The Congregational Church of Westborough
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
57 West Main, Westborough, Massachusetts 01581

OPEN DOORS – GROWING FAITH!
No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here!

WE WELCOME VISITORS AND NEWCOMERS!
We are an “Open and Affirming” Church

Dec 15, 2019
**WELCOME!**

Are you visiting with us today? We are glad you are here! We celebrate “OPEN DOORS and GROWING FAITH”

“No matter who you are or where you are on your journey, you are welcome here.”

If you are here for a brief visit or are searching, let us be of help. Speak to an usher or the pastor and we will gladly be of service.

Our restrooms are located beyond the vestry on the first floor. There is a handicapped elevator located in the back of the sanctuary and a deacon will be glad to assist you. We have a handicapped bathroom next to the main office near the parking lot on the first floor.

Should there be a need to leave the service, there are exits to either side of the pulpit in front, or the stairs on either side in the back.

We celebrate open communion on the first Sunday of the month, where everyone is welcome to partake. Children are invited as well.

We welcome children to remain in worship today however we also offer a children’s program each Sunday in the nursery for children in grades 3 or younger and faith formation for older children most Sundays. We offer crayons and coloring pages for those who wish to keep their fingers moving during the service and we are comfortable with children being children! If your children need to move about, please feel free to stand in the back or go downstairs where the service can be heard over our speaker system.

**WE HOPE YOU WILL BE INSPIRED AND PRAYERFULLY FILLED IN OUR SERVICE OF WORSHIP**

**and that**

**YOU WILL FEEL WELCOMED, AS ONE WHO BELONGS!**

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**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 Congregation is invited to stand.*

**INVITING THE WORD**

**PRELUDE**

**YOUTH BELLS & CHIMES**

“Bring A Torch Jeanette, Isabella”

*French Carol*

*Bring a torch, Jeanette, Isabelle*

*Bring a torch, come swiftly and run*

*Christ is born, tell the folk of the village*

*Jesus is sleeping in his cradle*

*Ah, ah, beautiful is the mother*

*Ah, ah, beautiful is her son*

*It is wrong when the Child is sleeping*

*It is wrong to talk so loud;*

*Silence, all, as you gather around.*

*Lest your noise should waken Jesus.*

*Hush, hush, peacefully now He slumbers*

*Hush, hush, peacefully now He sleeps*

**WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Rev. Sue O. Remick**

**LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH** - The candle of JOY – Mary’s candle

Readers: Wendy Reardon and Faith Exploration class

Prayer: (In unison) **Revealing God, visit us and fill us with Your Spirit. Bring Your good news to life within us. Give us courage to carry Your light of joy into the shadows of this world. Amen.**

Response: (# 119 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel v. 2)

*O come, thou dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here, disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death’s deep shadows put to light.*

*Rejoice. Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!*
*GREETING  (During flu season, remember to limit handshaking. Bows, Elbow bumps, or a wave are great)

*SONG #161
“I Wonder as I Wander”  I WONDER AS I WANDER

*CALL TO WORSHIP
Faith Exploration Class
Leader:  A voice in the dark, an image in a dream, a bright light in a clear sky --
People:  Wonders and signs that turn our hearts toward God,
Leader:  Holy mysteries that cause our hearts to sing,
People:  Soul-felt grace that radiates through our lives.
Leader:  Young and old alike feel the awesome presence of God and join with Mary in proclaiming the greatness of God.
People:  Our hearts rejoice and our souls magnify the One who visits us again and again.

PRAYER OF INVOCATION (Please be seated.)  Wendy Reardon
And the messenger of the Lord came to Mary and Joseph, and the words said were not easy. The requirements that message made upon them were not simple. The word of God brought about a life that neither of them imagined. Today we pray that our hearts and minds will be open to hear Your message for us: a message of hope and joy, even amid great stress and anxiety. For unto us a child has been born, unto us the Son of the Most High has come to dwell within our midst. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (Debts)
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.

JOYSPRING ANTHEM  "Mary Did You Know"  by Mark Lowry

Mary, did you know that your baby boy would one day walk on water?
Mary, did you know that your baby boy would save our sons and daughters?
Did you know that your baby boy has come to make you new?
This child that you've delivered, will soon deliver you?

