

# The Congregational Church of Westborough

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

57 West Main, Westborough, Massachusetts 01581

December 10, 2023



Photo by KaLisa Veer on Unsplash

## SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

*PEACE*

**WE WELCOME VISITORS AND NEWCOMERS!**

We are an "Open and Affirming" Church



## **WELCOME!**

To our worshipping community, especially to parents: God put the wiggle in children; don't feel you have to suppress it in God's house! We welcome you and your child/ren. Children are a gift to the church and a reminder that the church is growing. May our church be a place where we give smiles of encouragement to parents!

Are you visiting with us today? We are glad you are here!  
WHETHER YOU HAVE JOINED US BY PHONE, IPAD, OR COMPUTER

We celebrate "OPEN DOORS and GROWING FAITH"  
"No matter who you are or where you are on your life's journey, you are welcome here."

## **CONTACTS AND INFORMATION**

*Rev. Betsy Dorsi, Pastor – [revbetsyccw@gmail.com](mailto:revbetsyccw@gmail.com)*  
*Joseph Stillitano, Director of Music – [uccwestboromusic@gmail.com](mailto:uccwestboromusic@gmail.com)*  
*Linda Borglund, Director of Faith Formation – [lborglund53@gmail.com](mailto:lborglund53@gmail.com)*  
*Sue Menzel, Director of Bells – [westcongmusic@gmail.com](mailto:westcongmusic@gmail.com)*  
*Lisa Coffey, Administrator – [westboroucc@verizon.net](mailto:westboroucc@verizon.net)*  
*Deb Boucher, Communications Coordinator – [deb.boucher.15@gmail.com](mailto:deb.boucher.15@gmail.com)*

## **Office Hours**

*Tuesday – Friday: 9am – 1pm*  
*Monday: Closed*  
*Church office phone 508/366-2000*

*General Church email – [westboroucc@verizon.net](mailto:westboroucc@verizon.net), Church website- [www.uccwestboro.org](http://www.uccwestboro.org)  
[www.facebook.com/TheCongregationalChurchofWestborough](https://www.facebook.com/TheCongregationalChurchofWestborough)*

## **Statement of Inclusion**

We, the people of The Congregational Church of Westborough, United Church of Christ, believe that all people are created equal, in God's image. "We are all God's children." In our journey of faith, we strive for justice and equality for all. We invite and welcome into our community and into the full life and Christian ministry of this church, persons of every race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, family structure, faith background, economic circumstance, mental and physical ability. We say, and mean, "No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here." We declare ourselves an Open and Affirming Christian community, actively expressing our belief in diversity and inclusion. We seek to be a faith community centered in Christ, ready to proclaim the Gospel and seek to grow through the transformative power of the Holy Spirit. We offer to each person acceptance and the responsibilities and blessings of participation in this congregation.

# THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WESTBOROUGH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Dec. 10, 2023

Second Sunday of Advent

*\*The Congregation is invited to stand.*

## GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS (shown online and on the sanctuary screens)

9:45 AM

PRELUDE

INTROIT

“Prepare the Way of the Lord”  
Chancel Choir

PREPARE THE WAY

CHURCH BELLS TO CALL US

10:00 AM

## INVITING THE WORD

WELCOME

Rev. Betsy Dorsi

\*CALL TO WORSHIP

Sally Petersen

One: In the wilderness, prepare a way.

**Many: We will level the mountains and raise up the valleys.**

One: Make the crooked paths straight.

**Many: For God is coming amongst us.**

**All: Let all flesh see the glory of God together.**

\*OPENING HYMN #122

“Comfort, Comfort You My People”

GENEVA

LIGHTING THE SECOND ADVENT CANDLE – PEACE

Lucy Stillitano & Family  
A member of our Confirmation class

1<sup>st</sup> person: Advent means “coming” and in this season we prepare for the coming of Christ. One of the ways we can celebrate Advent is by lighting candles on an Advent Wreath. It reminds us of the gifts Christ brings to the world. Last Sunday, we lit the first candle on our Advent Wreath, the candle of hope. Let us light it again, remembering that the light of hope shines for us in the darkness.

