



December 15, 2022

Blue Christmas

First Congregational United Church of Christ

945 G Street NW, Washington, DC

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

ORDER OF WORSHIP

The seed of light is born in the dark womb of Midwinter, the time we know as the Winter Solstice, a word which means “the sun stands still.” Every year from Midsummer onward in the Northern Hemisphere, daylight hours become shorter and shorter until around December 21st. Then, barely noticeable at first, the sun begins its long journey towards the south, and all of creation starts to exhale. The wheel turns, a cycle of new life begins once more.

PRELUDE “Elevation” Dom Paul Benoit

WELCOME Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss

CENTERING SONG “Be Still” (page 4)

CANDLE-LIGHTING LITANY OF REMEMBRANCE Rev. Sam McFerran

One: We light this candle to call forth hope, vulnerable as a flickering flame. We see the world as it is—awash in beauty and brokenness. We dare to hope God will come to us again.

Many: **Let there be the light of hope.**

One: We light this second candle to call forth the peace of God's holy, healing presence. We see the world as it is—at war, flush with guns, yet also fierce with love. We long for the peace that passes all understanding.

Many: **Let the dawn of peace overcome the shadow of violence.**

One: We light this third candle to call forth divine joy. We live in the world as it is—marked by loss and common sorrow, yet warm with comfort. We yearn for the joy of God's presence.

Many: **Let there be the dancing flame of joy.**

One: We anticipate the coming of the promised one of old: Light of the World, Hope of Glory, Healer of Nations, Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace. May our hearts prepare room to receive Emmanuel, God with us. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING Michael Hopkins
Psalms 46:1-3, 10-11

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, and though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

“Be still, and know that I am God. I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth!” The God of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

REFLECTION Marian Drake

*HYMN
Verses 1, 2, & 6

“O Come, O Come Emmanuel”

(page 5-6)

SCRIPTURE READING
John 1:1-5, 14

Rev. Kaeley McEvoy

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word was in the beginning with God, all things were made through the Word, and without the Word was not anything made that was made. In the Word was life, and the life was the light of all. The light shines in the deepest night, and the night has not overcome it...and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.

REFLECTION

Susan Saudek

MUSICAL OFFERING

“O Holy Night”

Michael Hopkins, marimba

RITUAL OF CANDLE-LIGHTING

Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss

We invite you forward to share the light from one of the Advent candles—Hope, Peace, or Joy—to kindle a votive. You may light it for someone you love, as a sign of hope in difficult circumstances, as a prayer for peace where there is violence, as a sign of your own inner light. You may light it for gratitude or joy. As you light your candle, you are welcome to speak a name, word or phrase describing why you light it. As you come forward, remember that you are not alone; others go before you or behind you. Together, our light grows.

PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

**Our God, 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.**

REFLECTION

David Greer

MUSICAL OFFERING

“In the Bleak Midwinter”

Marian Drake

BENEDICTION

Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss

POSTLUDE

“O Love That Will Not Let Me Go”

Lloyd Larson

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* indicates “Please Rise in Body or in Spirit”

Centering Song: Be Still

Ps. 46:10

Music: Anon.



Be still and know that I am God. Be still and know that



I am God. Be still and know that I am God.

Participating in Worship

Dennis Turner, pianist

Michael Hopkins, marimba

Marian Drake, mezzo soprano

Connect with us!

If you are worshiping from afar but would like to connect with the First Church community, please [fill out an online Visitor's Card](#) and check out our newsletters at our website, www.firstuccdc.org. We are so grateful to be extending our reach beyond the DC region and welcome you warmly!

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Isa. 11:1-12; Exod. 19-20:17

*Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum, 1710
Based on ancient antiphons from Advent Vespers
Transl. John Mason Neale, 1851, and others; alt.
St. 2, 7, transl. Henry Sloane Coffin, 1916; alt.*

Unison

1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and
2 O come, O Wis - dom from on high, and
3 O come, O come, O A - do - nai, who
4 O come, O shoot of Jes - se, free your
5 O come, O Key of Da - vid, come, and

ran - som cap - tive Is - ra - el That mourns in lone - ly
or - der all things far and nigh; To us the path of
came to all on Si - nai high, And from its peak a
own from Sa - tan's tyr - an - ny, From depths of hell your
o - pen wide your heaven - ly home; Make safe the path to

ex - ile here, un - til the Child of God ap - pear.
knowl - edge show, and help us in that way to go.
sin - gle law pro - claimed in maj - es - ty and awe.
peo - ple save, and give them vic - tory o'er the grave.
end - less day, to hell's de - struc - tion close the way.

In the medieval Western church, seven "Great O" antiphons, the basis for this hymn, were sung consecutively on the seven days before Christmas, ending with what appears above as the first stanza.

