



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF BETHEL

An Open and Affirming Church

November 27, 2022

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome! We welcome you to our worship this morning and are grateful for your presence. No matter who you are, or who you love, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here. Please introduce yourself to an usher or Reverend Ryan Gackenheimer to learn more about our ministries.

SHARING OF OUR GIFTS

Those attending worship in the sanctuary please leave your offerings in the giving baskets located in the rear of the sanctuary. If you would like to give electronically, visit our website where you can find a donation link.

SUNDAY SCHOOL Children K-8th are welcomed to leave following the Children's message.

COMING UP:

Letters to Santa on December 10th from 12:00PM-2:00PM

Christmas Eve Service on December 24th at 4:00PM

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please send request to the Prayer Request Email:

PRAYER@firstchurchbethel.org

We thank our worship leaders for their participation in this morning's service:

Senior Pastor: Reverend Ryan Gackenheimer

Deacon of the Day: Marcia Merritt

Advent Candle: Cindy Ferguson

Organist: Dana Mancuso

Video & Tech Support: Jim Welsh, Wade Anderson, Eric Hermansen, Jackie Pflieger, Pam Smith, Mary O'Hare

Church Contact Information:

Senior Pastor: Ryan Gackenheimer (Pastor@FirstChurchBethel.org)

Telephone: (203) 743-1877. Address: 46 Main Street, Bethel, CT 06801.

Director of Music: Dana Mancuso (dmancuso.live@gmail.com)

Secretary: Kathy MacAulay (secretary@firstchurchbethel.org)

Pastor Emeritus: The Rev. Dr. Sheldon Smith

Senior Deacon: Marcia Merritt (pesinger37@aol.com)

Head Trustee: Jim Welsh (jim.welsh.jr@gmail.com)

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SUNDAY ORDER OF WORSHIP FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Please stand either in body or spirit*

Lighting of the Advent Candle- Week- HOPE

(Psalm 122:1 NRSV)

All: "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'"

One: We are glad. Whether we drove in or climbed up, whether we logged on or tuned in. We are glad to be here in this community, with this family. It is a place of joyful hope, of radical welcome. It is a place where, together, we can wait in wondrous anticipation of the kingdom to come.

All: "Many peoples shall come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that God may teach us God's ways and that we may walk in Gods paths'" (Isaiah 2:3 NRSV).

One: We light this candle as a sign of our hope, our joyous hope that we can be restored – our faith restored, our strength restored, our confidence restored, our joy restored as we watch and wait with all God's people for the promise to be fulfilled.

Light the first candle on the Advent wreath.

PRELUDE

My Hope Is In You

CALL TO WORSHIP

(Inspired by Psalm 122, Isaiah 2:15)

One: I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Giver of hope!"

All: We come today with eager expectation. Our feet are standing within God's gates.

One: Come, let us go up to the mountain that the Giver may teach us the way of peace.

All: We come today with holy expectation. Our hands are lifted with grateful praise.

One: We gather at the edge of the throne of justice.

All: Come, let us walk in the light of the LORD!

INVOCATION AND LORD'S PRAYER

God of the faith that the bleak past has taught us, God of the hope that the present has brought us, we call on you in this hour of worship. We know that you need no invocation for you are already and always with us—Emmanuel, even before the child was born. We open our hearts to receive your gifts, for you are the Giver of hope, the Giver of peace, the Giver of joy, the Giver love. Make your presence known as we make ourselves available to you.

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.

***OPENING HYMN #125**

Come, O Long-expected Jesus

vs. 1 & 2

PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON

One: We gather together in this season of Advent anticipating hope, praying for peace, attempting to cultivate joy and share love amidst commotion, grief, despair and uncertainty.

Moment of silence

All: In a world full of hopelessness, we have sometimes forgotten that you are our hope, dear God. Consumed by the chaos of the world, we lean into helplessness instead of your loving embrace. We cling to the stony roads and the bitter rods felt in days when unborn hope had died; we've forgotten that you promised us hope for a future. So, stimulate our memory, dear God. Remind us of that hope for which you assured us. Be with us as we cling to it in the midnight hours of waiting.

