

The Congregational Church of Westborough

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

57 West Main, Westborough, Massachusetts 01581

December 24, 2023

10:00 AM



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FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

LOVE

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
Joseph Stillitano, Director of Music – uccwestboromusic@gmail.com
Linda Borglund, Director of Faith Formation – lborglund53@gmail.com
Sue Menzel, Director of Bells – westcongmusic@gmail.com
Lisa Coffey, Administrator – westboroucc@verizon.net
Deb Boucher, Communications Coordinator – 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, Church website- www.uccwestboro.org
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**

December 24, 2023

Fourth Sunday of Advent - LOVE

Christmas Eve Morning Service - 10 AM

**The Congregation is invited to stand.*

GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS (shown online and on the sanctuary screens) 9:45 AM

INTROIT "Emmanuel, Emmanuel" Bob McGee
Joseph Stillitano

CHURCH BELLS TO CALL US 10:00 AM

INVITING THE WORD

WELCOME Rev. Betsy Dorsi

*CALL TO WORSHIP Linda Birch

One: Hear the Good News. A new King is coming. He will establish justice through all the earth.

Many: This King does not come from a powerful family. He comes as one who became poor to save the poor.

One: A new future is being born. The way of God's Kingdom leads to life.

Many: O Lord, transform our hearts that we may fully live in Your Kingdom.

LIGHTING THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE – LOVE Choir Members

Kathy Todd: We relight the hope candle for we are people of hope, our hearts full of anticipation for the coming of God among us.

(The purple HOPE candle is relit)

Nicole Halbert: We relight the peace candle for we are people of peace, knowing God has told us to turn our weapons of war into instruments that benefit all humanity.

(The purple PEACE candle is relit)

Judy Ellis: We relight the joy candle for we are people of joy, believing that God desires for us a life beyond sorrow and strife.

(The pink JOY candle is relit)

Max Keeler: Today we light the candle of Love, for we are people of love. With this flame we signify the love of God that surrounds us and fills us at all times. There is no greater power than that love. It is stronger than grief and despair. Stronger than even death. We love, because God loved us.

(The purple LOVE candle is lit)

Let us pray (unison): **Loving God, light our lives with Your grace and mercy. Show us the creative power of hope. Teach us the peace that comes from justice. Fill us with the kind of joy that cannot be contained, but must be shared. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by You, that we may walk in the light of Christ. Amen**

*ADVENT RESPONSE	“One Candle is Lit”	CRADLE SONG
	Hymn #128 (vs. 1,2,3, 4)	

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (Unison)	Linda Birch
O Lord, as we celebrate this fourth Sunday of Advent, we come before You with open hearts ready to receive and be made new by Your love. May each of us here personally feel Your presence. Make us ready to meet You tonight as a baby born in a stable, the One who came to redeem the world. We offer this prayer in Your name O Jesus and continue using the words You gave 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.

RECEIVING THE WORD

*HYMN #142	“People, Look East”	BESANCON
SCRIPTURE	Matthew 1:18-25	Linda Birch
SPECIAL READING & REFLECTION	“Recognizing Jesus” Author Unknown	Rev. Betsy Dorsi
PASTORAL PRAYER		Rev. Betsy Dorsi
*HYMN #132	“When God Is a Child”	MOON BEAMS

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

OFFERING OUR GIFTS

Invitation: *Let us bring our offerings before God with thanksgiving!*
The morning offering will now be received.

Linda Birch

Offertory



“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)

Linda Birch

Loving God, giver of all good gifts, You did not even withhold Your only son from us. In loving response to You, we offer these gifts now for the good of Your work to further the growth of Your Kingdom on earth. Bless them and us as we use them in Your service. Amen.

BEING THE CHURCH

*HYMN SING

We will sing 1 verse of the suggested hymns, beginning with **#150** “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” and ending with **#151** “The First Noel”.

*BENEDICTION

*POSTLUDE

Linda Birch serves as liturgist today.

Theresa DiMeo and **Elizabeth Kfig** are deacons of the day.

