



**Heifer International Living Gift Market
Dec 17 after worship**

**Buy crafts and honor loved ones
with donations to Heifer**

New 2023 honor cards!



Worship Notes.

Music licenses: One License with license #A-733437,
and CCLI License #A-2267261 and Streaming
#CSPL169342, Size A

CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
United Church of Christ
5 Summer St. Lynnfield MA 01940
781-334-3050 www.Centre-Church.org
We Welcome Everyone: An Open and Affirming Church

Rev Thomas Bentley, Pastor
Douglas W. Hodgkins, Organist/Choir Director
Leah O'Brien, Director of Tower Day School



THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Rev. Thomas Bentley

CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ

5 Summer Street, Lynnfield, Massachusetts

December 17, 2023

10:00 am

Prelude
In a Manger Bed

Broughton

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship

Randy Russell

Leader: The God who speaks comfort to us calls us here.

Leader and People: The God who addresses us with tenderness meets us here.

Leader: The God who guides us with gentleness cares for us here.

Leader and People: We come to prepare a way for the Lord, we come to ready ourselves for the transformation of our lives. For the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it.

Opening Prayer

Randy Russell

Lord God, as we gather this day, we open our hearts to you, seeking your healing and transforming love. Our world cries for justice for all people, yet the leaders seem intent on bantering with one another, unmindful of the peace-bringers and those who would heal and teach the ways of peace. Be with all of us. Prepare us for this bright light of love which you are sending to us, for we ask this in Jesus' Name. AMEN.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

The Choir

Leader: Your song is joy, Singer of Creation, for you are Joy—

Leader and People: Joy that fills the empty with good things.

Leader: Joy that sings light into the darkness;

Leader: Joy echoes among us with angelic song;

This is the joy that births hope in the midst of despair.

Leader and People: Open our lips to sing your praise and receive your melody in my life.

Leader: We are ready for your coming.

Leader and People: Our hearts are open to the coming of Joy. Amen.

***Opening Hymn**

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

#116



NEW TESTAMENT READING

Randy Russell

1 Thessalonians 5:12-23 The Message

And now, friends, we ask you to honor those leaders who work so hard for you, who have been given the responsibility of urging and guiding you along in your obedience. Overwhelm them with appreciation and love!

Get along among yourselves, each of you doing your part. Our counsel is that you warn the freeloaders to get a move on. Gently encourage the stragglers, and reach out for the exhausted, pulling them to their feet. Be patient with each person, attentive to individual needs. And be careful that when you get on each other's nerves you don't snap at each other. Look for the best in each other, and always do your best to bring it out.

Be cheerful no matter what; pray all the time; thank God no matter what happens. This is the way God wants you who belong to Christ Jesus to live.

Don't suppress the Spirit, and don't stifle those who have a word from the Master. On the other hand, don't be gullible. Check out everything, and keep only what's good. Throw out anything tainted with evil.



CHILDREN'S TIME

Call to Offering

*Offertory

The Glorious Christmas Morn

Hodgkins

Prayer of Dedication

Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

THE LORD'S PRAYER (in unison)

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
All Earth Is Waiting

Taule

GOSPEL READING

Randy Russell

John 1:6-8, 19-26 The Message

There once was a man, his name John, sent by God to point out the way to the Life-Light. He came to show everyone where to look, who to believe in. John was not himself the Light; he was there to show the way to the Light.

When Jews from Jerusalem sent a group of priests and officials to ask John who he was, he was completely honest. He didn't evade the question. He told the plain truth: "I am not the Messiah."

They pressed him, "Who, then? Elijah?"

"I am not."

"The Prophet?"

"No."

Exasperated, they said, "Who, then? We need an answer for those who sent us. Tell us something—anything!—about yourself."

"I'm thunder in the desert: 'Make the road straight for God!' I'm doing what the prophet Isaiah preached."

Those sent to question him were from the Pharisee party. Now they had a question of their own: "If you're neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet, why do you baptize?"

John answered, "I only baptize using water. A person you don't recognize has taken his stand in your midst. He comes after me, but he is not in second place to me. I'm not even worthy to hold his coat for him."

MESSAGE: "When Love Thunders Into Joy"

Rev. Tom Bentley

***CLOSING HYMN**

As with Gladness Those of Old

#159

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Hallelujah Chorus

Handel

Our ushers this morning are Kathi Martin & Jim Wilkie

Our coffee fellowship host this morning is Annmarie Pendola



The Poinsettias Decorating Our Sanctuary

Given By:

Laurel & Peter Caputo
Marjorie L. Potter
Dorsey & Dr Lynn Holappa
Jim & Lisa Wilkie
Jim & Lisa Wilkie
Paul & Karen Harrington
Paul & Karen Harrington
Donna & Jack Marino
Donna & Jack Marino
The Potter Furey Family
The Marshall Family
Ron & Barbara Horwood
Chuck & Debbie Cotting
Nina Emery & Roy Sorli
Dean & Janet Gulezian
Phil & Cheryl Fisher
Tim & Janice (Gulezian) Cassidy
The Doe/Russell Family
Dave & Diane Bjorkman
Linda Ladd
The Decker Family

Stephen Riley
Harvey & Margaret Waugh
The Martin Family

Given By:

Ron & Barbara Horwood

Stephen Riley
The Potter Furey Family
Dave & Diane Bjorkman

In Loving Memory Of:

Rose Giunta
Edward B. Potter
Family & Friends
Ethel Wilkie
Paul P. Shay
Donald & Beatrice Blanchard
Phyllis & Lincoln Harrington
Bob & Myrna Shorey
Our Special friends Al & Jo Farnsworth
Caroly & Woodrow Furey
Rev. James & Louise Marshall, Sheila Marshall
Stott A & Dorothy S. Morse
Our Parents
Earl & Steve Richard & all Covid victims
Barkey & Meg Gulezian
Lost loved ones
Barkey & Meg Gulezian
Wilber & Emily Doe and Harry & Ruth Russell
Roy, Elouise & Phil Bjorkman & Mary Peet
Loved ones
Barbara & John Wishant
Jean & Bent Decker
Barbara Becker
Marilyn Riley
Their parents
Frank & Jean Spencer, Frank P Spencer
Joe, Jan & Kathleen Martin
Suzanne Meade

In Honor Of:

William C & Janet Thompson
William & Violet Horwood
Etta English
Marjorie Potter
Loved Ones