**Worship from Home**

**First Congregational Church of Blue Hill, UCC**

**The First Sunday of Advent, December 1, 2024**

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Introit  *“Wake, Awake, the Night is Flying”* J.S. Bach

Call to Worship(From Andy O’Neil of the United Church of Canada)

**One:** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**Many: And also with you.**

**One:** On this first Sunday of Advent, as a community of faith, we don’t so much decorate our sanctuary and building as prepare *them* to be a symbol of preparing *ourselves* for the birth, and rebirth, of Jesus.With what shall we come to God’s house?

**Many: We come bringing branches of pine and fir, evergreens for wreaths of welcome, and garlands of joy.**

**One:** What is this lovely fragrance that follows us here?

**Many: It is the smell of cedar—bough of wisdom, wood of honor— the holy breath and presence of God in our midst.**

**One:** What will these things become in this place?

**Many: The promises of God, the words of prophets, and the blessings of disciples— signs of the temple not made with human hands—all brought to life in the one called Jesus, and reborn in us this season.**

**One: “**Make us to know your ways, O Lord; teach us your paths. Lead us in your truth, and teach us, for you are the God of our salvation; for you we wait all day long” (Psalm 25:4-5).

Lighting of the Advent Candle

One:    In the beginning was the Word—spoken and breathed, a promise made and kept.

**All:     Listen and hear—God’s promise is true!**

One:    The Word was in the beginning, and through him all things come into being.

**All:     Eternal and near at hand, Already and not-yet, God’s promise is the foundation of all life.**

One:    Listen! Hear the covenant anew, giving voice to a future with hope.

*~candle is lit~*

Unison Prayer of Invocation (from Lisa Frenz)

**Giver of all gifts, your first gift is hope. We thank you for letting us be hopeful people--expecting good tidings for ourselves, for our families and churches, and for our world. As we unwrap the Advent season, now beginning, help us to focus on the promise of Bethlehem, enjoying as simple pleasures the presents, traditions, special food, music and stories, without letting them control our time, spirits or resources. Help us to share your hope with others this week as it has been shared with us. Amen.**

*\**Hymn #110 PH *“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”*

O come, O come, Immanuel, and ransom captive Israel  
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.

Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here.

Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death’s dark shadow put to flight. Refrain

O come, O Wisdom from on high, and order all things far and nigh;  
to us the path of knowledge show and teach us in her ways to go. Refrain

O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind.  
Bid envy, strife and quarrel cease; Fill the whole world with heaven’s peace. Refrain

Children’s Message Pastor Lisa

A Reading from the Hebrew Bible Jeremiah 33:14-16

A Reading from the Epistles 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

A Reading from the Gospels Luke 21:25-36

Message *“Star Signs”* Pastor Lisa

\*Hymn #103 NCH *“Watcher, Tell Us of the Night”*

Watcher, tell us of the night, what its signs of promise are.  
Traveler, O a wondrous sight: see that glory-beaming star.  
Watcher, does its beauteous ray news of joy or hope foretell?  
Traveler, yes; it brings the day, promised day of Israel.

Watcher, tell us of the night; higher yet that star ascends.  
Traveler, blessedness and light, peace and truth its course portends.  
Watcher, will its beams alone gild the spot that gave them birth?  
Traveler, ages are its own; see, it bursts o’er all the earth.

Watcher, tell us of the night, for the morning seems to dawn.  
Traveler, shadows take their flight; doubt and terror are withdrawn.  
Watcher, you may go your way; hasten to your quiet home.  
Traveler, we rejoice today, for Emmanuel has come!

Prayers of the People *(sharing of joys and concerns)*

The Lord's Prayer *(debts and debtors)*

Choral Response

Invitation to Give

Offertory  *“Oh Lord, How Shall I Meet Thee”*

O Lord, how shall I meet thee, how welcome thee aright

Thy people long to greet thee, my hope, my heart's delight.

O kindle, lord most holy thy lamp within my breast.

To do in spirit lowly all that may please thee best.

Love caused thy incarnation, love brought thee down to me.

Thy thirst for my salvation procured my liberty.

O love beyond all telling that led thee to embrace

In love all love excelling our lost and fallen race.

Rejoice then, ye sad hearted, who sit in deepest gloom

Who mourn o'er joys departed and tremble at your doom.

Despair not, he is near you, yea, standing at the door

Who best can help and cheer you and bids you weep no more.

Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise God all creatures here below. Praise God above, you heavenly hosts: Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen**

Unison Prayer of Dedication (From Lisa Frenz)

**God of all life, you have given us so much: family and friends, faith and hope, possessions and prosperity — more than we can ever know. Accept our thanks and praise. Grant that we may always be overflowing with your glory so that our lives become a song of praise to you. Amen.**

**THE SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION**

**Invitation**

**Consecration**

**Sharing of the Bread and Cup**

**Prayer of Thanksgiving**

**Light of God, Jesus Christ, you come to us in your meal of love. Nourish us that we may be an advent people: seeking the truth of your Word, instilled with a longing to see God. May we be infused with the presence of God which spills out into the world enriching everyone we meet in our daily activities, singing the glory of God in our lives. Amen.**

*\**Hymn #609 NCH *“Now Is the Time Approaching”*

Now is the time approaching, by prophets long foretold,  
When all shall dwell together, secure and manifold.  
Let war be learned no longer, let strife and tumult cease,  
All earth a blessed garden, that God shall tend in peace.

Let all that now divides us remove and pass away,  
Like mists of early morning before the blaze of day.  
Let all that now unites us more sweet and lasting prove,  
A closer bond of union, in blessed lands of love.

O long expected dawning, come with your cheering ray!  
Yet shall the promise beckon, and lead us not away.  
O sweet anticipation! It cheers the watchers on,  
To pray and hope and labor, ‘til Christ’s new realm is come.

**\***Charge and Benediction

Postlude

\* indicates where the congregation may stand, in mind or in spirit.