The First Congregational Church in Thetford, Vermont

Built in 1787, this is the oldest meetinghouse in continuous service in the state of Vermont. A member of the United Church of Christ

A Sanctuary for Spiritual Nurture

December 24, 2021
Candlelight Service 5:00pm
Rev. Robin Junker-Boyce, Pastor
Maureen Burford, Church Musician & Choir Director

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
ONLINE ONLY
December 24, 2021

A Service of Silence, Song and Spoken Word

PH stands for Pilgrim Hymnal (red); NCH stands for New Century Hymnal (black)
Pre-service carols on organ

Prelude  Christ Child’s Lullaby  traditional Irish
Liz Thames with David Lloyd

Greeting

Introit  In the Bleak Midwinter  The Tecca Family

Lighting of the Christ Candle
Susan Kowalski will read a prayer she wrote for the candle lighting. Let us join our hearts together as we light the 5th candle of Advent, the candle of Christ.

Responsive Reading  Isaiah 9
Leader: The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.

People: They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

Leader: For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder.

People: And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Leader: Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom,

People: To order it and establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.

All: The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.  Alleluia!

Carol  PH #132 O Come, All Ye Faithful vs. 1, 2 & 4
Music is included in bulletin, we invite you sing along at home

Lessons & Carols

First Lesson  Luke 1: 26-35, 38
Reader  Vanessa Reigler
Carol  On Christmas Night, the People Sing  Marion Zens, Nacio Levey, Fritz Junker
Second Lesson  Luke 2:1, 3-7
Reader:  Uly Junker
Carol: PH #140  What Child Is This vs. 1-3  All sing

Third Lesson  Luke 2:8-14
Reader: Meg Darrow Williams
Carol: PH #116  Angels We Have Heard on High
Verses 1 & 2: Abigail Darrow Williams, Lola Alsup, Stella Thames
Verse 3: All sing

Fourth Lesson  Luke 2:15-20
Reader: Hallie Zens
Carol: A Christmas Carol by Charles Ives  Choir members

Fifth Lesson  Matthew 2:1-2, 7-12, John 1:1-5
Reader: Charlie Buttrey
Carol: PH #130  Joy to the World  All Sing

Christmas Meditation  Rev. Robin Junker-Boyce

Offertory  O Holy Night  Nicky Corrao, soloist with vocal ensemble
100% of the Christmas Eve offering goes to the Floyd Dexter Fund, helping those in need in our community.

Prayer of Dedication
Lighting of the Congregation’s Candles
You are invited to turn off or dim the lights out in your homes.
Once all candles are lit, we will sing Silent Night. During the last verse we will raise our candles high to shine the light to the world.
Carol: PH #138  Silent Night, Holy Night
Music is included in bulletin, we invite you sing along at home

Benediction
Postlude  PH #138  Silent Night, Holy Night  David Lloyd, guitar

Following the postlude, we ask you to quietly exit the building. You are invited to process out onto the Thetford Green for a socially distant carol sing (since we did not get to sing as many hymns indoors this year). You are invited on for as long as you like to take in the light. May Christ’s peace be with you this Christmas.
What Child Is This, Who, Laid to Rest

In unison

1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, On Mary's lap is sleeping?
2 Why lies he in such mean estate Where ox and ass are feeding?
3 So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh, Come peasant, king, to own him;

Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, While shepherds watch are keeping?
Good Christian, fear: for sinners here The silent Word is pleading,
The King of kings salvation brings, Let loving hearts en-throne him.

This, this is Christ the King, Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:

Haste, haste to bring him laud, The babe, the son of Mary.

Angels We Have Heard on High

1 Angels we have heard on high, Singing o'er the plains,
2 Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
3 Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing,

And the mountains in reply Echo back their joyous strains,
Say what may the tidings be, Which inspire your heavenly song,
Come adore on bend-ed knees, Christ, the Lord, the New-born King.

REFRAIN

Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.
In-Person Worship Protocol

We will continue to monitor the situation and will adjust accordingly, considering both the science and the social dynamics. You are not required to be vaccinated. The Town of Thetford has implemented an indoor mask mandate with an exception for "Any person officiating or participating in a religious service or activity in which the temporary removal of a face covering is necessary to participate in or complete the religious service."

We believe that our present worship practices are consistent with the policy/exception. In addition:

- Please maintain social distancing within the building.
- Family groups/couples may sit next to each other in a pew. Child care is available downstairs during services, and we also welcome the whole family in the sanctuary.
- Hand sanitizer and masks will be available at both entrances.