

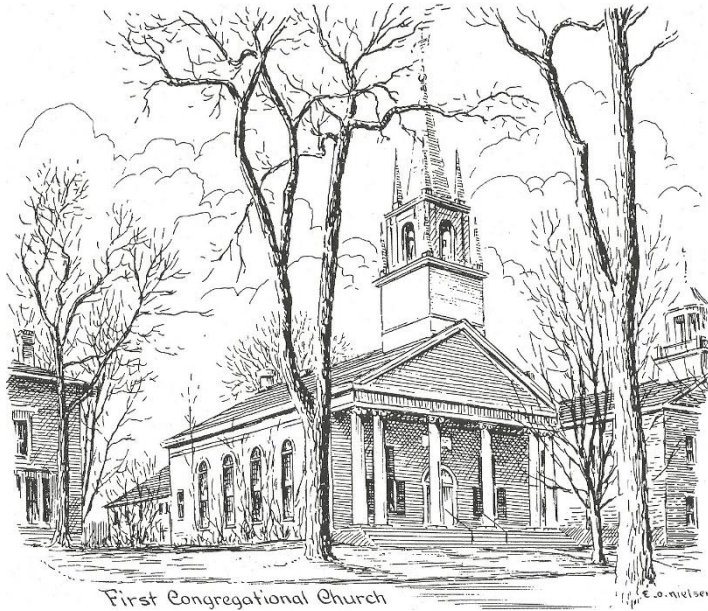
First Congregational Church

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

An Open and Affirming Church

PO Box 350, 28 High Street, Wiscasset, Maine 04578

207-882-7544, www.uccwiscasset.org



We welcome you to the First Congregational Church of Wiscasset.

VISION: We are on a journey to reflect God's love, embracing diversity and affirming the dignity and worth of all.

MISSION: Together we strive to praise God, grow in faith, cultivate love, spread joy, care for all people and God's creation, promote peace, and do justice.

November 30, 2025

**FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
NOVEMBER 30, 2025**



FOR YOUR CONTEMPLATION

“Advent is a coming, not our coming to God, but his to us. We cannot come to God, he is beyond our reach; but he can come to us, for we are not beneath his mercy.”
Christopher Webber

PRELUDE *Fugue in G Minor* J.S. Bach
 Christ Be Our Light arr. Nancy Rabe

RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: The Liberator is on the way!

P: We’re watching and waiting.

L: The Liberator will arrive soon!

P: Blest is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.

L: Lift up your hearts; lift up your heads,

P: So that the Liberator can come in.

L: We are watching; we are waiting; we are anticipating....

ALL: The Coming of our Liberator, The King of Glory, The Savior of the world!

*OPENING HYMN *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* No. 114

INVOCATION TO PRAYER

THE DEDICATION OF THE ADVENT WREATH AND CANDLES

Rev. John: We do not know the full story behind the Advent Wreath. The greenery represents life now and in the future. The circle reminds us of God’s unending love. The candles represent Jesus as the light of the world with the center candle being the Christ Candle. The candles remind us we

are a people of light. May these candles remind us of being Christ's light into our lives.

P: We dedicate these candles as a reminder to us and others of the uncertainty of life, as flickering candles. God helps us to be mindful of the risk in the Holy One coming into the world in the infant Jesus, born in Bethlehem.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH – THE CANDLE OF HOPE

Ruth Gilbert and Nancy Roby

Reader 1: O God, we light the first candle of Advent.

Reader 2: We kindle it with hope. We long for you to come to our world, to break through and reign with compassion, justice, and peace.

Reader 1: The prophet Isaiah also cried to God to tear open heaven and come down. He called God's people to do right. Isaiah called them to be refashioned like clay by God, the potter. This Advent, we call out to God.

Reader 2: Arise, shine, for your light has come and the glory of God has risen upon you.

Congregation: For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, but God will arise upon you and his glory will be seen upon you.

ALL: And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.: Mighty God, creator of the world, break through all that keeps us from you. We ask for your mercy and reform us in your image. This Advent, visit us with your justice, love, and peace. Amen.

THE DEDICATION OF THE CARDS

Rev. John: Since the beginning of the Christian Church, expressions of greetings were exchanged. The early church would use a light kiss on the cheek and an embrace. Later in the 1st and 2nd centuries, Paul's letters that are now canonized into the Bible, were read aloud during worship. Paul would often use a greeting and ending for closure. Over the years, letters and cards were sent to friends and loved ones as a way of exchanging feelings and thoughts. Today, we come to sign our names to the cards for our shut-ins. The cards have been beautifully prepared by the loving hands of the Organ Society for our prayers to our friends.