Mary, did you know that your baby boy will give sight to the blind man?
Mary, did you know that your baby boy would calm a storm with his hand?
Did you know that your baby boy has walked where angels trod,
That when you kiss your little baby, you've kissed the face of God?
The blind will see, the deaf will hear, the dead will live again.
The lame will leap, the dumb will speak, the praises of the lamb.

Mary, did you know that your baby boy is Lord of all creation?
Mary, did you know that your baby boy will one day rule the nations?
Did you know that your baby boy was heaven’s perfect lamb,
And the sleeping child you’re holding is the great I Am?

SCRIPTURE
Luke 1:26–38

(Pew Bible page 831)

Wendy Reardon

YOUTH’S MESSAGE
(The children and youth will bring forward the animals for the creche)
All children and youth will leave for Faith Formation at this time.

RECEIVING THE WORD

SCRIPTURE #131 (Responsive Reading)  “Song of Mary”  Rev. Remick

SERMON  “Finding Our Joy”  Rev. Remick

ANTHEM  "Breath of Heaven,"  by Amy Grant and Chris Eaton
arranged by Roger Emerson

I have traveled many moonless nights, cold and wary with a babe inside.
And I wonder what I’ve done. Holy Father, You have come and chosen me now to carry Your Son.
I am waiting in a silent prayer, I am frightened by the load I bear.
In a world as cold as stone, must I walk this path alone? Be with me now.

Breath of Heaven, hold me together, be forever near me, Breath of Heaven.
Breath of Heaven, lighten my darkness, pour over me Your holiness
for You are holy, Breath of Heaven.

Do You wonder as You watch my face, if a wiser one should have had my place?
But I offer all I am for the mercy of Your plan. Help me be strong.

Thee Six: Judy Ellis, Kathy Todd, Pam Kapitz, Rachel Graham, Jen Keeler and Sue Menzel

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE  Pete Graham
MUSIC RESPONSE  # 306  “Hear Thy Prayer O Lord”

Hear our prayer O Lord. Hear our prayer O Lord. 
Incline thine ear to us and grant us they peace. Amen

OFFERING OF OUR GIFTS  

Invitation: Gracious God, we thank You for this season of carols and gifts, and for Your most precious gift of Jesus. We offer You our lives and these gifts: our hopes and our hearts as the morning offering is given and received.

CHANCEL CHOIR & 

“Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring” by Johann Sebastian Bach

STRING ENSEMBLE ANTHEM

Jesu, joy of man's desiring; holy wisdom, Love most bright. 
Drawn by Thee, our soul's aspiring; sour to uncreated light.

Word of God, our flesh that fashioned; with the fire of life impassioned. 
Striving still to Truth unknown; soaring, dying, round Thy throne.

String Ensemble: Mallika Das, Marie-Anna Das, Katherine O'Toole, Alison Regnier, Sarah Regnier

*DOXOLOGY (Unison)  

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)  

God of great gifts and great love, as we await the birth of Your son in hope and peace and joy and love, may our gratitude be reflected in the gifts we give. Because of our generosity, might others know of the babe, born in a manger and in our hearts. Amen.

*CLOSING SONG #142  “People, Look East”  

BESANCON

*BENEDICTION  

Rev. Remick

*POSTLUDE  (You are invited to sit for the Postlude if you wish. Let the worship service settle in your heart. If you wish to exit, please do so quietly.)

Join us for fellowship and refreshments downstairs after worship!

Wendy Reardon and Faith Explorers are Advent readers and liturgists this morning. 

