

Welcome to First Congregational Church United Church of Christ
Christmas Sunday
December 28, 2025

*** Some rise to their feet, some rise in their hearts—please rise as you are able.*

GATHERING BELL

At the sound of the bell, please silence yourselves and prepare for worship.

PRELUDE

Hallelujah Joy!, Mark Hayes

Martha Jones

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Paul Ashby

INVITATION TO WORSHIP

**Whoever you are...and wherever you are on life's journey...
you are welcome here!**

CALL TO WORSHIP

Nancy Palubicki

Christ is born. In the face of the Christ child, we see the reflection of God's love.

In the animal trough in the stable, we see the way of God is not the way of power, thunder, or shock, and awe.

We follow a God who is revealed in gentle, graceful beauty.

In a world shaped by power, fame, wealth, and politics, God's light unveils itself in simplicity, poverty, humility, and love.

GATHERING HYMNS OF THE SEASON

All

Joy to the World

Joy to the world! the Lord is come; let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sound joy.

God rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
The glories of God's righteousness, and wonders of God's love,
And wonders of God's love, and wonders, wonders of God's love.

O Come, All Ye Faithful

All

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant.
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.
Come and behold him, born the King of angels.
O come let us adore him; O come let us adore him;
O come let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing all ye citizens of heaven above;
Glory to God, all glory in the highest:
O come let us adore him; O come let us adore him;
O come let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the Christ-child bring;
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinner reconciled!"
Joyful, all you saints arise, join the triumph of the skies,

With the angel host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the Christ-child bring!"

Hail the Bearer of God's peace! Hail the Sun of righteousness,
Light and life our Savior brings, risen with radiant, healing wings.
Mildly lay his glory by, born that we no more may die,
Born to raise us all from earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the Christ-child bring."

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Paul

Respond to each shared prayer request with "Peace, Shalom, Salaam."

PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

Our Creator, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your 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 yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO OFFERING

Nancy

OFFERTORY

Away in a Manger (Cradle Song), arr. Jim Lucas

Martha

**DOXOLOGY (tune: *Lasst Uns Erfreuen*)

**O gleaming star of love divine,
O light unveiling God's design,
alleluia, alleluia;
O Word revealed in human birth,
O meeting place of heav'n and earth:
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Nancy

God of time and eternity, we thank you for this day, this hour. In this busy season we often need to recover from Christmas. Open our hearts to relax in the beauty of this season and reflect on the love of Jesus for all people, including ourselves. Amen

MORE HYMNS OF THE SEASON

All

The First Nowell

The first Nowell, the angel did say,
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell, born is the King of Israel.

They looked above, and saw a star
shining in the east, beyond them far,
And to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night.
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell, born is the King of Israel.

This star drew nigh to the northwest,
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
And there it did both stop and stay,
right over the place where Jesus lay.
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell, born is the King of Israel.

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
now give heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today;
Ox and ass before him bow, asleep within the manger now,
Christ is born today, Christ is born today!

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
now you know of endless bliss; Jesus Christ was born for this!
God has opened heaven's door, and you are blessed forevermore.
Christ was born for this, Christ was born for this!

Angels We Have Heard on High

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply, echo back their joyous strains.

Refrain: Gloria, in excelsis Deo [repeat]

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
Say what may the tidings be, which inspire your heavenly song. *refrain*

See the babe in manger laid whom the choirs of angels praise;
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid, while our hearts in love we raise. *refrain*

SCRIPTURE

Mark 3:20-35

Nancy

Then he went home, and the crowd came together again, so that they could not even eat. When his family heard it, they went out to restrain him, for people were saying, "He has gone out of his mind." And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons." And he called them to him and spoke to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered.

"Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness but is guilty of an eternal sin"—for they had said, "He has an unclean spirit."

Then his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. A crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers are outside asking for you." And he replied, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" And looking at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."

MESSAGE

"So, Who Left the Christ Out of Christmas?"

Paul

CLOSING SONG

Go Tell It On the Mountain

Refrain

Go tell it on the mountain, over the hill and everywhere.
Go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born!

While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
behold throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. *refrain*

The shepherds feared and trembled when lo! above the earth

rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth. *refrain*

Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. *refrain*

****BENEDICTION**

Paul

GREETING ONE ANOTHER IN THE SPIRIT OF LOVE

RECESSIONAL

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice, Emily Lund

Martha

Today's Worship Leaders

minister

Rev. Dr. Paul Ashby

liturgist

Nancy Palubicki

musician

Martha Jones

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