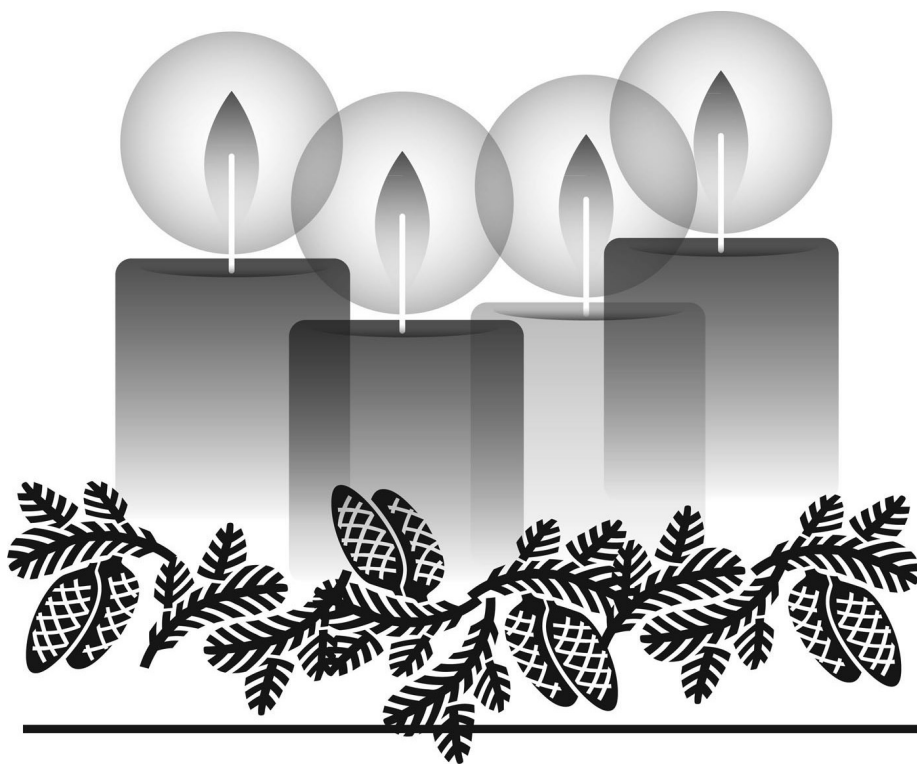


# Fourth Sunday of Advent



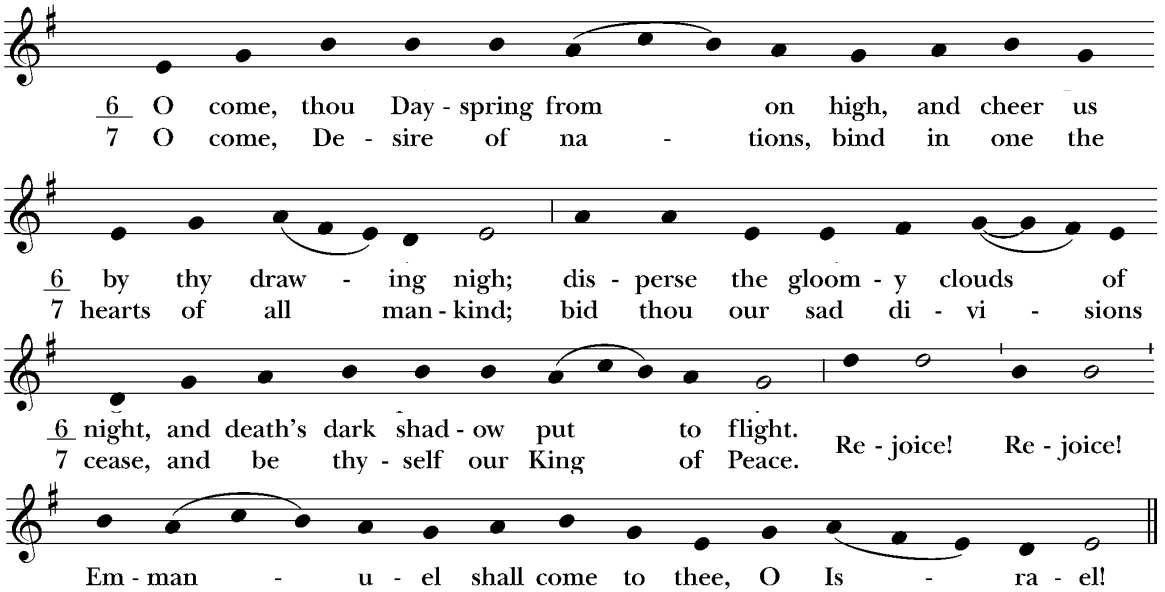
**December 24, 2023**

**11:00 a.m.**

*Before the service, speak to the Lord;  
During the service, let the Lord speak to you;  
After the service, speak to one another.*

