempted find help and the sorrowful comfort. Here may the weary find rest and the strong renewal. Here may the aged find consolation and the young be inspired through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

GREETINGS

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE READINGS **Galatians 4:4-7**

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

Luke 2:22-40

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, "Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child

is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too." There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

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

SOLO *I Wonder As I Wander* John Jacob Niles
JANET POISSON, soprano *(1892 – 1980)*

SERMON "When the Time Had Come" Rev. Dr. Andrew W. Armstrong

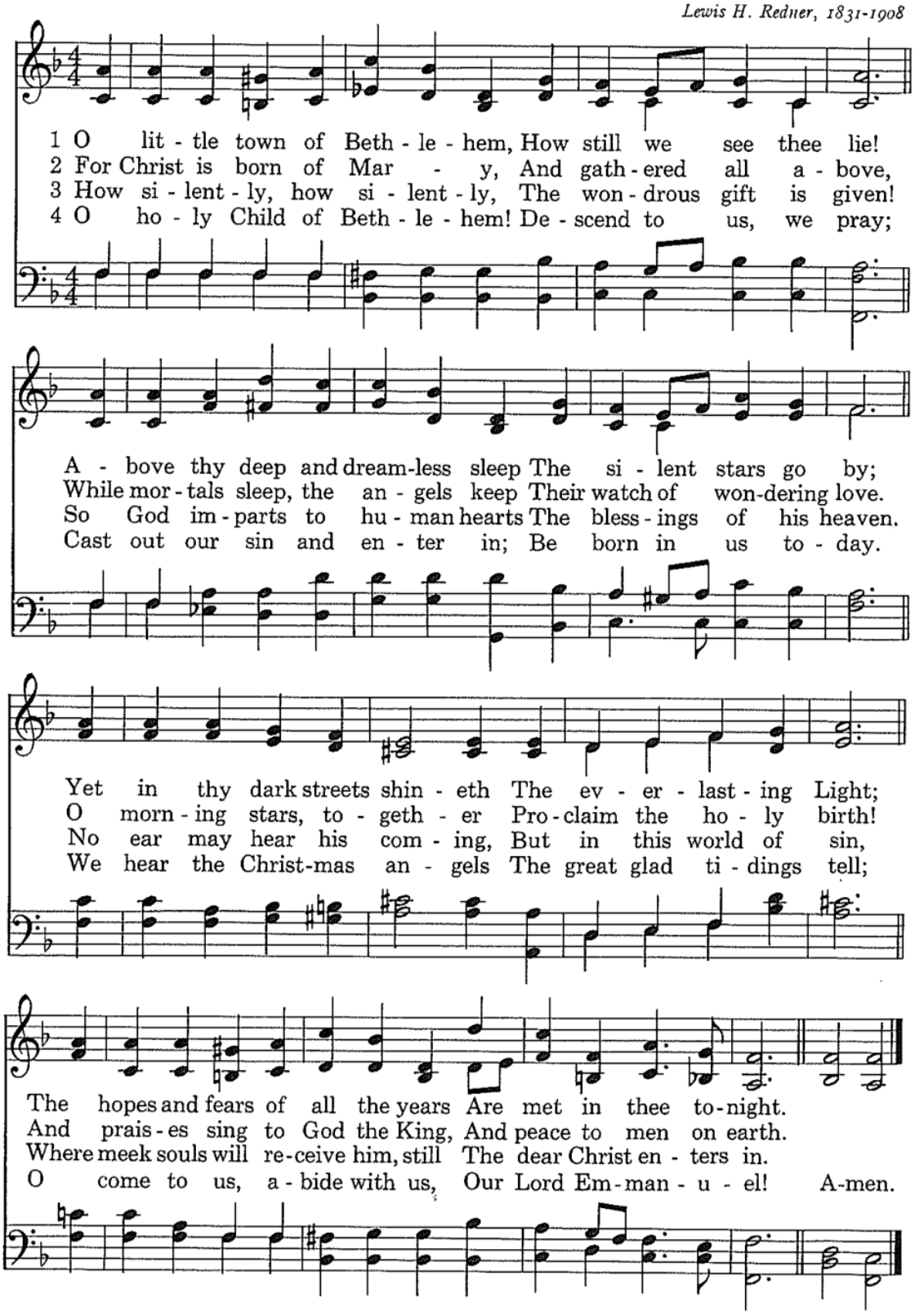
***HYMN 134** *O Little Town of Bethlehem* ST. LOUIS
(see next page)

