

“GOD IS STILL SPEAKING”

***NEVER PLACE A PERIOD
WHERE GOD HAS PLACED A COMMA***



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ - ONA

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South Hadley, Massachusetts 01075

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**** The two center sections of the sanctuary are equipped with a hearing loop.
Turn on the T-coil in your hearing aid and sit in one of these sections
for better hearing**

December 4, 2022

Advent 2



The Deacons will light a candle of **PEACE** AND **RESILIENCY** FOR UKRAINE at the beginning of each worship service.

Do not let the behavior of others destroy your inner peace. —Dalai Lama

PRELUDE

*Freu dich sehr
Sleep of the Child Jesus*

G. Near
L. Smith

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASSING OF THE PEACE

CHORAL INTROIT *Comfort, comfort all my people* Arr. Larry D. Schipull

*All their sins our God will pardon, blotting out each dark misdeed;
All that well deserved God's anger, God no more will see or heed.*

*They have suffered many a day; Now their griefs have passed away,
God will change their aching sadness into every springing gladness.*

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE OF PEACE

Reader One: Because of war, because of violence in our communities, because there is still so much unrest in Jerusalem, we light a candle of peace.

Reader Two: Because hatred is still so strong, because so many swords have not yet been beaten into ploughshares, we light a candle of peace.

Reader One: May the light from this candle overwhelm the world.

Reader Two: May the light from this candle say to all that God's peace is coming on earth as it already is in heaven.

Reader One: Friends, be not afraid, God's peace is at hand!

***HYMN**

Comfort, Comfort O My People

black #101

JOYS AND CONCERNS OF THE PEOPLE

MORNING PRAYERS

Prayer of Confession (unison)

Tender One, we are quick to make weapons instead of peace. We are quick to unleash unkind words instead of words of support. May we walk in your light, God. Amen

Assurance of Forgiveness

Pastoral Prayer

Silence

Lord's Prayer (debts)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your Kingdom come; your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

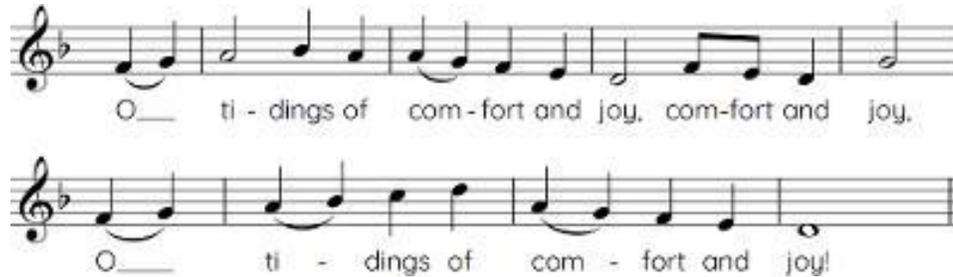
Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen

Congregational Response



READING FROM THE SCRIPTURES

Isaiah 2:3-5

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

3 Many peoples shall come and say,
“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.”

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

4 He shall judge between the nations
and shall arbitrate for many peoples;
they shall beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation;
neither shall they learn war any more.

5 O house of Jacob, come, let us walk
in the light of the Lord!

SERMON

FINDING REFUGE IN PEACE

OFFERING

Invitation

Anthem

Make Me a Channel of Your Peace

Arr. Mark Barnard

Make me a channel of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me bring your love.

*Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord,
and where there's doubt, true faith in you.*

Make me a channel of your peace.

Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope.

*Where there is darkness, only light,
and where there's sadness, ever joy.*

O Master, grant that I may never seek

so much to be consoled as to console,

*To be understood as to understand,
to be loved, as to love with all my soul, Lord,*

Make me a channel of your peace,

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.

*In giving of ourselves that we receive,
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.*

*Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,

Praise Christ the Word in flesh born low,

Praise Holy Spirit evermore,

One God triune whom we adore. Amen

Prayer of Dedication

*HYMN

Isaiah the Prophet Has Written of Old black # 108 vv 1&2

COMMUNION

Invitation

Communion Prayer

Words of Institution

Distribution of the Bread and Cup

*It is our tradition to hold each of the elements until all are served
so that we may partake together.*

[Rice cake pieces are offered for those with allergies to gluten.]

Prayer of Thanksgiving (unison)

God, you are eternally faithful. As we wait and watch, eat and drink, we are struck again and again by how remarkable this faith is. You have given us all we can taste and feel. You listen when we call out to you. You speak to us with holy breath. And now you have brought us together as the body of Christ. We give you thanks. Amen

*HYMN *It Came upon the Midnight Clear* black # 131 vv 1&2

*BENEDICTION

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE *Threefold Amen*

POSTLUDE *Freu dich sehr* G. Boehm

We invite you to remain quietly and celebrate the conclusion of worship in the postlude.

*Please stand if you are comfortable



*We hope that you find your worship experience meaningful.
If you are new to the community, we invite you to make this your church home.*

In our Service Today



Preacher:	Rev. Lori J. Souder
Scripture Reader:	Sharyn Kovalesky
Organist:	Larry Schipull
Pianist:	Cynthia J. Morrell
Choir Director:	Gil Wermeling
Deacon:	Gretchen LaBonte



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

DECEMBER 24, 2022

5:00 PM CANDLELIGHT SERVICE



Our Christmas Eve offerings will be directed to Heifer Fund International and The Foodbank of Western MA.