*Tune: VENI EMMANUEL L.M. with refrain
Melody from a 15th-century French "Processional"
Arr. Thomas Helmore, 1854*

Refrain

Re-joice! Re-joice! Em-man-u-el shall come to you, O Is-ra-el!

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>6 O come, O Day-spring, come and cheer
our spir-its by your ad-vent here;
Love stir with-in the womb of night,
and death's own shad-ows put to flight.
<i>(Refrain)</i></p> | <p>7 O come, De-sire of Na-tions, bind
all peo-ples in one heart and mind;
Make en-vy, strife, and quar-rels cease;
fill the whole world with heav-en's peace.
<i>(Refrain)</i></p> |
|--|---|

Prayer List

Prayers of comfort for the family of John Smeltzer following the death of his father, the Rev. John Philip Smeltzer, who served as a minister in the United Church of Christ.

Prayers of comfort for Courtney McCaffrey and her family following the death of her mother, Bonnie Rickert.

Prayers of comfort for David Greer, following the death of his beloved father.

Prayers for Rose Berman as she continues to heal from her knee surgery and hospitalization.

Prayers of strength for Monica, daughter-in-law to Diane Brenneman and wife of Sara, after a recurrence of cancer.

Prayers of healing for James Ross.

Prayers of support for Andre, mother of Scott Prentice, as she battles leukemia.

Prayers of mercy for the people of Afghanistan and Afghan families resettling in the U.S.

Prayers for Monte Hillis and her husband Bert, as she faces the rapid onset of dementia.

Prayers of peace and liberation for Ukraine, Nicaragua, Cuba, and Haiti.

Byron Adams' niece, Valerie, undergoing treatment for breast cancer.

All those who mourn the loss of a beloved one.

Families struggling to eat and make ends meet.

People's UCC, our sibling congregation.

Emmanuel Okorie-Dunn and Ellen Bushmiller, who serve as nurses.

Rev. Laura Johnson and Rev. Diana Gomez de Molina, who serve as chaplains.

Prayers of healing for Paul Pelosi and his family.

Candlelight Christmas Eve Service: **December 24 at 5:30 PM**

Join us at 5:30 p.m. on Christmas Eve in the sanctuary or by Zoom for our traditional lessons and carols candlelight service. The service will include the lighting of the Advent candles, a time with our children, sacred readings, and gorgeous music. It will end with the lighting of our candles as we sing Silent Night. In Bethlehem is born the one who is for all, the light of the world, the hope of the ages, as God's love comes to us once more. Join us for this special service.

(In person and by Zoom with this link:
<https://tinyurl.com/1stChurch-Eve>)





EMMANUEL:
GOD WITH US

Christmas Morning Gathering

As Christmas falls on a Sunday this year, we will open our doors for an informal gathering at 10:30 a.m. for anyone who wishes to be together with others at church on Christmas morning. Ellen Bushmiller, Andrew Hamilton, and Diane Brenneman will lead us in lighting the Advent candles, sharing reflections on the themes of hope, peace, joy, love, and the Christmas story, singing a few hymns (with guitar), and praying for the world. All are welcome; come as you are.

Please note this will not be a hybrid offering, as all of our staff, including our AV technicians, have been given the Sunday off. We are grateful to be able to welcome our neighbors who may be unhoused to come in out of the cold this Christmas.

Questions? Contact Ellen Bushmiller
bshmlr@yahoo.com or Andrew Hamilton
hamilton8691@gmail.com.

 First Cong_5GHz First Cong_2.4GHz

First Church Wi-Fi password:

first1865

To avoid echo/feedback,
please mute your device when
taking part in group discussions.

We are an Open & Affirming congregation, welcoming all LGBTQ+ individuals and families into the full life and leadership of our church.

Welcome to First Congregational UCC. We were founded in 1865 by abolitionists as the first racially integrated church in Washington, D.C. In 1867 our mission committee played a prominent role in the founding of Howard University. The church has been located at its present site at 10th and G Streets NW since 1868. In more recent years, the church affirmed its vision as an Open and Affirming (ONA) Church (1987), a Just Peace Church (1985), Multiracial/Multicultural Church (2003), and an Anti-Racist Church (2021). Our new building, constructed according to Gold LEED standards, was dedicated in 2012. First Church continues to follow its faith journey into the future and to be a prophetic voice for the Spirit in the nation's capital. If you would like to know more about First Church or would like to make it your spiritual home and community, please contact churchoffice@FirstUCCDC.org or 202.628.4317.



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

Ministers – Friends & Members of the Church
Senior Minister – Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss
Associate Minister – Rev. Sam McFerran
Building Manager – Mr. Byron Adams
Director of Music Ministry – Ms. Leela Koilpillai
Sexton – Ms. Ines Marquez
Members in Discernment – Lynaya Morris, LaTayna Purnell



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