CHRISTMAS AFFIRMATION

Leader: Let the love that shaped earth and heaven dwell within us this Christmas.
People: Let the love that created humanity dwell within us this Christmas.
Leader: Let the love that overcomes suffering and hatred dwell within us this Christmas.
People: Let the love that causes us to rejoice with loved ones dwell within us this Christmas.
Leader: Let the love that forgives and renews dwell within us this Christmas.
People: Let the love that brings reconciliation after separation dwell within us this Christmas.
Leader: Let the love that brings the blessing of peace dwell within us this Christmas.
All: And may we share that peace with all people near and far. Amen.

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893

ST. LOUIS 8.6.8.6.7.6.8.6.
Lewis H. Redner, 1831-1908

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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.

OFFERTORY *Wexford Carol* Philip Maue
*(*1962)*

***DOXOLOGY #515** OLD HUNDRETH LM

Praise God from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host:
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (Unison)

Generous God, over and over Your grace sustains us, over and over Your love provides for us, over and over Your arm steadies us. We give you these gifts, with gratitude and joy, thankful that You are God over all. Amen.

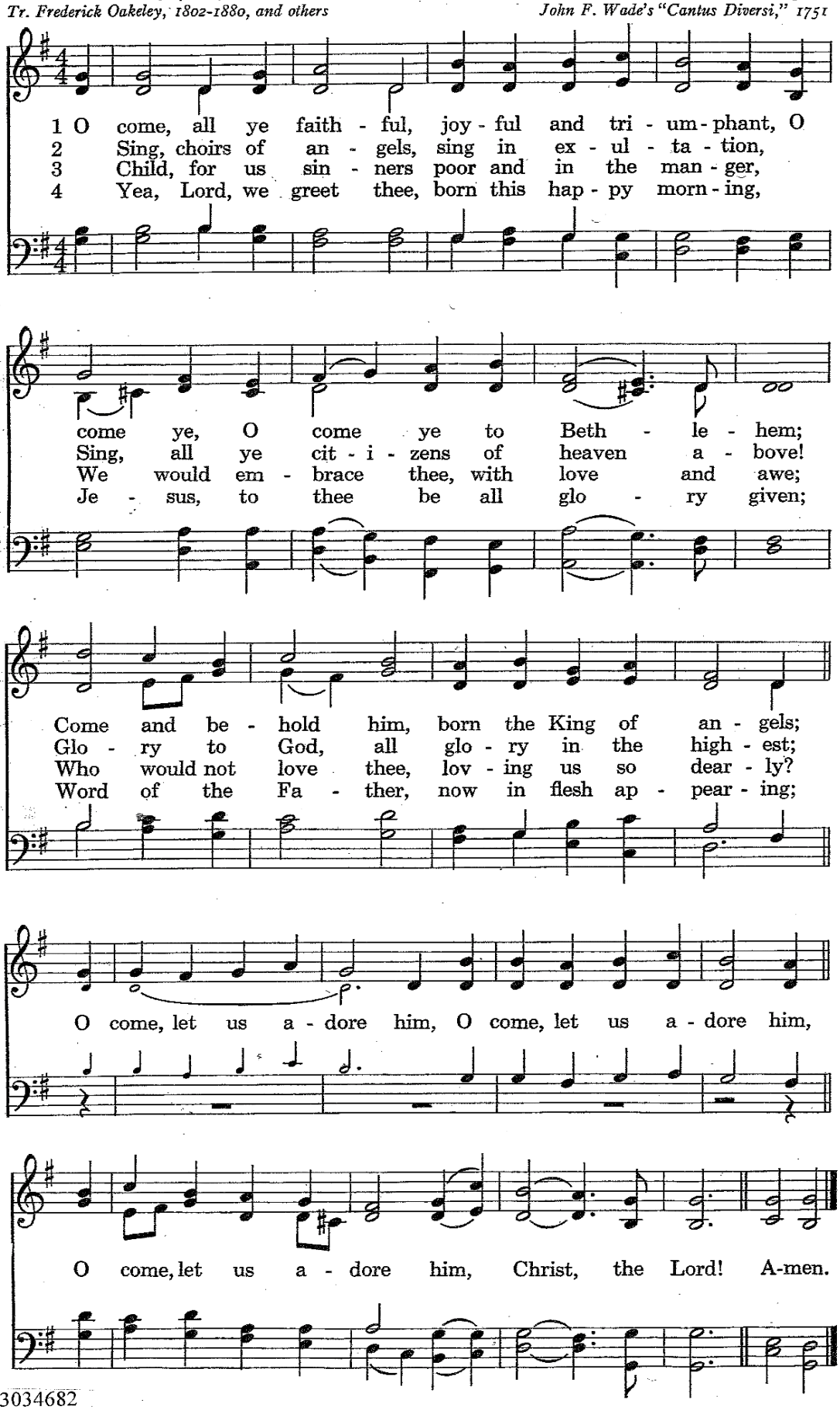
***HYMN 132** *O Come, All Ye Faithful* ADESTE FIDELIS
(see next page)