Prelude

Hymn 56 "O come, O come, Emmanuel"



6 O come, thou Day - spring from on high, and cheer us  
7 O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind in one the  
6 by thy draw - ing nigh; dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of  
7 hearts of all man - kind; bid thou our sad di - vi - sions  
6 night, and death's dark shad - ow put to flight. Re - joice! Re - joice!  
7 cease, and be thy - self our King of Peace.  
Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

Words: Latin, ca. 9th cent.; Music: adapt. Thomas Helmore. Public domain.

Lighting of the Advent Candle - Choir & Congregation

Hope for God's Presence (*Responsive Litany*)

*Leader* During Advent we see God's love for us embodied in our Savior's birth.

*People* **Christ is our light and the source of everlasting love.**

*Leader* Advent calls us to love others with patience and kindness.

*People* **Christ is our light and the source of everlasting love.**

*Leader* Advent calls us to be slow to anger and quick to forgive.

*People* **Christ is our light and the source of everlasting love.**

*Leader* Advent reminds us that Christ commanded us to love as he loved.

*People* **Christ is our light and the source of everlasting love.**

## Candle Lighting

This morning we light four candles: the candles of hope, peace, joy, and today’s candle—love. This candle reminds us that God so loved the world that he sent his only son, so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have life everlasting. Today we celebrate God’s gift of love and remember that we have been commanded to love others as God loves us.

### Love’s Pure Light Congregational part

*“Gesù Bambino”*  
Music: Pietro Yon

Words and Arranged by  
JOEL RANEY

O come, O come, Em - man - u -  
el, and end this gloom of night. Bring  
hope to the world, bring peace to the  
earth, and fill us with love's pure light.

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## Closing Prayer

Gracious God, as we continue our Advent journey, we are reminded that “Love came down at Christmas—love amazing, love divine.” You loved the world enough to send your Son, and now it’s up to us to love others as you loved us. Remind us that Christ is our light, and the true source of infinite, everlasting, pure love. Amen.

*The complete text begins on page 355 of The Book of Common Prayer.*

*Priest* Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

*People* **And blessed be God's kingdom, now and forever. Amen.**

*Here is said*

*Priest* Lord, have mercy.

*People* **Christ, have mercy.**

*Priest* Lord, have mercy.

### **The Collect of the Day**

*Priest* The Lord be with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*Priest* Let us pray.

*Priest* Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

### **The Lessons**

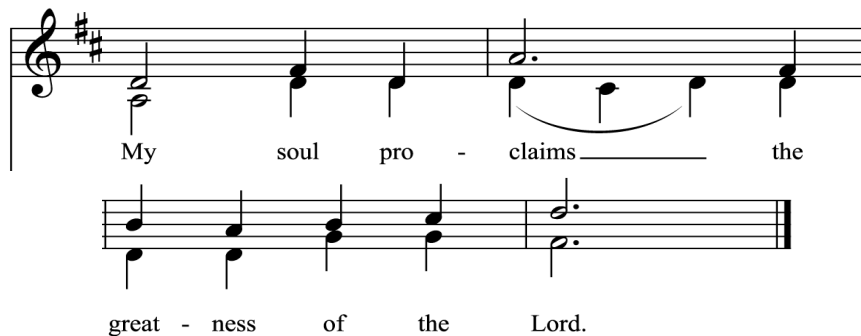
Romans 16:25-27

Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith-- to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! **Amen.**

*Lector* The Word of the Lord.

*People* **Thanks be to God.**

Gradual Psalm 126



From *A HymnTune Psalter, Revised Common Lectionary Edition* © 2007 by Carl P. Daw, Jr. and Kevin R. Hackett. Church Publishing Incorporated. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; \*  
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.  
From this day all generations will call me blessed: \*  
the Almighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his Name.