Linda Birch and Theresa DiMeo are Deacons of the day.
PRAYERS & CELEBRATIONS FOR DEC 15, 2019

Continued Prayers: For Betty and Ted’s family in the unexpected death of a nephew Scott and for families as they travel to Delaware; for their niece Heather and her family; continued prayers for Mike and Stephanie; Kristy Kocou; Cheryl Toole’s mother Patricia (GiGi) Brand Robert Aldrich; Megan Huber’s mother Fran Kelly; Marie Murphy’s son Craig Jernberg and her daughter Lisa Jernberg; Cathie Achorn’s friend Julie Noble and her preemie baby Kosmas Andrew Melitas; CJ Harris (Marge Butcher’s grandnephew); Nancy Reimann; Cathie Achorn’s mother Dee Mumbly; Lauren Algelro undergoing cancer treatments; Bob Brown; Gini & Tom Erwin; Anna Gavel, granddaughter/cousin of Karen Gavel and the Oevermanns; Linda Polatka (Cathie Achorn’s sister); Ron and Nancy Clark’s daughter, Melissa Dickinson.

Celebrations: Mike & Stephanie Jaworski welcome the birth of their son, Levi. Happy grandparents are Betty & Ted.

Prayer requests: You can place prayer concerns on the church’s email distribution list at eprayers@uccwestboro.org. If you would like a prayer request included in today’s service, please let a Deacon know prior to the start of worship. Prayers will remain listed for 8 weeks. If you would like a prayer renewed, please call the church office.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHRISTMAS CAROLING & PIZZA TODAY AT 4:30PM
Come to one of the most popular activities. It’s a great way to spend time with our youth, and the shut in people enjoy our visits. Meet in the Vestry @ 4:30PM for pizza and then caroling at 5:00 PM. People of all ages are invited. Bring your Santa hat or reindeer antlers and your jingle bells. Then afterwards we have hot chocolate and fellowship. If you have questions call Cathie Achorn at 508-380-8671.

NEW DATE FOR DISMAS HOUSE DINNERS!
Our church goes once a month to cook and serve a meal with the people of Dismas House, a home for ex-prisoners. Beginning in January we will now be going on the 4th TUESDAY of each month. If you would like to help, be in touch with Karen Hutchinson at millarhutch@aol.com. The next dinner will be Tuesday, Jan 28th. Donations of Stop & Shop cards are greatly appreciated to help with the shopping for the meals! Thank you.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE
Please be advised that on Christmas Eve, we will have only one service of Lessons and Carols at 7:00 pm. The family service will be the Pageant which will be on Sunday, Dec. 22nd at 5 pm. Spread the word!
ANNUAL COOKIE WALK – DEC 22\textsuperscript{ND}

The Annual Cookie Walk fundraiser for the music program will take place immediately following the Children's Pageant on Sunday, December 22\textsuperscript{nd}. 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 or bars (i.e. brownies, cranberry bars, turtles) should leave them in the kitchen before the morning service. Thank you. The Music Committee

* Arranged on a plate, ready to serve  
* Labeled what kind of treat  
* Nuts/no nuts, gluten free

GROCERY CARD PROJECT

2019 Goal: $ 8,000  
2019 YTD: $ 5,950.30  

We’re ready! We’ve stocked up on Grocery Cards so that you can do all of your Christmas grocery shopping at Stop and Shop, Roche Bros. or Price Chopper. Every dollar we earn supports the Operation Budget of our Church. Please help us help the Church by having a grocery card in your wallet. Bring your checkbook to church and we’ll be waiting for you in the vestry. We are thankful for your support. If you need cards delivered contact Karen Hutchinson at 508.870.1782 or millarhutch@aol.com or Nancy Quimby at 774.249.4431 or nquimby11@gmail.com or Sally Petersen at sbpetersen4@gmail.com and 366.5169.

CONTACTS AND INFORMATION

Rev. Sue Remick, Interim Minister – revsuerem@gmail.com  
Peter Graham, Student Minister – petegrahamiam@icloud.com  
Wendy Reardon, Director of Children’s and Youth Ministries - wendysreardon@yahoo.com  
Joseph Stillitano, Interim Minister of Music – josephmstillitano@gmail.com  
Sue Menzel, Director of Bells – westcongmusic@gmail.com  
Office hours: closed Mon; Tues & Wed 9am-2pm, Thurs 10am-2pm, Fri 9am-1pm  
Church office phone 508/366-2000  
General Church email – westboroucc@verizon.net, Church website www.uccwestboro.org  
www.facebook.com/TheCongregationalChurchofWestborough

Advent  
A Season of Hope & Expectation  

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