

First Congregational United Church of Christ

December 29, 2024



# THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

December 29, 2024 9:30AM

First Sunday After Christmas ~ Congregational Carol Sing

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## PRELUDE

Improvisation by Noah Harmon, *guest pianist*

## CALL TO SILENCE & RINGING OF THE BELL

## WELCOME

*\*Please Rise in Body or Spirit*

## RE-LIGHTING THE CANDLES OF ADVENT

One: O come, Emmanuel, God-with-us, the One we have hoped for. We are waiting for you, Emmanuel.

**All: Yes, come to us, Emmanuel.**

*Light the first candle & sing refrain of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"*

*Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!*

One: O come, God of Wisdom. Order our ways and cause us to walk in your ways. We are waiting for you, Wisdom, Emmanuel.

**All: Yes, come to us, Wisdom, Emmanuel.**

*Light the second candle & sing refrain*

One: O come, Dayspring, brightness of God, Sun of righteousness. Shed abroad your light and your justice.

**All: We are waiting for you, Dayspring, Emmanuel.**

*Light the third candle & sing refrain*

One: O come, Desire of nations, all the world is waiting for you. Embrace the nations with your justice and peace. We are waiting for you, Desire of nations, Emmanuel.

**All: Yes, come to us, Desire of nations, Emmanuel.**

*Light the fourth candle & sing refrain*

One: O come, Emmanuel, God-with-us. Our hearts, our homes, our congregation, and our world are waiting in hope and joy for you. Make your presence known among us this night. You are the One we have been waiting for forever.

**All: Yes, you have come to us, Emmanuel.**

*Light the Christ Candle*

\*OPENING CAROL #158

*Good Christians All, Rejoice*

IN DULCI JUBILO

## CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

(During the sermon, the prayer request cards will be collected. After the Children's Sermon, the children will follow their teachers to Church School.)

## CONGREGATIONAL CAROLS

#147 *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly*

W ZLOBIE LEZY

#154 *In the Bleak Midwinter*

CRANHAM

St. 1, 2 & 4

## UNISON SCRIPTURE READING Psalm 148

One: Praise the LORD!

**All: Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights! Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host!**

One: Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars! Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!

**All: Let them praise the name of the LORD, for he commanded and they were created. He established them forever and ever; he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed. Praise the LORD from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps, fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command!**

One: Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars! Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds! Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth! Young men and women alike, old and young together!

**All: Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth and heaven. He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his faithful, for the people of Israel who are close to him. Praise the LORD!**

## BEHIND THE HYMN

*"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"*

Rev. Nick Hatch

## \*HYMN #114

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

VENI EMMANUEL

## OFFERING

### CALL TO THE OFFERING

(During this time, you are invited to a virtual offering. Please visit our webpage and click "Give" to make your weekly offering, or text FCUCC GIVE to 73256.)

## MUSICAL REFLECTION

Improvisation by Noah Harmon, *guest pianist*

**\*DOXOLOGY**

**ALL: Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God above, ye heavenly host:  
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

**\*CONGREGATIONAL CAROL #136**

*Angels, from the Realms of Glory*

REGENT SQUARE

**GATHERING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS**

(You are welcome to submit your prayer requests throughout the week  
to the church office, or email to a pastor for confidentiality.)

One: The Lord be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

One: Let us pray.

**THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**All: 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.**

**\*CLOSING CAROLS**

#141 *The First Nowell*

St. 1 & 2

THE FIRST NOWELL

#160 *Go, Tell It on the Mountain*

GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

**\*CLOSING WORDS & BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE**

Improvisation by Noah Harmon, *guest pianist*

**THANK YOU TO TODAY'S WORSHIP LEADERS**

Pastor Nicholas J. Hatch, *Co-Pastor*

Pastor Katherine Willis Pershey, *Co-Pastor*

Noah Harmon, *guest pianist*

John M. Albrecht, *Director for Music Ministries*

We welcome **Noah Harmon** as guest pianist this morning. Noah has been involved with music his entire life. His musical endeavors began at age four and have continued ever since. He received a bachelor's degree in music from Lawrence University where he studied classical piano performance with renowned Canadian pianist Dr. Michael Kim. While his studies focused on classical music, Noah also became interested in jazz piano as well as composition. In a classical medium he has performed with larger ensembles such as the Water City Chamber Orchestra, the Oshkosh Symphony, the Big Band Reunion, and the Chaminade Women's Choir. Smaller ensembles he has performed with include the Electric Company - (psychedelic rock), Bloodhawk - (metal), the Jazz Orgy - (jazz), just to name a few. As a soloist his endeavors fall into an antique genre of classical improvisation where his spontaneous counterpoint is best highlighted.