Christmas Morning worship on Facebook only 10am - Message and Music



PLEASE KEEP THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE IN YOUR PRAYERS

Continual:

Emily Bangs-Orsini Mission Care Holyoke
Luke Bradley (lifelong battle with cancer)
Joan Duffy
Muriel Graham
Tom Hazen
Audrey Heinrichs
Grace Hooton, in rehab
Eunice Howes, for stabilization of vision
Phyllis Lacoste
Fay Paquette
Anna Sibley
Art Stanley
Those struggling with addiction



We keep our Member-in-Discernment, Emily Carle, in our prayers, in her seminary studies at Louisville Seminary

All those affected by the Coronavirus

Prayers for all those in Ukraine, and those who have fled for safety.

Those serving in the military, including JB Pontes

Situational:

Charlotte Buijnarowski (surgery pending)
Julie Burke's friend Danielle, following heart transplant surgery
Jamie Clauson, on hospice, and for his wife Pat and family
Audrey Heaphy's brother-in-law, Bob Brandt
Cathy Irish's sister-in-law Vickie, undergoing Chemo
Pricilla and Jack Finn, death of their son
Family and friends of Julius Alvin Polgar, following his suicide
Kay Pryor, with cancer, family friend of Karen and Estelle Anderson
Sarah Smith, following surgery
Joy Weigel, after a fall
Nikki Wolf, Linda's granddaughter

If you have submitted one of these requests for prayer, please let us know when it is time to remove someone's name from the list.



This Week at Center Church

Today	Worship 10am Holiday Bazaar Noon - 3pm
Monday	Girl Scouts 5pm
Tuesday	Church Council on Zoom 7pm
Thursday	AA 1:30pm Dance 5:30pm
Friday	Church Office open 9am - noon
Sunday	Third Sunday in Advent Worship 10am



Center Church Announcements

Sermon Series in Advent: *Refuge Found in Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.*
Finding refuge means 1) protection or shelter from danger or hardship or
2) A place providing protection or shelter: sanctuary



Thank you for your generous response to Center Church's annual pledge drive, "**From Bread & Cup too Faith & Giving**". So far, Center Church has received \$118,930 toward our goal of \$145,000. Have not pledged yet? Please return your pledge card in the offering plate or mail to the church office soon! Need a pledge card? Pledge cards are located at both entrances to the sanctuary, or you can contact the church office for a pledge card and more information on making a financial pledge to Center Church.

Thank you!



Bible Study at Loomis – Thursdays December 1, 8, and 15 - 10am

The theme is A Christmas Birth Narrative – readings will be excerpts from Bishop John Shelby Spong's book, The Birth of Jesus. For December 8, please read pages 13-23 (copies on the table at the Church Street entrance).



During November and December, **we will accept food donations for the Neighbors Helping Neighbors Food Pantry**, here in South Hadley. We are no longer operating the pantry here at the church, so wish to support SH folks thru NHN. There is a bin by the Church Street entrance where you may leave your donation of non-perishable foods; we will get them down to the pantry periodically. Thank you in advance!



Vigil for Transgender Rights – December 11 – 10am Please Join Us!



Please sign up to read Scripture – there is a sign up sheet on the table in the Bock Crossway. We will send you the reading the week prior to your sign up date. Thanks so much!!!!



If you are interested in **finding out more about Center Church**, we will have an informational meeting soon. Contact the Church office or speak to Lori, or Bobbie Ayers of the Membership Team.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

Once again, our sanctuary will be decorated with poinsettias for Christmas.
The deadline for placing your order IS TODAY.

Number of plants you wish to order 6 " pots \$ 10 each
_____ red # _____ white _____ Total payment enclosed.

Please make checks payable to:

"First Congregational Church" and note "Christmas Poinsettias" on the memo line.

In Loving Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

GIVEN BY _____



Please check one of the following:

____ I will pick up after church on Christmas Eve ____ I will not be taking my plant(s)

NAME _____



On December 18, or any time this month, you are invited to support the

The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund

"Overwhelmed with joy!" Matthew 2:10

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. 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. Please consider a gift to support this worthy cause. **Checks can be made out to Center Church with a note in the memo for "The Christmas Fund"** or donations can be made directly to the fund via UCC at:



<https://www.pbucc.org/index.php/art-ma-landing/opportunities-for-giving>

Emily Carle will be preaching on January 1, 2023. Emily is attending Louisville Seminary in Kentucky, where she is enjoying her second year classes. (see "Thoughts From The Seminarian" in the newsletter). Hope you can make it to worship on the First, to support Emily as she continues in her discernment.



If you wish to attend any team meeting as a non-voting participant, please contact Thia in the Church Office or speak to the Team Chair prior to the meeting, and we can send you the Zoom link to attend. Meetings have always been open to all, but with the arrival of COVID we have gone to meeting on Zoom which requires an invitation.



Rev. Souder will be away December 26 - January 2
The Church Office will be closed Dec. 23 - 27, and 30.



THE MINISTRY AT CENTER CHURCH

Ministers:	All Church Members
Senior Minister:	Rev. Lori J. Souder
Member in Discernment:	Emily Carle

Christian Education Program

Children:	Kate Hoffman and Chelsea Korzeniowski
Youth:	Kayla Scott-McDowell and Clare Messina Fitzgerald

Music

Organist:	Larry Schipull
Choir Director:	Gil Wermeling
Associate in Music:	Cynthia Morrell
Office Administrator:	Cynthia Jubinville
Sexton:	Robert Farman