*(The purple Hope Candle is lit.)*

2<sup>nd</sup> person: Peace is one of God’s gifts to us. John the Baptist was a prophet calling the people of Israel to repent, to find peace with God. May we, by our actions, help to prepare the way for the coming of Peace.

We light this second candle to remind us that Jesus is the Prince of Peace. His light helps us find ways to share God's peace with others.

*(The purple Peace Candle is lit.)*

3<sup>rd</sup> person: The Prayer of St. Francis asks God to help us be peacemakers.

Let us pray together:

**Lord, make us instruments of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is sadness, joy; and where there is darkness, light. Grant that we may not seek so much to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, in pardoning that we are pardoned, and in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.**

ADVENT RESPONSE HYMN #128      "One Candle Is Lit" (vs. 1 & 2)

CRADLE SONG

\*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (Unison)

Sally Petersen

**Stir up thy might and come O Lord, set Your people free. O Lord, we know that we are the reason You came to earth. Help us to understand our role in preparing Your way so the world will recognize and accept You, and all people will know Your love for them. We pray this in the name of Your son, Jesus who came to set us free and we continue in prayer using the words He taught us...**

\*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.**

MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Unison)

Sally Petersen

**O Lord, we stand on our mountain tops and look at Your creation, often not noticing the people living in the valley below us. Forgive us for ignoring them, forgive us for taking more than our share of the bounty You provide. Help us to find real ways to level the mountains and raise the valleys so all people are free. Amen.**

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

## RECEIVING THE WORD

A MESSAGE FOR THE YOUNG AND YOUNG AT HEART

Rev. Betsy Dorsi

SCRIPTURES

Isaiah 40:1-11 Mark 1:1-8

(Pew Bible pgs. 581 & 812)

SERMON

“Standing on Our Mountain Tops”

Rev. Betsy Dorsi

\*HYMN #129

“Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates”

TRURO

## RESPONDING TO THE WORD

PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Betsy Dorsi

OFFERING OUR GIFTS

Invitation: *Let us bring our offerings before God with thanksgiving!*

Sally Petersen

The morning offering will now be received.

Offertory

“Heaven Everywhere”

Ben Glover & Francesca Battistelli

Chancel Choir

*I hear the bells, they're ringing loud and clear  
You can't help but love this time of year  
It's Christmastime, there's something in the air  
There's a little bit of Heaven everywhere.*

*Somehow there's a little more of love  
Maybe there's a little less of us  
Or maybe we're just slightly more aware  
There's a little bit of Heaven everywhere.*

*It's the smile on a man who has finally found hope  
It's the tears of a mother whose child has come home  
It's the joy that we feel and the love that we share  
There's a little bit of Heaven everywhere.*

*It's funny how it takes a holiday  
To show us how the world could truly change  
If we all took the time to really care  
There'd be a little more of Heaven everywhere.*

*It's the grace that we show to a world that needs hope  
It's giving our lives knowing they're not our own  
It's the joy that we feel and the love that we share  
There's a little bit of Heaven everywhere.*

*Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
And the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains:  
Hallelujah!*

*It's the joy that we feel and the love that we share  
There's a little bit of Heaven everywhere.*



"For online giving, scan QR code with your phone's camera"

**\*DOXOLOGY**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God above, ye heavenly hosts: Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (Unison)**

Sally Petersen

**Generous God, we thank You for all that You have provided, and pray that our offerings will  
be used to spread Your peace. Amen.**

**BEING THE CHURCH**

**\*CLOSING SONG**

"Even So Come"

Chris Tomlin, Jess Cates,  
Jason Ingram

**\*BENEDICTION**

**\*POSTLUDE**

**Sally Petersen** serves as liturgist today.

**Theresa DiMeo** and **Cathie Achorn** are deacons of the day.

**Prayers**

New Prayers: Betty Barclay in hospice.

Continued Prayers: Judy Oliver; Steve Lindberg; Nancy Reimann; The Lord family; Cathie Achorn's mom, Dee Mumby; Betty Grays's niece Heather and her family; Ilda & Jim Engle; Betty Simino; Roberta Di Terlizzi's mother Donata.

