



THE BAR HARBOR CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ

29 Mount Desert Street

Bar Harbor, Maine 04609

December 3, 2023

10:00 am

First Sunday of Advent

PRELUDE

*'Allegro' from Sonata in F Major, Op. 1 No. 11
by George Frederick Handel*

SILENT REFLECTION *(by Chaim Stern)*

Days pass and the years vanish and we walk sightless among miracles.
God fill our eyes with seeing and our minds with knowing;
let there be moments when Your Presence, like lightning,
illuminates the darkness in which we walk.

Help us to see, wherever we gaze, that the bush burns unconsumed.

And we, clay touched by God, will reach out holiness and exclaim in wonder:

“How filled with awe is this place and we did not know it!”

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our annual **Living Nativity** will take place on Friday, December 15, from 6-7:20 PM.

This is a lot of fun, a meaningful tradition, and a gift to our community. Please consider joining as a participant, a dresser, kitchen helper, or providing soup and/or dessert. We are also adding a choir section this year. There is a sign up poster in the parlor.

Our **Community Christmas Supper** will be Sunday, December 17th from 5 to 7pm. Lots of volunteer support needed. The sign up sheet is in the church parlor. See Kathy Woodside or Cas Dowden if you have questions.

Seacoast Mission Giving Tree Each year, the Maine Seacoast Mission distributes Christmas gifts to more than 1500 children, families and elderly in need throughout Hancock and Washington counties. Our church family generously takes part through our Giving Tree, which is located in the Narthex. The tree is decorated with tags, each with a Christmas wish. Take as many tags as you like and bring your unwrapped gifts back to the tree no later than Thursday, December 14th.

Online giving is also possible and easier than ever! See the Mission's Amazon Wish List at https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1PQH9PMVUXOCA/ref=hz_ls_biz_ex. Thank you for spreading the love and joy of Christmas and for supporting the Maine Seacoast Mission Christmas Program. Contact Geneva Langley with any questions.

Cristy Benson, Liturgist; Kathy Woodside, Drew Zimmerman, Welcome Table; Chloe Bolt, Steve Grubb, Sarah Laskey, worship technicians.

The altar flowers are given today by Dotie Robins, in memory of loved ones.

Thank you to Cristy, Kay & Debbie for the Thanksgiving Baskets

BHCC This Week

Sunday, December 3rd	9:15am BHCC Choir 10am Worship Service at BHCC & on Zoom 11:15am Deck the (church) Halls AND pageant rehearsal
Monday, December 4th	6pm BHCC Choir+ <i>ALL voices / all ages / all instruments welcome</i>
Wednesday, December 6th	6:30pm BHCC Evening prayer (in-person and via BHCC Facebook live)
Thursday, December 7th	7:30am Men's breakfast at Everyday Joe's 10am BHCC Saunter
Friday, December 8th	8am MDI Backpack helpers 11am BHCC Bible Study (in-person and on Zoom)
Saturday, December 9th	9am Advent retreat- all ages welcome
Sunday, December 10th	9:15am BHCC Choir 10am Worship Service at BHCC & on Zoom 11:15am BHCC Connections & pageant rehearsal 1pm Harborside Trio Christmas Concert @ BHCC
Coming up:	Living Nativity December 15th @ 6pm BHCC Community Supper December 17th @ 5pm Longest Night / Blue Christmas Service December 20th @ 6:30pm Community Caroling on Village Green December 21 @ 5pm

ANNUNCIATION

Isaiah 64:1-9

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence - as when fire kindles brushwood and fire causes water to boil-- to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait.

WELCOME & LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

INTROIT *O Come, O Come Emmanuel (red PH#110), verse 1*

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain:

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

*** CALL TO WORSHIP** *(by Christine Sine)*

Leader: Christ, our light: we await your coming.

ALL: We wait filled with hope, knowing your light will shine in the darkness.

Leader: We wait, anticipating your peace, for one day it will fill our world.

ALL: We wait, embracing your love; may we reach out to share it with our neighbors.

Leader: We wait with joy, bubbling up in expectation of your birth.

ALL: Christ, our light: we wait; come soon and fill us with your life.

HYMN *Joyous Light of Heavenly Glory (blue S & S p.102)*

Joyous light of heav'nly glory, loving glow of God's own face,
You who sing creation's story, Shine on ev'ry land and race.
Now as *morning dawns* around us, we shall raise our songs to you.
God of daybreak, God of shadows, come and light our hearts anew.

In the stars that grace the darkness, in the blazing sun of dawn,
in the light of peace and wisdom, we can hear your quiet song.
Love that fills the night with wonder, love that warms the weary soul,
love that bursts all chains asunder, set us free and make us whole.

You who made the heaven's splendor, ev'ry dancing star of night,
Make us shine with gentle justice, let us each reflect your light.
Mighty God of all creation, gentle Christ who lights our way,
Loving Spirit of salvation, lead us on to endless day.