One: Let us know that God gives us unmerited hope for a future, peace like a river, joy everlasting, and love. No misstep can separate us from the gifts of God. Amen.

A TIME FOR YOUNG AT HEART

***HYMN OF PRAISE #86**

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

vs. 1 & 3

SCRIPTURE:

Psalm 122

Isaiah 2:1-5

SERMON:

A Vision of Hope

SHARING OUR GIFTS

Invitation to Give

As recipients of the generosity of God, let us share our generosity with each other and the community.

Musical Offering

Living Hope

Unison Prayer of Dedication

One: For the wondrous ways this offering will bless this community

All: We dedicate these gifts.

One: For the ways it will help us live out God's mission

All: We dedicate these gifts.

One: Let these gifts strengthen our call to do justice, love mercifully, and walk humbly.

***PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

***CLOSING HYMN #703**

When All Is Ended

vs. 1, 2 & 6

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE #614 (All welcome to sing) #631 *Lift Every Voice and Sing*

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Liturgy: used with permission from Worship Ways, United Church of Christ

Prelude

My Hope Is In You

Songwriters: April Gessbreght, Ed Cash

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Opening Hymn

#125 Come, O Long-expected Jesus vs. 1 & 2

Words: Charles Wesley, 1744

Music: Rowland H. Prichard, 1830; harm. *The English Hymnal*, 1906

Hymn of Praise

#86 Great Is Thy Faithfulness vs. 1 & 3

Words: Thomas O. Chisholm, 1923

Music: William M. Runya, 1923

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Musical Offering

Living Hope

Songwriters: Brian Johnson, Phil Wickham

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CCLI Song #7106807

Closing Hymn

#703 When All Is Ended vs. 1, 2 & 6

Words: Brian Wren, 1988

Music: Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906

Words © 1989 Hope Publishing Co.

Postlude (all welcome to sing)

#631 Lift Every Voice and Sing

Words: James Weldon Johnson, 1921

Music: J. Rosamond Johnson, 1921

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Prelude

My Hope Is In You

Opening Hymn

#125 *Come, O Long-expected Jesus* vs. 1 & 2

1. Come, O long expected Jesus born to set your people free. From our fears and sins release us; Christ, in whom our rest shall be. You, our strength and consolation, come salvation to impart; dear desire of many nation, joy of many a longing heart.
2. Born your people to deliver, born a child, and yet a king, born to reign in us forever, born your gracious realm to bring. By your own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone; by your all-sufficient merit raise us to your glorious throne.

Hymn of Praise

#86 *Great Is Thy Faithfulness* vs. 1 & 3

1. Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father, there is no shadow of turning with thee; thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not; as thou hast been thou forever wilt be. Great is thy faithfulness!
3. Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth, thy own dear presence to cheer and to guide; strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside. Great is thy faithfulness!

Musical Offering

Living Hope

Closing Hymn

#703 *When All Is Ended* vs. 1, 2 & 6

1. When all is ended, time and troubles past, shall all be mended, sin and death outcast? In hope we sing, and hope to sing at last; Alleluia! Alleluia!
2. As in the night, when lightning flickers free, and gives a glimpse of distant hill and tree, each flash of good discloses what will be: Alleluia! Alleluia!
6. With all creation, pain and anger past, evil exhausted, love supreme at last, alive in God, we'll sing an unsurpassed Alleluia! Alleluia!

Postlude (all welcome to sing)

#631 *Lift Every Voice and Sing*

1. Lift every voice and sing, till earth and heaven ring, ring with the harmonies of liberty; let our rejoicing rise high as the listening skies, let it resound loud as the rolling sea. Sing a song full of faith that the dark past has taught us; sing a song

full of the hope that the present has brought us; facing the rising sun of our new day begun, let us march on till victory is won.

2. Stony the road we trod, bitter the chastening rod, felt in the days when hope unborn had died; yet with a steady beat, have not our weary feet come to the place for which our people sighed? We have come over a way that with tears has been watered; we have come, treading our path thru the blood of the slaughtered, out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.
3. God of our weary years, God of our silent tears, thou who hast by thy might lad us into the light, keep up forever in the past, we pray. Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met thee; lest our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget thee; shadowed beneath thy hand, may we forever stand, true to our God, true to our native land.