**Refrain**

He has mercy on those who fear him \*  
in every generation.  
He has shown the strength of his arm, \*  
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

**Refrain**

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, \*  
and has lifted up the lowly.  
He has filled the hungry with good things, \*  
and the rich he has sent away empty.

**Refrain**

He has come to the help of his servant Israel, \*  
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,  
The promise he made to our fathers, \*  
to Abraham and his children for ever.

**Refrain**

*Priest* The holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

*People* **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

*Priest* The Gospel of the Lord.

*People* **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

**The Pageant** "Twas the Night Before Christmas Pageant"

**Congregational Hymns During Pageant:**

**"Away in a manger"**

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,  
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.  
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,  
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

*Traditional carol. Public domain.*

**"Angels we have heard on high"**

Angels we have heard on high, singing sweetly through the night,  
and the mountains in reply echoing their brave delight.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.

*Words: French carol, tr. James Chadwick; music: French carol, arr. Edward S. Barnes.  
This selection is in the public domain.*

## “Silent night”

Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright  
Round yon virgin mother and child, Holy infant so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace. Sleep in heavenly peace.

*Words: Joseph Mohr, tr. John F. Young; Music: Franz X. Gruber, harm. Carl H. Reinecke. This selection is in the public domain.*

## “Joy to the world! the Lord is come”

Joy to the world! the Lord is come: let earth receive her King;  
let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

*Words: James Watts; Music: George F. Handel, adapt. And arr. Lowell Mason. This selection is in the public domain.*

## The Prayers of the People

*The Deacon or other person appointed says*

**Almighty God, giver of every good gift: Look graciously on your Church, and so guide the minds of those who shall choose a rector for this parish, that we may receive a faithful pastor, who will care for your people and equip us for our ministries; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;  
**That we all may be one.**

Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;  
**That your Name may be glorified by all people.**

We pray for our Presiding Bishop Michael, Assisting Bishop Skip, and all bishops, priests, and deacons;  
**That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.**

We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world;  
**That there may be justice and peace on the earth.**

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;  
**That our works may find favor in your sight.**

Have compassion on Audrey, Lotte, Patti, Debbie, Carol, Betty, Lee, Ginny, Bruce, Maggie, Matthew, Bob, Daryl, Jim, Mike, Andrew, Joyce, Carol, Phil, Jim, Jane, and Bishop Curry . Are there others? And all those who suffer from any grief or trouble;  
**That they may be delivered from their distress.**

Give to the departed eternal rest;  
**Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy;  
**May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.**  
Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

*Silence*

*The People may add their own petitions.*

*The Celebrant adds a concluding Collect.*

### **The Peace**

*Priest* The peace of the Lord be always with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*The People may then greet one another with a sign of peace.*

### **Offertory**

**Doxology** (*Old Hundredth, Hymn 380 v. 3*)    *Words: Thomas Ken. Public domain.*

\*3 Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye



heaven - ly host: praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

**The Great Thanksgiving**  
*Eucharistic Prayer A*

*The complete text begins on p. 361, BCP*

*Priest* The Lord be with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*Priest* Lift up your hearts.

*People* **We lift them to the Lord.**

*Priest* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

*Priest* It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of power and  
 might, Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord,  
 God of power and might, hea - ven and earth are  
 full, full of your glo - ry. Ho - ly

san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na  
in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes  
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na  
in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

*Then the Priest continues*

Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

*At the following words concerning the bread, the Priest is to hold it or lay a hand upon it; and at the words concerning the cup, to hold or place a hand upon the cup and any other vessel containing wine to be consecrated.*

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, we proclaim the mystery of faith:

*Celebrant and People*

**Christ has died.  
Christ is risen.  
Christ will come again.**

*The Priest continues*

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

*The Priest continues through the Invocation, then says*

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **Amen.**

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

*Priest and People*

**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 trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

## The Breaking of the Bread

*The Bread is broken and silence is kept. Then may be said*

*Priest* Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

*People* **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

*Invitation to Communion*

*A spiritual communion is a personal devotional that anyone can pray at any time to express their desire to receive Holy Communion at that moment, but in which circumstances impede them from actually receiving Holy Communion.*

*Optional Prayer for those who cannot receive*

Beloved Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. I love you above all things, and I desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive you in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, come spiritually into my heart. I embrace you and unite myself entirely to you. Let me never be separated from you in this life or in the life to come. Amen.

## Hymns During Communion

Hymn "In the bleak mid-winter"



1. In the bleak mid - win - ter, