



**First Congregational Church of Walpole, UCC**

**December 1, 2024, 10:00 a.m.**

**First Sunday of Advent**

*I don't think of all the misery, but of the beauty that still remains.*

— Anne Frank

*Without pain, how could we know joy? This is an old argument in the field of thinking about suffering and its stupidity and lack of sophistication could be plumbed for centuries but suffice it to say that the existence of broccoli does not, in any way, affect the taste of chocolate.*

— John Green

*They say a person needs just three things to be truly happy in this world:  
someone to love, something to do, and something to hope for.*

— Tom Bodett

**GATHERING MUSIC**

**PRELUDE**

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**INTROIT**

**CALL TO WORSHIP** (Based on Psalm 25)

Leader: To you, O God, I lift up my soul.

**People: God, I trust in you; do not let me be put to shame;  
do not let my enemies exult over me.**

Leader: Make me to know your ways, O God; teach me your paths.

**People: Lead me in your truth, and teach me,  
for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.**

Leader: Be mindful of your mercy, and of your steadfast love,  
for they have been from of old.

**People: Do not remember the sins of my youth, or my transgressions;  
according to your steadfast love remember me, for your goodness' sake!**

**All: All the paths of God are steadfast love and faithfulness,  
for those who keep God's covenant and decrees.**

**HYMN\*** NCH #117 *Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates*

**PRAYER OF INVOCATION\*** (unison)

God, your Spirit filled the prophets with inspiration that drove them to cry out for justice. They dared to hope. We seek the path you set before us, so we might become the people you made us to be. Kindle within us the desire to serve you in ways that free us to be our best selves. Grant us courage to hope. Join our hearts and minds to your purpose, as we offer you our silent prayers...

**SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST\***

Leader: May the peace of God be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

**LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE OF HOPE** Mike and Cynthia Brodeur

Leader: We light the first Advent candle to proclaim the coming of light into our darkness.  
We remember in this way the Hope of the prophets, for this first candle is the candle of Hope.

*(The first candle is lit.)*

Leader: We remember Isaiah, who watched and waited.

**People: We remember Amos, who looked for a sign, and Hosea, who knew the sign was love.**

Leader: We remember Micah, who spoke of kindness, justice, and humility.

**People: We remember Jeremiah who wept yet dreamed of hope.**

Leader: Let us join our voices in prayer:

## **ADVENT PRAYER** (seated in unison)

Compassionate God, greet us with your grace today. Help us to find that place where we can receive as well as give, wait as well as run, listen as well as speak. Our whole world needs the Hope you promise in this season. Amen.

**ADVENT HYMN\*** TWC #133 vs 1 & 2 *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

## **CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

**LORD'S PRAYER:** (trespasses)

## **JOYS AND CONCERNS**

## **PASTORAL PRAYER**

## **SUNG AMEN**

**SCRIPTURE LESSONS:** Jeremiah 33:14-16; Luke 21:25-36

### **Jeremiah 33:14-16**

“The days are coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will fulfill the good promise I made to the people of Israel and Judah.

“In those days and at that time

I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David’s line;  
he will do what is just and right in the land.

In those days Judah will be saved  
and Jerusalem will live in safety.

This is the name by which it will be called:  
The Lord Our Righteous Savior.”

### **Luke 21:25-36**

“There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

He told them this parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees. When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near.

“Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

“Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.”

### **SCRIPTURE RESPONSE:**

Leader: For the Word in Scripture, for the Word among us, for the Word within us:

**All: Thanks be to God!**

**SUNG RESPONSE:** (2 Times) Psalm 119:105

*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

### **SERMON**

**HYMN\*** NCH #91 *Wake, My Soul*

### **CALL TO OFFERING**

**DOXOLOGY\*** (Old Hundredth)

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;*

*Praise Christ, the Word in flesh born low;*

*Praise God above, you heavenly host;*

*Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost.*

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION\*** (unison)

God, you are the source of each breath and every possession. We are humbled by your generosity and grateful for the ability to give. We offer you a portion of what is yours. We dedicate this offering and our lives to ministry in your name. All this we pray in Christ. Amen.

### **THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION** (unison)

Sovereign God, we confess that we have not lived the lives of which we are capable. We have gifts that we have not used, and gifts we have misused. We have not loved you with our whole hearts, and we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have turned our backs on our sisters and brothers in need, and in doing so, shut the doors of our hearts to the love you offer them through us. Forgive us we pray. Cleanse and renew our hearts, that we might resume the path of discipleship with courage, strength and endurance, even as we offer you the silent confessions of our hearts...

### **WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

### **INVITATION**

## **COMMUNION PRAYER** (unison)

Gracious God, we now dedicate these elements to become sacraments of ministry, signs of your work and witness among us. Do bless this bread and this fruit, and in the common sharing of them bless us all by the outpouring of your Holy Spirit. In this meal we remember Christ's sacrifice and his call that we also might serve, we embrace each other along his pathways, and we look with hope for the transformation of the world in his love. May we, your servant community, become ourselves bread for the journey and fruit for the spirit among all peoples and powers of the earth. Amen.

**COMMUNION HYMN** NCH #345 *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*

## **COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE**

### **PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING** (unison)

We give thanks, O Lord of Life, that you have refreshed us at your table and refashioned us in your hope for community. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us into the world as Christ's witnesses with courage and in peace. All this we pray in the name of your son, our friend and teacher, Jesus Christ. Amen.

**HYMN\*** NCH #122 *Come, O Long Expected Jesus*

## **BENEDICTION**

**BENEDICTION RESPONSE\*** *Go Now in Peace*

*Go now in peace. Never be afraid. God will go with you each hour of every day.  
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true. Know He will guide you in all you do.  
Go now in love, and show you believe. Reach out to others so all the world can see.  
God will be there watching from above. Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.*

## **POSTLUDE**

**The First Congregational Church of Walpole, NH is an Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ.** Open and Affirming (ONA) is the United Church of Christ's (UCC) designation for congregations, campus ministries, and other bodies in the UCC which make a public covenant of welcome into their full life and ministry to persons of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions.

**Pastor:** The Reverend Richard Malmberg

**Zoom Director:** Paul Looney  
**Lay reader:** Bob Rhodes  
**Ushers and Greeters:** Rebekah and Erin Bowen

**Church Staff:**

**Office Administrator:** Jane Vesper **Treasurer:** Tracey Martin

**Music Director:** Anna Dunn

**Church Office Hours** Monday - Friday, 9 a.m.-12 noon

**Telephone:** 603-756-4075

**Email:** [walpolechurch@yahoo.com](mailto:walpolechurch@yahoo.com). **Website:** [www.walpolenhucc.org](http://www.walpolenhucc.org)

**Please pray for:**

Bob Rhodes, Dean Prentiss, Bill Sudsbury, Linda Jeffrey, Ann Rogers, Stephen Hill,  
Dave Adams, Carole Hill, Keith Sayers and the family of Gina Nason.

Our sister church in Chiredzi, Zimbabwe

Members living in retirement homes:

Becky Hubbard, Carol Lamp

The deacon of the month of December is Peter Graves.

Convenient Online Giving to the First Congregational Church of Walpole is available through  
our website. Thank you for your support!

<https://apps.digigiv.org/o/walpolenhucc>