

The Congregational Church of Westborough

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

57 West Main, Westborough, Massachusetts 01581

December 3, 2023



Photo by KaLisa Veer on Unsplash

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

HOPE

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

Dec. 3, 2023

Communion Sunday

First 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

“Emmanuel, Emmanuel”
Chancel Choir

Composed by Bob McGee

CHURCH BELLS TO CALL US

10:00 AM

INVITING THE WORD

WELCOME

Rev. Betsy Dorsi

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Linda Crawford

One: We, a people in darkness, await God’s coming.

Many: We light one candle to shine in the darkness.

One: God’s saving love will shatter the power of sin.

Many: Let us Worship God, in Whom we place our hope.

*OPENING HYMN #142

“People, Look East”

BESANCON

LIGHTING THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE – HOPE

Lawson Snow & Family
A member of our Confirmation class

Hope is wishful thinking. Hope is the Spirit of God dwelling with us, reminding us that we are never alone. Hope is our active commitment to be God’s faithful people. As we light the candle of HOPE, we embrace God’s presence among us, yesterday, today and always.

(Please pause until the candle has been lit)

People: Loving God, we thank You for the hope You offer us. In this season of Advent, may we open all the dark places in our lives and memories to the healing light of Christ. Show us the creative power of hope as we prepare our hearts to be transformed by You.

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (Unison)

Linda Crawford

O Lord, we pray, please come and light up our darkness. Our world is full of sin and all kinds of suffering. Your prophets bid us to place our hope in You. Our faith tells us You alone are the answer to our prayers. Help us, this Advent, to focus on Your love for us as we prepare our hearts to welcome You to earth. We pray in the name of Jesus and 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)

Linda Crawford

Our Lord, help us prepare our hearts for Your birth. Forgive us for getting caught up in the busyness of this season, preparing gifts for our family and friends while overlooking the needs of others around us. Forgive us for not taking enough time to worship You in prayer and devotions. Have mercy on us as we place our hope in You. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

RECEIVING THE WORD

A MESSAGE FOR THE YOUNG AND YOUNG AT HEART
(Children leave to go to Sunday School)

Rev. Betsy Dorsi

SCRIPTURES

Isaiah 64: 1-9 Mark 13: 24-37

(Pew Bible pgs. 606 & 826)

SERMON

"No One Knows"

Rev. Betsy Dorsi

*HYMN #125

"Come, O Long-expected Jesus"

HYFRYDOL

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Betsy Dorsi

OFFERING OUR GIFTS

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

Linda Crawford

Offertory

"African Noel"
Chancel Choir

Arranged by Andre J. Thomas

*Sing Noel. Sing we all Noel.
O Come, ye people, gather here
To hear the news of good cheer.
The King of kings, the Lamb of God
Is born today in Bethlehem.
Sing Noel.*



"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 Crawford

Almighty God, help us use these gifts we offer You to bring hope and love to those in need of You. Amen.

BEING THE CHURCH

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

(Communion at our church is open to all. Gluten free wafers are in the prepackaged containers.)

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (as found on the inside cover of your hymn book)

Linda Crawford

INVITATION

PRAYER OF REMEMBRANCE

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP

*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (Unison)

Rev. Betsy Dorsi

Lord of hope, we thank You for feeding us at Your table. May our meal together strengthen our union with one another and with You as we wait for Your return. Amen

*CLOSING HYMN #119

“O Come, O Come Emmanuel” (vs. 1,2 & 4)

VENI EMMANUEL

*BENEDICTION

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

“Go Ye Now in Peace”

Composed by Joyce Elaine Eilers

JoySpring Songbook #25

*POSTLUDE

Linda Crawford served as liturgist today.

Pam Faustine and **Steve Achorn** are deacons of the day.

Prayers

Bereavement: Family and friends of Norma Thompson who passed away on Nov. 27

New Prayers: Judy Oliver in the hospital; Steve Lindberg

Continued Prayers: 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.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

It’s that time of year to donate a poinsettia in honor of or in memory of a special person. This year we will have the display up on Sunday, Dec. 24th so we would ask that you order them by Wednesday, Dec. 13th. The flowers will then be delivered to the octogenarians and shut ins. The price this year is \$13.00 per plant. See the order form insert.

GIVING TREE 2023

All of the tags have been taken! Please be sure to return the wrapped gifts to the church by noon on December 10th with the tag attached. If you will not be in church that Sunday, please leave the gifts at the church office during regular office hours. Many thanks from the Mission Team!

STEWARDSHIP 2024 UPDATE

The Stewardship Committee wants to thank the 66 pledging units who have already forwarded their pledge cards. This count represents about 73% of the anticipated number of pledges. The great news is that the amount pledged for operations is 83%, indicating that pledges are up significantly. We encourage church friends and church members to participate in supporting the work and mission of our church with whatever monies they feel are appropriate—no amount is too small. If you are a cash contributor, please consider submitting a pledge to help reach the goal outlined in the mailing. Pledge cards can be mailed or dropped off in the mail slot outside the parking lot door. If you need a pledge card, please contact the church office at 508-366-2000.

ANNUAL COOKIE WALK – DEC. 17TH

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 on 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.

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 and Deb

December 3rd – December 10th

Dec 3 10:00 AM	Sunday – Advent I Worship & Sunday School
Dec 4 6:30 PM	Monday – office closed WF Meeting
Dec 5 10 AM 7–8 PM	Tuesday Willows & Whitney Place Bell Rehearsal
Dec 6 6:30-7:30 PM 7:00 PM	Wednesday Choir Rehearsal Deacons/Kerygma Rm
Dec 7	Thursday
Dec 8	Friday
Dec 9 Noon	Saturday Holiday House Tour reception/Vestry
Dec 10 10:00 AM	Sunday – Advent II Worship GIVING TREE GIFTS DUE TODAY!

December Worship Schedule

SUNDAY, DEC 3rd FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT **COMMUNION SUNDAY**

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

SUNDAY, DEC 10th 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 17th 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 24th - FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

We will gather at 10 AM today to light our fourth Advent candle – LOVE! We'll also have a Hymn Sing!

SUNDAY, DEC 24th 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 31st

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!