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE MENDELSSOHN Noel Rawsthorne
Hark, the Herald Angels Sing *(1929 – 2019)*

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Latin: John F. Wade, 1711-1786
Tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802-1880, and others

ADESTE FIDELES *Irregular*
John F. Wade's "Cantus Diversi," 1751

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Flowers in the pulpit are given by the Sipe family in memory of Paul

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OUR WORSHIP HAS ENDED; OUR SERVICE BEGINS

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AV TEAM: Brenda Smith-Weiss and Lee Hauenstein

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GUEST ORGANIST: Brett Greene

SOLOIST: Janet Poisson, soprano

POSTLUDE: Published by: Kevin Mayhew Ltd.

COVER ART: www.gospelimages.com

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HEARING AIDS AND LARGE PRINT BULLETINS
ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

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PLEASE USE THE VARIOUS CARDS IN THE PEW RACKS TO HELP KEEP THE STAFF INFORMED OF YOUR PASTORAL NEEDS. YOU MAY ALSO SUBMIT PRAYER CONCERNS ONLINE. FIND THE 'PRAYER REQUEST' BUTTON ON THE WORSHIP PAGE FOR ANY PRAYER CONCERNS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH REV. NANCY.

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Worship Schedule

10:00 AM: Worship in the Sanctuary & Livestream
Radio Broadcast on WSMN AM 1590 & FM 95.3

Christian Formation Corner

Sunday School Classes/Nursery Care – are on a break and will resume on Sunday, January 7th.

Church Happenings and Outreach - New/Current

Church Cancellation Policy - In the event of inclement weather, a power outage, or severe weather advisory, First Church may cancel the First Service, Sunday School, or All Services. Please visit the church webpage (www.tfcucc.org), or Facebook Page (First Church Nashua UCC) for any cancellation notices. You can also check media outlets WMUR Channel 9, or WZID 95.7 under the heading First Church Nashua. The notifications will read as follows: First Service Cancelled or Sunday School Cancelled or All Services Cancelled and will be announced by 6am on the Sunday in question.

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Winter parking reminder - Use caution when parking along the north side of the church building. Heed the posted signs. Falling snow and ice can cause damage to your cars!