P: We come with our hands before you Holy God, asking that in the name of Jesus you bless them, and us. May these messages go forth as a

symbol of our spiritual wishes and seek your Holy Spirit to strengthen our friends and families.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

After each Joy or Concern, Please respond

Pastor: God, **Congregation: Hear our Prayer**

LIGHTING OF THE PEACE CANDLE

Global Mission Partner Prayer this week: **Egypt**

MORNING PRAYER FOLLOWED BY SILENT PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

OFFERTORY

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

PRESENTATION WITH THE ADVENT DOXOLOGY

**All praise eternal Christ to thee,
Whose Advent sets thy people free;
Once more upon thy people shine,
and fill the world with love divine. Amen**

DEDICATION PRAYER

HANGING OF THE GREENS

STAR WREATH

Matthew 2: 1-2; 9-10

Deb Olson

L: When Jesus was born in the time of King Herod, a brilliant star appeared in the east. It led magi to Bethlehem to see the infant king and offer him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

P: The star wreath reminds us of Jesus' birth.

HYMN

The First Nowell (vs. 2,3)

No. 141

HEART WREATH

1 John 4:7-12

Susan Attwood

L: Love comes from God, and God's love became flesh in Jesus. Since God loves us, we ought to love one another. When we do, God lives in us.

P: The heart wreath reminds us that in Jesus, God's love could be heard, seen and touched.

HYMN

Love Came Down at Christmas (v. 1,3)

No. 159

CROSS WREATH

Philippians 2:5-11

Deb Myers

L: Jesus taught us to share our lives with others. In sharing his life, he was put to death on the cross and was raised to new life with God.

P: The cross wreath reminds us of Jesus' compassion, courage and resurrection.

HYMN

What Wondrous Love Is This (vs. 1&2)

No. 183

CIRCLE WREATH

1 John 5:13

Linda Wallace

L: The circle wreath reminds us that God's love never ends. We celebrate the eternal love of God that is with us in every place and every moment of our lives.

P: O God, thank you for this season of Advent, and these symbols of Christian faith. Help us to live out our faith in every season, with compassion and great joy.

*HYMN

Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates

No. 127

THE DEDICATION OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE, ORNAMENTS AND LIGHTS

Rev. John: As we decorate our sanctuary on December 6th, we dedicate the Christmas tree, ornaments and lights to the One who lived among us, Jesus. Some say Boniface started the tradition and others say reformer Martin Luther is the source of this tradition. It seems Germany is the source of this tradition. The first trees were often decorated with candies and cookies. Later glass blowers made ornaments. In Colonial America the Christmas Tree did not have a place. Only when the German settlers arrived did the Christmas Tree tradition begin to develop during the 1800's. We dedicate the tree, ornaments and lights to remember that Jesus is the one coming to bring us light and beauty and Jesus is God's special gift of light for everyone.

P: In thanksgiving, and praise we pre-dedicate this tree , lights and ornaments on December 6 as a reminder that God sent the Son into the world as a light, to bring beauty and hope.

THE DEDICATION OF THE ANGEL

Rev. John: The angel does not need an introduction. The angel is a messenger of news. The angel in our Christmas narrative brings good news. The cornhusk angels were made by the Winnebago Native American Tribe in Nebraska. We dedicate the angels to the bearer of good tidings to the world.

P: We dedicate these angels in remembering the messenger of good news and light that shines into the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it. The angels remind us of a loving God who lights our lives with Christ's message. We recognize the land where this church is gathered as the traditional territory of the Wabanaki Confederacy. We acknowledge the living histories and cultures of the Wabanaki peoples, and all Native American cultures, who have stewarded this land for generations.

THE DEDICATION OF THE POINSETTIA PLANT

Rev. John: The bright poinsettia has become the most popular Christmas flower. Many churches are decorated with it during the Christmas season. The poinsettia is a tropical plant. Contrary to general belief, the red leaves are not the blossoms. Rather, the small yellow flowers in the center of the clusters are the blossoms. Dr. Joel R. Poinsett first discovered the poinsettia in Mexico in 1828. The legend states that when blood fell on the earth from the broken heart of a young girl, a poinsettia grew from each drop. The star-shaped formation of red leaves is a reminder to us of the star that shone over Bethlehem's stable.