Prayers

Continued Prayers: Ron & Nancy Clark’s daughter Melissa Dickinson; Betty Barclay; Judy Oliver; 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.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP MEETING – JAN 8th

(Please note this is the 2nd Monday of the Month because of New Years Day falling on the first Monday of the Month). Join us for our Women's Fellowship "Get Together, Eat Supper and Get It Done Night". The Women's Fellowship will meet on Monday, January 8, 2024 at 6:30 pm for a light supper and then we will put away the Christmas Decorations. It is always a fun night to get together. Please let Cathie Achorn know of any dietary restrictions you might have. Bring a friend or two or three. Let us know if you need a ride. Cathie Achorn, 508-380-8671 text or leave a message for info.

STEWARDSHIP 2024 UPDATE

The stewardship Committee sincerely thanks you for the 80 pledges which have been received to date. The pledges for operating expenses total \$224,235 towards a goal of \$246,500. We understand that people's circumstances change, which accounts for a loss of just over \$14,000 from previous pledgers, which totaled 93. As we strive 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 listed below. If you need a pledge card, please contact the church office at 508-366-2000. If you prefer to have a proxy pledge card submitted, email Dave Smith at smithwestboro@cs.com. Pledge cards can be dropped off 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

GOT PICTURES?

It's that time of year again, when many wonderful things are happening around our church, and many of you take pictures - THANK YOU! When you EMAIL pictures to Deb and Lisa, PLEASE help us out, and don't send them with "no subject" in the subject line! The time it takes for you to type a couple of words for the subject is WAY LESS than one of us trying to search every "no subject" email for a special picture. (And please, don't text the pictures. The quality is much better through email, and again, much easier to organize/find.) Thank you! Lisa westboroucc@verizon.net and Deb deb.boucher.15@gmail.com.



The Poinsettias displayed last week were given “In Memory of” and “In Honor of”

The Achorn Family in memory of Ed, and in honor of Dolores Mumby and in
in memory of Phil & Ellen Achorn

The Arnold families in memory of loved ones

Suzanne Arpante in memory of Patty Wyner, and in honor of the Church Deacons

The Arpante Family in memory of Kay & Al Bowman

Deb, Rich, Jess & Dan Boucher in memory of Tom & Nancy Walker and in memory Dick &
Shirley Boucher

The Bramley family in loving memory of: Christopher Bramley, Sarah Bramley, The Price family,
and the Bramley family

Tom Erwin in memory of loved ones, now with the Lord

Tom Erwin in honor of caregivers and people needing care

Nancy Gage in memory of Charles Gage and our daughter Lynda

Amy & Jack Glennon in memory of John Glennon

Joe Harrington in honor of Bob & Hat Markert

Marcia Hoffman in memory of loved ones

Warren Johnson in memory of his wife Ann

Sandy Keegan in memory of her sister, Sheila Cardin

Kathy Leblanc in memory of Gabriel Leblanc and in memory of Jane Goode

In memory of Bob MacConnell from his family

Ron & Melinda MacKendrick in memory of George & Georgina MacKendrick, and in memory of
James W. Green & family

Nana Sue in honor of my beloved grand and great-grandchildren

Celeste Chenet-Monte in memory of Bill Falkenstern and Pat Marples

Elaine Moore in memory of Wilfred & Florence Cook

Susan & Nick Perron in memory of Martin Soderlund

Bob and Sally Petersen in memory of our beloved son John

Ric & Linda Plummer in memory of Charles & Joan Plummer and in memory of Herb & Hazel
Berry

Harriett Root in memory of loved ones.

David & Jackie Smith in memory of Charlie & Anita Day


David & Jackie Smith in memory of Glen & Anabel Smith

The Steen Family in memory Milton Steen

Polly and Jay Thayer in honor of loved ones

Doug and Annie Wales in memory of Jennifer Wales and in memory of
Ted Herrera

Ed & Kathie Wong in honor of loved ones



Dec 24
10:00 AM
7:00 PM

Sunday – Advent IV
Regular Worship & Hymn Sing
Candlelight Service

Dec 25

Merry Christmas

Dec 26

Tuesday – OFFICE CLOSED

Dec 27

Wednesday

Dec 28

Thursday

Dec 29

Friday

Dec 30

Saturday

Dec 31
10:00 AM

Sunday – New Years's Eve
Worship & Hymn Sing

Merry Christmas