**300<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY MEETING**

There will be a meeting on Monday, December 18 at 7PM. All are invited to attend. Please let Cathie Achorn know if you need more information or if you would like to contribute ideas for this wonderful year that we are going to have in 2024. Call OR leave a message or text to Cathie at 508-380-8671

**CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS -EXTENDED DEADLINE**

You can still purchase a poinsettia in honor of or in memory of someone. There are order forms at the back of the church.

### ANNUAL COOKIE WALK – DEC. 17<sup>TH</sup>

The Annual Cookie Walk is a fundraiser for the Music program, which raises funds to bring in new music and guest musicians to our services. It will take place immediately following the Christmas Pageant service next Sunday, December 17th. If you need last minute cookies for your guests, the Cookie Walk is a great time to stock up! Anyone willing to bake a couple dozen cookies and donate them to the sale should leave them in the kitchen before the service. Please label your cookies with your name, the type of cookie it is and whether or not they contain nuts. Thanks to all the bakers and consumers!! Questions? Call Linda Borglund (774) 245-1425.

### STEWARDSHIP 2024 UPDATE

As of December 6, 72 pledges have been received, for which the Stewardship Committee is very thankful. These pledges for operating expenses total \$210,00 towards a goal of \$246,500, which represents 71% of the total operating budget. In order to support the church's continued spiritual offerings and community outreach, we encourage previous pledgers, cash contributors and new pledgers to participate by submitting a pledge card for 2024—no contribution is too small.

If you have any questions, please contact a member of the Stewardship Committee. If you need a pledge card, please contact the church office at 508-366-2000. Pledge cards can be dropped off any time in the mail slot outside the church parking lot door. Linda Crawford, Ted Jaworski, Janice Shaw, and Dave Smith.

### WESTBOROUGH FOOD PANTRY

This month, the Food Pantry is in need of cereal (all varieties), microwave popcorn, and pump soap. Donations can be placed in the white box at the side entrance to the church or the basket at the front entrance. Thank you so much for your generous donations. The Mission Team

#### **Dec 10**

10:00 AM

#### **Sunday – Advent II**

Worship & Sunday School

GIVING TREE GIFTS

DUE TODAY!

#### **Dec 14**

6:30 PM

#### **Thursday**

Trustees/Kerygma Rm

#### **Dec 11**

5-8:00 PM

#### **Monday – office closed**

Pack 100/vestry

#### **Dec 15**

#### **Friday**

#### **Dec 16**

9:00 AM

#### **Saturday**

Men's Breakfast

#### **Dec 12**

10:30 AM

7–8 PM

#### **Tuesday**

Beaumont service

Bell Rehearsal

#### **Dec 17**

10:00 AM

#### **Sunday – Advent III**

Worship & Christmas

Pageant

#### **Dec 13**

9:30 AM

6:30-7:30 PM

#### **Wednesday**

Called to Care

Choir Rehearsal

## ***December Worship Schedule***

### **SUNDAY, DEC 3<sup>rd</sup> FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT** **COMMUNION SUNDAY**

*We will celebrate the Sacrament of Communion, and light our first Advent candle - HOPE!*

### **SUNDAY, DEC 10<sup>th</sup> SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT** **“GIVING TREE” GIFTS RETURNED**

*We will light our second Advent candle - PEACE! Gifts bought for needy children in the area should be returned by noon today to our missions team.*

### **SUNDAY, DEC 17<sup>th</sup> THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT** **CHRISTMAS PAGEANT & COOKIE WALK**

*We will light our third Advent candle today – JOY! During the service we will share our annual Christmas Pageant. We will also be selling holiday cookies at the Cookie Walk after the pageant to benefit our music ministry. Join us for refreshments and fellowship immediately after.*

### **SUNDAY, DEC 24<sup>th</sup> - FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

*We will gather at 10 AM to light our fourth Advent candle - LOVE! Our regular morning worship will conclude with a hymn sing.*

### **SUNDAY, DEC 24<sup>th</sup> AT 7PM - CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE**

*We will have our Family Christmas Eve service at 7pm. Invite a friend or family member to join you!*

### **SUNDAY, DEC 31<sup>st</sup>**

*We will gather for worship at 10 AM on this New Year's Eve Day. Join us for a Hymn Sing!*



**PLEASE INVITE YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS TO JOIN US HERE FOR WORSHIP!**