DEDICATION OF THE NATIVITY

Rev. John: During the Middle Ages, most people could not read and there were very few books. Church ceremonies were in Latin and worshipers did not understand all that was going on. St Francis popularized the reenactment of the birth of the Christ Child in a simple manger scene at the little town of Greccio, Italy in 1224, although the custom may have

originated as early as the 8th century. A few years before his death, Francis had seen shepherds sleeping in the fields near Greccio and this gave him the inspiration for depicting a life-size nativity so that everyone could understand the Christmas story. Tradition tells us that this took place in a cave on the hill above Greccio. Real persons playing the part of Mary, Joseph and the shepherds were accompanied by live oxen and donkeys. After the play, the actors strolled down the street singing and thus caroling was born. News spread rapidly through town and countryside, and crowds of worshipers gathered for the reenactments. This was repeated year after year and soon spread to other countries.

P: We give you thanks dear God, that Jesus came as one of us, born of working parents, and living among the poor and needy of the world. We thank you for this day and dedicate ourselves to living and telling the story of Christ to those around us so together we will know your great acts and that your love is for all people. We are thankful for the beauty of the nativity that will adorn our sanctuary as a special connection from the Whitfield Family and shared among us. Each week we will witness the movement of the Magi as they travel closer to the Manger to see Jesus.

HYMN

O Little Town of Bethlehem (v.1)

No. 151

P: As we extinguish the candles, we covenant to return each Sunday morning to see lights burning again. We will witness the Advent Wreath grow in light and meaning for us. We will gather to rejoice in God's presence with us.

BENEDICTION

BENEDICTORY RESPONSE

**Go now in peace. Never be afraid.
God will go with you each hour of every day.
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true.
Know God will guide you in all you do.
Go now in love, and show you believe.
Reach out to others so all the world can see.
God will be there watching from above.
Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.**

POSTLUDE

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee



**All who are able may stand.*

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Those Serving You Today

Ushers: Mary McKinney and

Online Streaming: Angie Eddy

Please join us for fellowship, coffee or tea, and refreshments in Fellowship Hall following worship.

Please take note of the colored paper prayer slips in the pew rack. These are for you to write a word or phrase of prayer or concerns. Fold it and place it in the offering plate. It will only be shared with Rev. John.

Happy November Birthday to Harry Green, Rev. John Hogue, Mary McKinney, Deborah Olson, Karl Olson, Margot Stiassni, and Jan Whitfield.

Help Yourself Shelf November Wish List

Cereal * Coffee * tea * Canned stew and soup * Baked Beans * Pasta * Ramen
Canned meats * Condiments * Pancake mix * Toothbrushes * Pet Food & litter

Announcements

Stewardship Campaign

If you have not yet dropped off your pledge card for 2026, please drop it at the office or send it to the church (PO Box 350, Wiscasset, ME 04578).

Toys for Tots

A Toys for Tots box will be in Fellowship Hall through Wednesday, December 10th. New unwrapped toys and/or warm winter clothes are greatly appreciated.

Organ Society Cookie Sale

Platefuls of delicious holiday cookies will be available after church on Sunday, December 14th. Each plate will contain several varieties of cookies for only \$5.

Poinsettia Ordering Time!

We look forward to decorating our sanctuary this December with poinsettias of red, pink, and white. The order form will be in the bulletin this week and next (as well as in the CHIMES). Please fill one out and drop it by the office (outside the door in the plastic mail holder if the office is closed) by Tuesday, December 9. You can also phone in your order to the office (207-882-7544) or mail it in (P.O. Box 350, Wiscasset, ME 04578).

Feed Our Scholars Needs Our Help

FOS will be holding a Bake Sale at Ames on Saturday, December 13th, from 7:30am to 1pm. If anyone has the time and energy, baked goods would be deeply appreciated for this important fundraiser; they can be dropped off at St. Philip's on Friday or brought to Ames during the Bake Sale.

Sign-Up Online to Support our Worship and Coffee Hour Experience

Would you like to usher, read scripture, or provide flowers? Coffee Hour help is always needed. You can sign up online using the links in the Chimes or by calling the church office at 207-882-7544.

Cards Welcome

Carol Peck is in rehab at Horizons, Room 105, 29 Maurice Drive, Brunswick ME 04011.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Unison

1. O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive
 2. O come, thou Day - spring, come and cheer our spir - its by thine
 3. O come, thou Wis - dom from on high, and or - der all things,
 4. O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind all peo - ples in one

Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here, un -
 ad - vent here; dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of night, and
 far and nigh; to us the path of knowl - edge show, and
 heart and mind; bid en - vy, strife and quar - rels cease; fill

Refrain (Harmony)


til the Son of God ap - pear.
 death's dark shad - ows put to flight.
 cause us in her ways to go. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em -
 the whole world with heav - en's peace.

man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!



