

# The Congregational Church of Westborough

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

57 West Main, Westborough, Massachusetts 01581

December 24, 2023

7:00 PM



Photo: Deb Boucher

## CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

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 – [bdorsi64@outlook.com](mailto:bdorsi64@outlook.com)*  
*Joseph Stillitano, Director of Music – [uccwestboromusic@gmail.com](mailto:uccwestboromusic@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

December 24, 2023

Candlelight Christmas Eve

*"To us is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord"*

*\*The Congregation is invited to stand.*

## GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

PRELUDE "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" Michael Praetorius  
Chancel Choir

INTROIT "Westminster Bells" Traditional  
Performed by Jennifer and Maxwell Keeler

## INVITING THE WORD

CHURCH BELLS TO CALL US

WELCOME Rev. Betsy Dorsi

\*CALL TO WORSHIP Rev. Betsy Dorsi

**All: O Come Let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

Leader: Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. (LK 2: 10-11)

\*CAROL #148 (vs. 1,2) "O Come, All Ye Faithful" ADESTE FIDELES

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE The Regnier Family

1<sup>st</sup> Person: Advent is a tradition often celebrated in the Christian faith to prepare for the arrival or coming of Jesus Christ. The Advent wreath is used to symbolically remind us of the gifts Christ brings into the world.

2<sup>nd</sup> Person: The first purple candle symbolizes HOPE. It is lit to remind us of the prophets, particularly Isaiah, who prophesied the birth of Christ. It symbolizes the anticipation felt in awaiting the coming of the Messiah. It also represents our hope and prayers for a world of peace and harmony.

*(The first purple candle is relit)*

3<sup>rd</sup> Person: The second purple candle is to remind us that Jesus is the Prince of PEACE. His light helps us find ways to share God's peace with others.

*(The second purple candle is relit.)*

4<sup>th</sup> Person: The third candle, the pink one, represents JOY. As we wait for Christmas, we look forward to the joyful celebrations we will share with others. The angels told the shepherds not to be afraid. "Good news of great joy, which shall be to all people."

*(The pink candle is relit.)*

5<sup>th</sup> Person: The fourth candle, reminds us of God's gift of LOVE. With this flame we signify the love of God that surrounds us and fills us at all times.

*(The purple candle is relit.)*

Today we light our white candle. The CHRIST CANDLE. This candle which represents Jesus. It is the center of our wreath, just as Jesus is the center of our lives. HAPPY BIRTHDAY, JESUS!

*(The white candle is lit.)*

6<sup>th</sup> Person: Let us Pray: **God, our hearts sing with joy and praise because of Jesus. At this happy season, we rejoice that Jesus came among us. By his birth and life, He has shown us that we are Your people and that we are greatly loved. Help us to remember this Christmas all year long by giving to others the gifts of Life: hope, peace, joy, love, kindness and understanding. Amen.**

\*ADVENT RESPONSE #128

*"One Candle is Lit" (all verses)*

CRADLE SONG

\*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (Unison)

Rev. Betsy Dorsi

**God of surprising love and hope, we come this evening to the manger, gazing lovingly on the child born to bring hope to the world. Open our hearts tonight as we hear the story anew. Help us to be guided by the light of Jesus Christ, that we may truly feel the power of Your love and bring that love, we pray, to all we meet. We pray in His name and continue using the words He 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.**

ANTHEM	"What Child is This" Kristina Di Terlizzi and Lucy Stillitano, duet	GREENSLEEVES
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CHRISTMAS PRAYER

**A SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS**

<b>Lesson 1: The Light is Coming</b>	<i>Isaiah 11:1-4,6-9</i>	Betty Gray
CAROL #153 (vs. 1,2)	<i>"It Came Upon a Midnight Clear"</i>	CAROL

<b>Lesson 2: The Annunciation</b>	<i>Luke 1:26-35,38</i>	Sarah Regnier
CAROL #144 (vs. 1,3)	<i>"O Little Town of Bethlehem"</i>	ST. LOUIS

<b>Lesson 3: The Visitation</b>	<i>Luke 1:39-45</i>	Steve Achorn
CAROL #147 (vs. 1,2)	<i>"Away in a Manger"</i>	AWAY IN A MANGER

<b>Lesson 4: The Incarnation</b>	<i>Luke 2:1-7</i>	Lindsay Custer
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<b>Lesson 5: The Shepherds and The Angels</b>	<i>Luke 2:8-20</i>	Celeste Chenet-Monte
CAROL #155 (vs. 1,3)	<i>"Angels We Have Heard on High"</i>	GLORIA

<b>Lesson 6: The Magi</b>	<i>Matthew 2:1-2,10-12</i>	Roland Regnier
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ANTHEM	"Hark, The Herald Angels Sing" Kristina and Susanna Di Terlizzi Jeffrey and Lucy Stillitano	MENDELSSOHN
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CHILDRENS MESSAGE	<u><i>Celebrate-Celebramos Las Posadas</i></u> Read by Cathie Achorn, Ayla and Dylan McCoskery	by Marisa Boan
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OFFERING OUR GIFTS		Rev. Betsy Dorsi
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Our Christmas Eve offering will go to support the UCC Christmas Fund (Veterans of the Cross) which gives back to retired ministers. If you want to give financially, you can do so by leaving something in the offering plate or you can go to the website online or use the QR code.

Invitation: Our offering will now be received.

Offertory	"O Holy Night" Chancel Choir	Adolphe Adam
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“For online giving, scan QR code with your phone’s camera”

\*DOXOLOGY

***We offer incense gold and myrrh,  
To offer gifts to the King of Kings.  
Who we await and hope to come;  
Christ is the babe, the Son of Mary.  
Amen***

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (Unison)

Rev. Betsy Dorsi

**God of goodness and kindness, whose mercy is from everlasting to everlasting, all that we have are gifts of Your grace. As the heavenly host sang of Your glory, accept what we bring as offerings of praise and gratitude for the hope of new life we receive in Christ Jesus. Amen.**

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

\*CAROL # 151 (vs. 1,2,3)

*“The First Noel”*

THE FIRST NOEL

*Lights will be dimmed*

**Lesson 7: The Light**

*John 1:1-5, 12a-14*

Rev. Betsy Dorsi

SHARING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

*As Christ comes bringing the light of God’s love, we light our individual candles to signify our individual and collective commitment to live as Christ’s faithful in the world. The light will be brought to the end of each row, TIP your UNLIT candle into the flame so that it may take hold. Please do not tip your lit candle! Pass the Light along your row until every candle is lit. As the candles are lit, we will join in singing:*

\*CLOSING CAROL #145 (vs. 1&2)

*“Silent Night, Holy Night”*

STILLE NACHT

\*BENEDICTION

**Cathie and Steve Achorn** are deacons of the day.



*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

