THE FIRST CHURCH

NASHUA, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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.

CANDLELIGHT SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

December 24, 2024 **8:00 PM**

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

PRELUDE *Of the Father's Love Begotten* W. C. Held
(1914 – 2015)

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: The Word became flesh and moved into the neighborhood, and we have caught a glimpse of His glory.

People: Oh, come, let us worship Christ the Lord who makes His home with us.

Leader: The people who wandered in the shadows have seen a light too bright to ignore.

People: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has no power to put it out.

Leader: For those who dwelt in the deepest night, the dawn has come at last.

People: We have seen the glory of God's presence, cradled in a child, full of grace and truth.

Leader: Unto us, a child is born; unto us, a son is given—a gift for the whole world.

People: Glory to God in the highest! Alleluia!

***HYMN 116** *Angels We Have Heard on High* GLORIA
French, 18th century

OPENING PRAYER (Unison)

God of wonder and light, on this holy night, we gather with hearts full of expectation and awe. We thank You for the mystery of the manger, where the infinite became an infant, and the Word took on flesh to dwell among us. Under the canopy of stars, we are reminded of Your faithfulness to every promise and Your love that will not let us go. As we hold the story of Christ's birth in our hands, may its light break into the dark corners of our lives like the rising sun. Let the angels' song warm our hearts and the shepherds' wonder awaken our faith. Draw near to us tonight, O God, as we draw near to You. May our worship honor the One who was, and is, and is to come—Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Amen.

OFFERTORY *O Holy Night* A. Adam
CHANCEL CHOIR *(1803-1856)*
HANDBELL TRIO *arr. Hopso*
SARAH FLETCHER
MEGHAN O'KEEFE
RHONDA O'KEEFE

***DOXOLOGY 515** OLD HUNDRETH LM

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Holy and gracious God, on this sacred night, we bring ourselves and these gifts as offerings to You. Use them to shine Your light into the dark places of this world. Let them feed the hungry, comfort the weary, and bring peace where there is conflict. But most of all, God, take our hearts. And renew them to Your work of peace and love, that we may carry the wonder of this night into every ordinary day that follows in Christ's name. Amen.

FIRST LESSON: Genesis 1: 26 – 28, 31a

HYMN 140 *What Child is This?* GREENSLEEVES
English, 19th century

SECOND LESSON: Genesis 3: 21 – 24
CAROL *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming* M. Praetorius
(1571 – 1621)

THIRD LESSON: Isaiah 9: 2-7
HYMN 132 *O Come All Ye Faithful* ADESTE FIDELIS
Portugese, 17th century
arr. Willcocks

FOURTH LESSON: Micah 5: 2-5a
CAROL *In the Bleak Widwinter* H. Darke
(1888-1976)
DEBORAH GRAHAM NORDYKE, soprano
KATIE WEISS, soprano
CINDY WHITNEY, soprano
ANDREW HOTHAM, tenor
HARRY NORDYKE, tenor
CRAIG PLUMMER, tenor

FIFTH LESSON: Luke 2: 1-7
HYMN 134 *O Little Town of Bethlehem* ST. LOUIS
American, 19th century

SIXTH LESSON: Luke 2: 8-20
CAROL *Nativity Carol* J. Rutter
*(*1945)*

SEVENTH LESSON: Matthew 2: 1-12
HYMN 141 *The First Nowell* THE FIRST NOWELL
(see next page)
English, 16th century
arr. Willcocks

The First Nowell

THE FIRST NOWELL
English, 16th century
arr. Willcocks

1. *The first Nowell the angel did say*
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay
In fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep:

REFRAIN *Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell*
Born is the King of Israel

2. *They lookèd up and saw a star,*
Shining in the east, beyond them far;
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night

(refrain)

3. *Chancel Choir – congregation joins on* ***refrain***

4. *This star drew nigh to the northwest;*
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
And there it did both stop and stay
Right over the place where Jesus lay

(refrain)

5. *Chancel Choir – congregation joins on* ***refrain***

6. *Then let us all with one accord*
Sing praises to our heavn'ly Lord,
That hath made heav'n and earth of naught
And with his blood mankind hath bought

(refrain)

EIGHTH LESSON: John 1: 1-18

CAROL *Cradle Song* G. Near
*(*1942)*

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE Rev. Dr. Andrew W. Armstrong

CHRISTMAS PRAYER and LORD'S PRAYER (Debts/Debtors)

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

THE SERVICE OF LIGHTS

Silent Night, Holy Night STILLE NACHT
Austrian, 19th century

Silent Night! Holy Night! All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin Mother and Child, Holy Infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent Night! Holy Night! Shepherds quake at the sight!
Glories stream from heaven afar. Heavenly hosts sing alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

Silent Night! Holy Night! Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from thy holy face, With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord at thy birth.

CHRISTMAS BENEDICTION

***HYMN 130** *Joy to the World! The Lord is Come* ANTIOCH
English, 18th century

TOWER CHIMES Jim Stone

Officiant:	Rev. Dr. Andrew W. Armstrong
Minister of Music:	Joseph R. Olefirowicz- MA,CAGO
Staff Singers:	Janet Poisson, soprano – Kendra Goodwin, alto
	Zoe Harper, tenor - Joshua L. Gore, bass
AV Team:	Lee Hauenstein and Bill Thompson
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Pulpit Flowers:	Given by the Hutchinson family, in loving memory of
	Craig Hutchinson.

A Blessed Christmas to All. May Peace Prevail on Earth.

STAFF

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Friday 9:00 am - noon
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