WORDS: Latin: c. 9th century; sts. 1,2, tr. John M. Neale, 1851; sts. 3,4, tr. Henry S. Coffin, 1916 VENI EMMANUEL
 MUSIC: French melody, 15th century, arr., harm. Thomas Helmore, 1854 LM w. refrain

Anglican Oxford Movement Neale translated this hymn which originated in the seven Great 'O' antiphons that were traditional for vespers during Advent. The refrain was added in the 13th century.



Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates 127



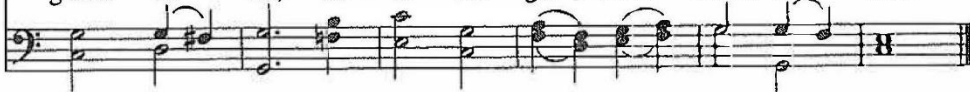
1. Lift up your heads, O might - y gates; be - hold the
 2. Fling wide the por - tals of your heart; make it a
 3. Re - deem - er, come! I o - pen wide my heart to
 4. So come, my Sov - ereign; en - ter in! Let new and

King of Glo - ry waits! The Prince of Peace is
 tem - ple, set a - part from earth - ly use for
 you; here, Lord, a - bide! Let me your in - ner
 no - bler life be - gin; your Ho - ly Spir - it

draw - ing near; the Sav - ior of the world is here.
 heaven's em - ploy, a - dorned with prayer and love and joy.
 pres - ence feel; your grace and love in me re - veal.
 guide us on, un - til the glo - rious crown be won.



WORDS: Georg Weissel, 1642; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1855, alt.
 MUSIC: Thomas Williams' *Psalmody Evangelica*, 1789

TRURO
LM

Georg Weissel, pastor of Altgrossgart Church in
 Königsberg, Prussia, based this hymn on Psalm 24.

ADVENT

THE FIRST NOWELL

verses 2 & 3

2 They looked up and saw a star shining in the east beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light, and so it continued both day and night.
Refrain: Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, born is the King of Israel.
3 And by the light of that same star three wise men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent, and to follow the star wherever it went.
Refrain: Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, born is the King of Israel.

LOVE CAME DOWN AT CHRISTMAS

verses 1 & 3

1 Love came down at Christmas, Love all lovely, Love divine;
Love was born at Christmas; star and angels gave the sign.
3 Love shall be our token; love be yours and love be mine;
love to God and others, love for plea and gift and sign.

WHAT WONDROUS LOVE IS THIS

verses 1 & 2

1 What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this, that caused the Lord of bliss
to bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul,
to bear the dreadful curse for my soul.
2 To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing;
to God and to the Lamb, I will sing.
To God and to the Lamb who is the great "I AM,"
while millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing,
while millions join the theme, I will sing.

LIFT UP YOUR HEADS, O MIGHTY GATES
(See full hymn above)

IT CAME UPON THE MIDNIGHT CLEAR

verse 1

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to men, from heaven's all-gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.

ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH

verse 1

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain:

Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.

O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL

verse 1

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come, and behold Him, born the King of angels!

Refrain:

O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

verse 1

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

Sunday, November 30	No Choir Practice Sunday Worship 10:00am First Sunday in Advent Hanging of the Greens Service Coffee Hour following worship in Fellowship Hall
Monday, December 1	Rev. John's Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm Mah Jongg 6:00 – 8:30pm
Tuesday, December 2	Rev. John's Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm
Wednesday, December 3	Rev. John's Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm Organ Society Business Meeting 9:30am Fire Extinguishers Inspection 10:00am FOS packing in the activity room upstairs 11:00am
Thursday, December 4	Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm
Friday, December 5	Merry and Bright Light Parade starts from Churchill Street at 5pm, Hooper Street to Federal Street to Main Street to Water Street ending at Yacht Club
Saturday, December 6	Sanctuary Decorating 9:30am Nativity Walk in Fellowship Hall 3:00pm-5:30pm Lighting of the Town Christmas Tree 4:00pm
Sunday, December 7	Choir Practice 8:10am Sunday Worship 10:00am Second Sunday of Advent Coffee Hour following worship in Fellowship Hall Nativity Walk in Fellowship Hall during Coffee Hour

First Congregational Church UCC
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Music Director: Joel Pierce
Sexton: Mary McKinney
Office Administrator: Beth Maxwell

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Church Office Phone – 207 882-7544
Church Website – www.uccwiscasset.org

Shining the Light of Christ
FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH
in the Heart of Wiscasset