



December 14, 2025
Third Sunday of Advent

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Sharing an experience of belonging, with God's music and the love
and justice of Jesus at the heart of what we do.

Welcome

Rachel Robicheau

Guided Breath & Centering Moment

Opening Prayer

Rev. Timothy Sylvia

Opening Music: O Come, Take Heart

Entry Into Worship/Advent Candle Lighting

Marissa Cohen

One: There are moments that scatter us,
days when we don't know which way is up,
seasons when we feel like we are holding it all together
with threads that are much too thin.
And yet...JOY has a way of slipping in.

**Many: Meet us here, O God.
Strengthen what feels weak.
Stir up JOY in this gathering.**

One: JOY is not naïve.
JOY pays attention.
JOY is what happens
when love refuses to let go of us.
Where does JOY find you these days?

**Many: JOY greets us in unexpected laughter.
JOY appears when someone remembers our name.
JOY rises in us when we feel held, not alone.**

One: So we light the candle of JOY,
trusting that JOY is not a luxury
but a lifeline
in a weary world.
May this flame remind us
that JOY can bloom in the cracked places,
the tender places,
the places still healing.

**Many: JOY grows here.
JOY awakens here.
JOY finds us again.**

Scripture: Jeremiah 1: 4-10

Marissa Cohen

Gospel: Luke 1: 26-39

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country,

Sacred Stories for All

Jennifer Harris Dault

Music: Show Up

Sermon: Even in Our Fear, We are Called Forward

Rev. Timoth Sylvia

Music: If You Say Go

Affirmation (Unison)

Rachel Robicheau

**We have carried heavy questions.
We have walked through days that felt too long.
We have wondered where joy has gone,
and still, we believe.**

**We believe God draws close...
not only in celebration,
but in the quiet, aching spaces
where courage takes time to grow.**

**We believe God meets us
in our searching, our longing, our uncertainty.
We believe joy is not lost...
it is being cultivated in hidden places.**

**We believe every flicker of gladness matters:
the smile that surprises us,
the moment of tenderness we didn't expect,
the strength that rises
when we take one small step forward.**

**So even when joy feels distant,
even when weariness lingers,
even when our hearts tire of waiting,
we will lean toward joy's promise.
We will honor the light already growing within us.
We will look for God in the small joys that break through.
We will trust that movement is happening**

even when we cannot see the path ahead.

Unto us, joy awakens.

Unto us, light glimmers again.

Even here...

God is urging us forward.

Offering Invitation

Rachel Robicheau

Pastoral Prayer (with the Lord's Prayer)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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.

Closing Music: O God, As Troubles Here Increase

Sending Forth

Rev. Timothy Sylvia, Pastor
Jeff Hobart, Director of Music Ministry

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ANNOUNCEMENTS:

ADVENT DEVOTIONALS are available in the Narthex.

WEEKLY ONLINE BIBLE STUDY, Wednesday, December 17th, 6:30 pm EST – ONLINE ONLY:
Join us each Wednesday for a time of deep reflection, thoughtful conversation, and sacred curiosity as we open scripture together and explore what it means for our lives today.

Whether you’ve been reading the Bible for years or are just beginning to ask questions, there’s space for you here. Bring your wonder. Bring your doubts. Bring your whole self. Come for the community. Stay for the transformation. Zoom link sent out weekly and available upon request.

POINSETTIAS can be ordered online by going to bit.ly/2025Poinsettia or by completing the attached form. All orders must be received by December 16th.

CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE, Thursday, December 18th, 11:00 am – 2:00 pm: Our staff invites you to stop by the Chapel for some light refreshments and plenty of holiday cheer!

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE, December 20th: Please submit to Nadine anything you’d like included in the January newsletter. Thank you.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

Missions	Sunday, December 14 th	After Coffee Hour in Memorial Hall
Staff Meeting	Monday, December 15 th	1:00 pm in the Chapel

SCAN OUR QR CODES:



Online Giving



Events Page of Our Website

Poinsettias

Poinsettias are available through the church at a cost of \$10 per plant. Please complete this form and return to the church office by December 16th. Forms will also be available in the Narthex. Checks should be made payable to "First Congregational Church".

In Living Tribute To: _____

In Loving Memory Of: _____

_____ In Memory of Loved Ones

_____ I would like to pick up my plant.

_____ I will leave my plant to be sent to those who
are "aging in place"

Given By _____