



Light of the World

Your savior is born today in David's city.

He is Christ the Lord. LUKE 2:11

Advent 2023

Dear Friends,

Since the first century, Christians have been waiting during the season of Advent for the True Light and uttered the word *Maranatha*, often translated "Our Lord, Come!" This word is a Greek translation of Aramaic and often appears as just one word - maranatha. But in Aramaic, it may be two words with two different meanings:

marana tha: a word oriented towards the future, translated as "Come, our Lord!"

maran atha: a word oriented towards the completed past, translated as "Our Lord has come."

These two different words collide during Advent: when saying, "Our Lord has come," the remembrance of the God's gift of God's Son Jesus Christ meets our hopeful cry inviting the Christ child to come again when we say, "Come, Our Lord!" During Advent, beginnings and endings meet. We prepare ourselves, for four Sundays, to step forth into the celebration of the Word incarnate - Jesus Christ.

The gifts of hope, peace, love, and joy are the treasures we at First Congregational United Church of Christ wish to share with you during worship this season. We invite you to look at our worship services listed on the reverse side of this page.

In addition to being a part of our worship life, we hope that each of you will also remember the church in your Christmas giving. Enclosed you will find an envelope for use in our traditional Christmas offering. This offering helps the church in fulfilling its ministry in Christ's name, supporting the total programming of the church here and throughout the world. Please give prayerful consideration to this gift, that it may be one which sincerely reflects your gratitude to God for the gift of God's only begotten son.

May the gifts of Advent—hope, peace, love, and joy—be with you in this season and throughout the New Year!

The Staff of First Congregational UCC, Appleton

Rev. Nick Hetch Pastor Mary Jo Laabs pastor Dianne Foster John Albrecht
 Nathan Kibler Sarah Wiltendink Siri Witt Tom Ott Pat Melton
 Matthew Feuerhelm Sheila VanRooy Pamela Hart yainal ngales Ari Krause

Advent and Christmas Worship Schedule

Wednesday, November 29 ~ Hanging of the Greens

6:00-7:30 PM ALL are invited to attend this family friendly evening where we'll gather to create Christmas ornaments as we eat a salad and pizza dinner. We'll then learn about important Christmas symbols and traditions during a worship service while we decorate our sanctuary. 6:00-7:00 PM Dinner and Ornament Creation, 7:00-7:30 PM Interactive Service.

Sunday, December 3 ~ First Sunday of Advent: HOPE

9:30 AM Communion Service with Advent music from the Sanctuary Choir.

Sunday, December 10 ~ Second Sunday of Advent: PEACE

9:30 AM **Major Choral Works: Christmas Cantatas of Dietrich Buxtehude, Sanctuary Choir with strings and organ.** Children are welcome to stay in the service to hear the cantatas or they may attend Children's Ministry. Joyful Noise Collection will be received.

Wednesday, December 13 ~ Taizé Worship Service

6:30-7:00 PM A meditative service for those experiencing loss during the Christmas season, held in our Chapel.

Sunday, December 17 ~ Third Sunday of Advent: LOVE

9:30 AM **Family Worship/Bell Sunday** with the Youth Handbells, multiple Choirs, and intergenerational experiences.
NO Children's Ministry, but there will be childcare.
Special Note: Everyone is asked to bring a bell to worship!

10:45 AM-12:00 PM, Intergenerational Caroling and Light Lunch After Worship

Please contact the office to sign up *asap*, so we know if we should rent a bus.

Christmas Eve, Sunday, December 24

9:30 AM *Fourth Sunday of Advent: JOY/Christmas Eve Service* with Candlelight and soloists. Childcare provided as well as a whole-group activity for children PreK-8th grade.

4:00 PM *"Build-It-Yourself" Family Nativity Service* with Children's Choir and additional musicians. All children who are present will be invited to portray a shepherd, angel, or wise person. Participate in singing familiar carols. Childcare provided.

8:00 PM *Service of Lessons and Carols* with Candlelight and Communion, Sanctuary Choir, instrumentalists, and vocal soloists. (NOTE the NEW TIME.)
No childcare provided.

PEACE LOVE HOPE JESUS PEACE LOVE HOPE JESUS