**Worship from Home**

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

**The Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 24, 2023**

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Introit  *“Magnificat”* Taizé

*Magnificat, anima me dominum* translates to "My soul magnifies the Lord."

Call to Worship

**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:** O come, O come, Emmanuel,
**Many: And be light for our darkness.**
**One:** Be comfort in our grief,
**Many: A guide for our path.**
**One:** Be a friend for our loneliness,
**Many: An oasis for our searching.**
**One:** O come, O come, Emmanuel,
**All: Restore our joy, heal our wounds and bring us peace.**

Lighting of the Advent Candle

**One:** There is a light drawing near – a light that will soon enter this world in the most unlikely of places, by the most unlikely of mothers.

**Many: It is a light that promises hope.**

**One:** It is only a faint glow in the distance, like a new star blooming in the night, but it cannot be contained. It will topple empires, heal the sick, and touch the weary heart.

**Many: It is a light that brings peace.**

**One:** The light is a promise, the same promise that the angel Gabriel whispered to Mary so long ago: ‘Emmanuel,’ as if to say, “The Eternal is right here with us.”

**Many: It is a light that promises joy.**

**One:** The light is coming, as surely as God’s love is steadfast. Its radiant reach is limitless, enveloping each one of us with a love that knows no bounds.

**Many: It is a light that brings us love.**

**One:** Today we light four candles, four small beacons in a sea of shadow. May they be signs for us, shining into our everyday lives with a spark of hope for Monday’s worries, a warm glow of peace for Tuesday’s spats and squabbles, a glimmer of joy for Wednesday’s holiday melancholy, and a love that welcomes, like a brightly-lit doorway, at the wear week’s end.

 (The candles of hope, peace, joy and love are lit.)

**One:** Let us pray

**All: Gracious God, we give thanks for the light that is dawning, even as the days grow so short. Open us to your nearness, to Gabriel’s good news. Help us to trust, like Mary, that you are actually and truly with us. Help us to say, “Here we are. Let it be with us according to your word.” Breathe upon the spark of your love that is in each of us, until the light and warmth of it can be felt by all those we meet. We pray in the shining name of Jesus. Amen.**

Prayer of Invocation (from Jennifer Phillips)

**Come, O Holy One, as the beloved child, Emmanuel! Soften our hearts and open our arms for your coming that we may make this a place worthy and warm, kindly and safe for all your children, in the name of Jesus. Amen.**

*\**Hymn Insert *“My Soul Proclaims with Wonder”*

Children’s Message *“Advent Words of God: Incarnation and Annunciation* Pastor Lisa

Pop-Up Christmas Pageant *“A Spontaneous Nativity (from Luke 2:1-20)”*

\*Hymn Insert *“To a Maid Whose Name Was Mary”*

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

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

Choral Response

Invitation to Give

Offertory

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

**Loving God, we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us -- ourselves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love.  Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord.  Amen**

*\**Hymn #127 NCH *“Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming”*

**\*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

Postlude

\* indicates where the congregation may stand as they are able.