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**The church office will be closed through January 2, 2025. Happy New Year!**

**To receive a tax credit on church donations for the 2024 year, all contributions must be received in the church office drop box or on Realm by Tuesday, December 31, 2024.**

**USHER TEAMS**

DECEMBER USHERS: **Team 1:** Dennis Korth, Gale Korth, Kim Hanson, Dale Hanson, Tom Tatlock, Jim Thaldorf, Carol Valeri, Sue Wisneski, Logan LaViolette, Luke LaViolette  
AUDIO & VIDEO: JD Jicha, Rick Behm, Matt Feuerhelm

**WORSHIP SCHEDULE FOR NEXT SUNDAY**

Epiphany

Pastor Katherine Willis Pershey

Matthew 2:1-12

## Joys and Concerns of Our Faith Community

Please keep these people in your prayers and greet them with a loving word when you see them.  
 Please call the church office if you have a prayer request or to request a pastoral visit: 920-733-7393  
**In cases of a pastoral emergency, please call 920-810-2600.**

Lyndee Aleman Amanda, who has terminal cancer Jill Anthony, her sister & her nephew Katie Behl and her sister, Barbara Don Brittnacher Chris Brittnacher's brother, Steve Reinkober Cheryl Currier Donna, who is in recovery from West Nile Erstad's family friend, Silas, and his family David Galow The family of Paul Gohdes Margaret Hankwitz JoAnn Helms Cynthia Hempel, daughter of Pat Streur Shirley Hoft Sandi Hurm Jean Jepson Larry Konz, father of Leigh Grube Kathy Lannoye	Helen McKean's daughter, Larri Jacquart Elizabeth McNally Holly Mueller Olivia, who has been re-diagnosed with cancer Our friends in Kerio Valley, Kenya Anika Quillman Larry Schiedermayer Frank and Pat Severin Mike Seymour's mom, Debbie Stacey, friend of Kathy and Dick DeVries Kinsley Tarr Gloria Tate Jack Thiel Peter Thiel James Totzke Those living with mental unwellness Larry Vaubel Karen Waters
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Please call or email the church office if someone's name should be removed from the list.  
 Thank you!

## **The Open Door Announcements**

For more information on these announcements and other events, please visit our website, weekly e-newsletters, and social media.

**Join Us for a Six-Session Study of the Gospel of Luke!** Discover the richness and depth of the Gospel of Luke in a six-session series beginning January 8. This study will take place 6:30-7:30PM in the Upper Lounge. Each session will offer thoughtful reflection, discussion, and community connection. Schedule: **January 8, 15, 22; February 5, 12, 19** (with January 29 and February 26 reserved as weather-related makeup days.) We'll follow a rhythm of three weeks on, one week off, with makeup days available to accommodate Wisconsin's unpredictable winter weather.

**Parking Lot Project Update:** We're excited to share that we've reached 71.4% of our fundraising goal for the Parking Lot Project—thanks to your incredible generosity! As the year draws to a close, there's still time to make a meaningful impact. Every donation brings us closer to making our space more accessible and welcoming for everyone. If you're considering a year-end contribution, please keep the Parking Lot Fund in mind. Your support, no matter the amount, truly makes a difference. Together, we can get this project over the finish line! Thank you for being part of this journey with us! And speaking of parking lots, thank you for continuing to park on the CYF side so our less mobile friends can easily get in the building and these chilly days.

**World Relief Volunteers Urgently Needed!** World Relief is anticipating a high volume of newcomer arrivals in the next 2 months, 200-250 individuals in Appleton/Oshkosh. The Appleton office has opportunities to volunteer in a variety of ways for both individuals and teams. A few opportunities are outlined below:

- Transport Support. Increased support needed with providing safe and reliable transportation for our new neighbors to important appointments, from medical visits to their first days at new jobs.
- Move-in Support. Support with setting up permanent housing for refugee families, which would include help with unpacking boxes, organizing belongings, arranging furniture, gathering material needs, and doing some light cleaning to ensure that living spaces are comfortable and inviting.
- Administrative/Office support at the Appleton office to help the staff prepare for a high volume of newcomer arrivals.

If you are interested in learning more about the opportunities outlined above, or if you would like a full list of our volunteer opportunities, please reach out to Trinity at World Relief. [tthao@wr.org](mailto:tthao@wr.org).