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Get ready for the **FIRST BRUNCH** of **2024**! Come gather for fellowship and French Toast Casserole (GF available) on ***Sunday, January 14th at 11:30***. Please sign-up at the Welcome Center following worship, online with the following link: https://forms.gle/enqvKus57AwJDeDN7 or by using the QR code. Last day to sign up is Sunday Jan. 7th. This brunch is being sponsored by your Stewardship Committee. We hope to see you there as we gather with gratitude!

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Decision Time Study coming in January! (with Rev.Andy) - If you are facing a major decision in 2024---taking a new job, college selection, moving to a new community, health care decisions, of anything else---then this study is for you! (If you do not have anything large on your plate at the moment, believe me it's coming.) "**The Decision Time Study"** will take place between services in Nauss Hall on January 7, 14, and 21. If that time does not work for you, I will offer another online series in February!

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ANNUAL MITTEN TREE DRIVE 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. Knitters and

crocheters are hopefully hard at work with plans to fill this tree. We also gratefully accept purchased mittens. All children sizes are needed. As you come across those Christmas bargains while shopping to warm the hearts of loved ones in your life this season, don't forget to pick up a few pairs of mittens to warm the hands of our young neighbors in need this winter. For questions or further information contact Susan Testa.

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Mission to La Romana, February 2024 - First Church will be supporting the mission team to partner with The Good Shepherd Hospital network to provide public health and spiritual support to Haitians living in the sugar cane fields throughout the DR. You can learn more at Central MA Medical Mission to La Romana – An Annual Mission Trip (fcsterling.org) In addition to your prayers, First Church will be gathering a variety of supplies to support the cause. We will start collecting items and donations November 26th through the end of January. The donation list can be found at the donation table in Fellowship Hall, or use the following Amazon link: https://www.amazon.com/registries/gl/guest-view/1IJMXDSY5QV6Y

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The First Church Thrift Shop is open on **Thursdays, 10:00 AM-2:00 PM (Will not be open on Saturday in Jan/Feb).** Donations of women's and children's clothing is being accepted. Leave items in the bin at the courtyard entrance. All proceeds go to community outreach. Thank you for all of your support!!

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Choirs in Worship Next Week

Sunday, January 7, 2024

8:15 Staff Singers

10:00 Chancel Choir

THIS WEEK AT FIRST CHURCH

SUN DEC 31	10:00am	Worship, Livestream, Radio Broadcast
MON JAN 1		Office Closed
TUE JAN 2	4:00pm	Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter
WED JAN 3	11:45am	BNI (dining room)
	12:00pm	NAIC (Fellowship Hall)
	6:45pm	Chancel Choir
THU JAN 4	10:00am	Thrift Shop
	6:45pm	Decibells
SAT JAN 6	11:00am	Sisters in Sobriety (dining room)

THE FIRST CHURCH

STAFF

Senior Minister, *Rev. Dr. Andrew W. Armstrong*, aarmstrong@tfcucc.org
Acting Associate Minister, *Rev. Nancy Haynes*, nhaynes@tfcucc.org
Minister of Music, *Joseph R. Olefirowicz, CAGO,* jolefirowicz@tfcucc.org
Church Business and Marketing Manager, *Dianne Smigliani*, dsmigliani@tfcucc.org
Office Manager, *Tasha Drew*, tdrew@tfcucc.org
Sexton, *Steve Buck*, sbuck@tfcucc.org

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 with us 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 nametags; 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 4:00 PM on the second Monday of the month.

All use of the building must be scheduled by the Office Manager.

THE FIRST CHURCH
NASHUA, NEW HAMPSHIRE

One Concord Street * Nashua, New Hampshire 03064 * 603-882-4861
Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 9:00am-noon and 1:00-4:00pm
Visit our web site at www.tfcucc.org
Give online. Scan the QR code to view one of the giving options available.