***OPENING PRAYER** *(by Nancy C. Townley)*

Almighty God, as we begin this season of Advent, remind us again that in the midst of our discouragement and distractions you bring us hope, calming our anxious spirits and re-centering our hectic lives. Make us ready to receive the gift of Christ. Slow our pace, and give us the blessing of feeling your hope in our hearts. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

GLORIA PATRI *(red PH #513)*

(You are invited to use the words that are most meaningful to you)

Glory to the Almighty,
to Jesus Christ,
and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning
Is now and ever shall be
World without end.
Amen, amen.

ADVENT CANDLE-LIGHTING: *Hope (from Sanctified Art)*

Heidi: Today we light the candle of hope as a reminder, and as a summons.

ALL: With God's help, may we bring hope into a weary world. Amen.

CHILDREN'S TIME

SPECIAL MUSIC

Stand By Me
BHCC Choir

PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY

All who wish may offer a prayer. As each prayer concludes, please join together in saying, "we walk with you in prayer."

Joys and Concerns

Text prayer requests in the chat box.

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer *(using "debts")*

(You are invited to use the words that are most meaningful 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.

Sung Response

Come Down, O Love Divine (red PH#239, verse 1)

Come down, O Love divine,
seek thou this soul of mine,
and visit it with thine own ardor glowing;
O Comforter, draw near,
within my heart appear,
and kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

A reading from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 1, verses 3-9

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind -- just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you -- so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by whom you were called into the fellowship of the Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

A reading from the Gospel of Mark, chapter 13, verses 24-37

“But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

“Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels and gather the elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert, for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake, for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening or at midnight or at cockcrow or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

MEDITATION

Seeds of Hope
Rev. Rob Benson

THE OFFERING

Offertory

Wren (traditional folk song)

Ellen Goldsberry, violin

Susanna Ausema & Debby Hammond, flute

Suzanne Burns, guitar

***Doxology** *You are invited to use the words that are most meaningful to you*

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.

***Unison Prayer of Dedication** *(by Thom Shuman)*

God-who-gifts-us, you bless us, not so we might have more, but that we might care for those who have so little; not that we might splurge, but that we might share. In the waiting of Advent, may we see the wanting, and use our resources to fill lives with hope, grace, and joy. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Prayer of Confession *(from Sanctified Art)*

Gracious God, lover of souls, restorer of weary hearts and broken lives: for bodies that ache, we pray: forgive us for pushing too hard. Remind us that we deserve Sabbath rest. For minds that feel overwhelmed, we pray: forgive us for our distractions. Remind us that in the quiet, we can hear you. For hearts that long to feel the joy of this season, we pray: forgive us for being impatient. Remind us that healing takes time. For our struggle to find hope, forgive us. Remind us of Zechariah and Elizabeth, whose longing was satisfied, and whose grief turned to joy. Remind us that your good news – and your great love – know no bounds.

Words of Assurance *(from Sanctified Art)*

Beloved: no matter how often we wear ourselves thin,

no matter how often we lose ourselves to distraction,

no matter how often we lose our patience,

God keeps showing up.

We are loved beyond comprehension.

Thanks be to God.

HYMN

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus (red PH#103)

Come, thou long expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.

Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a King,
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thine own eternal spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all sufficient merit,
raise us to thy glorious throne.

SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

Sursum Corda

Leader: May God be with you all.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to God.

People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Eucharistic Prayer *from the Iona Community*

God of new life, send your Holy Spirit upon us and on these gifts of bread and cup, that they may become for us heaven's food and drink: healing, forgiving, making us whole; and that we may become your body, loving and caring in the world until your kingdom comes.

Leader: These are the gifts of God for the people of God.

People: All are welcome to this feast of grace.

SHARING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

HYMN *Isaiah the Prophet (blue S&S p.90)*

Isaiah the prophet has written of old
how God's new creation shall come.
Instead of the thorn tree the fir tree shall grow;
the wolf shall lie down with the lamb, the lamb;
the wolf shall lie down with the lamb.

The mountains and hills shall break forth into song,
the people be led forth in peace;
the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God
as the waters cover the sea, the sea;
as the waters cover the sea.

Yet nations still prey on the meek of the world,
and conflict turns parent from child.
Your people despoil all the sweetness of earth;
the brier and the thorn tree grow wild, grow wild;
the brier and the thorn tree grow wild.

God, bring to fruition your will for earth,
that no one shall hurt or destroy,
that wisdom and justice shall reign in the land
and your people shall go forth in joy, in joy;
and your people shall go forth in joy.

BLESSING AND BENEDICTION *(from Sanctified Art)*

Beloved, as we leave this place, we go into a weary world—
so speak tenderly. Do the good that is ours to do.
Choose connection. Hold onto hope. We are God's beloved.
So we go with joy. The world needs it.

Leader: We go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

SUNG RESPONSE *Lift Up Your Heads (red PH#114, verse 1)*

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates;
behold, the King of glory waits;
the King of kings is drawing near;
the Savior of the world is here!

CARRYING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST INTO THE WORLD

POSTLUDE

*Allegro from Op. 3 No. 2 'A Baroque Christmas' by William Croft,
arranged by Jonathan DeLoach*

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