**Library News:** The theme for the library this month is Advent and Christmas. We will have a display of books in the Narthex on Sunday after church, but since we have dozens of books on Advent and Christmas, many of them will be on display in the library. Please take time to come see them all. Here are two from Amazon 1. “*The 12 days of Christmas*” by Helen Haidle. Discover the Christian symbolism behind the classic Christmas carol “The 12 Days of Christmas” in this vibrantly illustrated picture book. The true meaning behind the twelve days between Christmas and Epiphany are explored throughout, making it a perfect addition to any holiday family reading tradition. 2. “*The Christmas Troll*” by Eugene Peterson. This is a story that reminds readers young and old to keep their eyes open for God’s most surprising gifts: “Gifts are for giving and receiving, not for grabbing and getting.” Make this story part of your family’s holiday traditions to always remember the true meaning of Christmas.

**Dry January:** Alcohol can be part of a joyful, balanced life. Whether it's sharing laughter with friends over a craft beer or savoring a glass of fine wine with dinner, these moments can bring pleasure and connection. However, our culture doesn't always encourage reflection or moderation when it comes to alcohol. Heavy drinking surged by about 20% during the pandemic and has not fallen. Dry January is a month-long break from consuming alcohol designed to offer physical, emotional, and spiritual benefits – benefits that are supported by medical research. If you feel that Dry January could be a positive reset for you this year, sign up to receive weekly emails from Pastor Katherine with encouragement, links, and prayers. *Please note: Dry January is not intended for those who are struggling with alcohol abuse disorder. If you're concerned about your alcohol or drug use, we encourage you to seek support as you begin your journey toward sobriety. Your pastors are always available to provide pastoral care and professional referrals.* Sign up link: [Dry January](#)

**Pillars Meal Sign-up:** Time to Create a Nourishing Meal for Pillars Thursday, **January 2, 2025**. Check out the link to sign up! [Pillars Sign Up](#) We will be making soup and grilled cheese sandwiches. It's a great way to meet new people and enjoy fellowship. For questions contact Shelley Nulton, snulton@att.net or 920-202-4419.

**Join Wednesday Prayer Chapel!** Join Pastor Nick on Facebook Live for Prayer Chapel, live streamed from the church on Wednesdays for around 20 minutes. Gather to enjoy spoken prayer, devotions, music, and an opportunity to share your prayer concerns with our online community. We look forward to seeing you for this personal mid-week touchpoint.

**NOAHH Requests:** A 22-year-old lived with his mom until a couple of weeks ago, as the home had become unsafe. He has no belongings and will be starting from complete scratch. He needs a bed, dresser, side table, hamper, and clothes (men’s 2XL tops and XL bottoms.) Contact Barb Mincheff at 920-832-5515 for pickup or drop-off.



**Mental Health Spotlight:** Each December 31, New Year's resolutions are made. It may be to lose 25 lbs., stop a habit such as smoking, eat healthy, and so many more, on a list that is endless. Resolutions are lofty, often nearly impossible goals. The *resolution* is what I want to see at the end. The *solutions* are the small steps needed to reach a goal. First steps may be: drink 8 cups of water daily, keep track of the number of cigarettes smoked, eat breakfast daily, ask for someone's support, get a physical to identify areas of concern in my health. Each small step is a solution. Am I truly willing to commit to myself? Others, out of love and concern for me, may tell me that I need to make change. I cannot make change over the long-term for anyone else but myself, can I?... no matter how much I would like to. Questions that need to be asked may include: What am I truly concerned about? What am I willing to commit to? Who do I need in my corner? The New Year will come and go, and one day at a time I can embrace a solution.

**Quarterly Congregational Meeting, January 12, 2025:** Join us after worship in the sanctuary from 10:30-10:45AM to elect new council members, present the budget for approval and vote for us to become certified for WISE.

**VOTE**  
**FOR US TO BECOME**  
**CERTIFIED FOR WISE**

**WISE** UCC Mental Health Network  
Welcoming • Inclusive • Supportive • Engaged

**JANUARY 12, 2025**  
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC

WITH GOD'S GUIDANCE, WE ARE ANSWERING THE  
2015 UCC GENERAL SYNOD'S CALL TO BECOME A  
WISE CONGREGATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH.

READ OUR COVENANT AT:  
[WWW.UCCAPPLETON.ORG/POST/BECOMING-MENTAL-HEALTH-WISE](http://WWW.UCCAPPLETON.ORG/POST/BECOMING-MENTAL-HEALTH-WISE)

## **This Week's Schedule**

Monday, December 30 ~ church office closed

Tuesday, December 31 ~ church office closed

6:30-7:30PM Living Sober AA Group – *Common Grounds*

7:45-8:45PM Fireside AA – *Common Grounds*

Wednesday, January 1 ~ Happy New Year! – church office closed

Thursday, January 2

12:00-1:00PM AA Search for Serenity Group – *Common Grounds*

12:00-1:30PM Theology Discussion Group @ *Chefo's Pancake House*

5:00-7:30PM Pillars Dinner @ *Pillars Adult Shelter*

6:30-7:30PM Community Partnership – *Isaiah Project Room*

7:00-8:00PM Fox Valley 94 AA – *Common Grounds*

Friday, January 3

7:00-8:00PM Al-Anon – *Upper Lounge*

7:00-8:30PM N.A – *Common Grounds*

Saturday, January 4

1:00-5:00PM Women's Craft Circle – *Upper Lounge*

7:00-8:00PM Fox Valley 94 AA – *Common Grounds*

Sunday, January 5

9:25AM-12:00PM Childcare – *Childcare Room*

9:30-10:30AM Sunday Worship – *Sanctuary, Upper Lounge, Chapel*

9:30-10:30AM Children's Ministry: Chat in the Chapel – *Chapel*

10:30-11:00AM Kwik Trip Fundraising – *Narthex*

10:30-11:30AM Family Day: CYF Coffee Hour – *Narthex*

10:30-11:30AM Children's Choir – *Choir Room*

10:45-11:45AM Confirmation Class – *HS Youth Room*

10:45-11:45AM Parents Book Study: White Picket Fences – *Common Grounds*

6:00-8:00PM First Things First AA Meeting – *Fellowship Hall, Common Grounds*

7:00-8:00PM AL ANON – *Chapel / Alateen – Upper Lounge*

*Welcome to The Church of the Open Door.*

Our door is open to you at whatever point you are in your journey of faith.

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**Baptisms** are held on the third Sunday of each month. To schedule a baptism, contact the church office six weeks before your desired baptism date.

**Childcare** is available for ALL infants and toddlers every Sunday. Kindergarten and first graders may enjoy a communion mini-lesson on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month and may go to childcare the 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Sundays of each month. Please see an usher for directions to the Childcare Room.

**Communion:** The sacrament of Holy Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of each month. Communion elements are gluten and alcohol free. All are welcome to join us!

**Flowers:** Today's flowers were arranged by Cindi Ritcey Fox.

**Hearing Loop:** Need help hearing our service? Ask an usher. They can help get you in the loop!



**Online Streaming and Podcasting** are available on [Facebook: FCUCCAppleton](#) or [Youtube: First Congregational UCC Appleton](#).

**Open Door Announcements** can be shared by emailing [opendoor@uccappleton.org](mailto:opendoor@uccappleton.org) or calling the office.

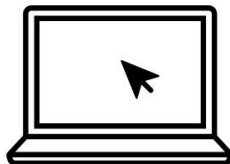
**References to God** in our worship may at times be gender specific. You are invited to substitute terms that reflect your understanding of the inclusiveness of God.

**Sunday School:** Our PreK - 5<sup>th</sup> graders begin in worship. After the children's message, they walk together to the CYF wing for our Children's Ministry Program. Kindergarten - fifth graders may enjoy a communion mini-lesson on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month. Children begin in worship, leave with the director, and return to partake in communion with their families. Youth gather on Wednesday evenings.

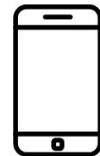
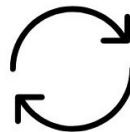
**Ways to Donate to First Congregational UCC, Appleton ~ Thank you for your support.**



Giving envelopes and checks can be dropped in the offering plate or mailed to the church



Visit our website at [uccappleton.org](http://uccappleton.org) and click "Give Now" for a one time gift or to sign up for automatic giving



Text FCUCC GIVE to 73256

\*Messages and data rates may apply.  
Message frequency varies. Text HELP to 73256 for help. Text STOP to 73256 to cancel.

*We are glad you are here today! You are welcome to worship in person with us in the sanctuary or watch it livestreamed in the upper lounge, narthex or chapel. The nursery also has livestreaming, on the other end of the building.*

### **TODAY AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC, APPLETON**

9:30-10:30AM      Sunday Worship/Congregational Hymn Sing – *Sanctuary, Chapel, Upper Lounge,*  
7:00-8:00PM      First Things First AA Meeting – *Fellowship Hall, Common Grounds*  
7:00-8:00PM      AL ANON – *Chapel / Alateen – Upper Lounge*

**NO CHILDREN'S MINISTRY/NO CHILDCARE TODAY**



**We are “The Church of the Open Door,” a welcoming and inclusive Christian community. No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.**



—The Church of the Open Door—

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL**  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Office hours: Monday–Friday, 9:00AM–3:00PM  
For pastoral emergencies: 920.810.2600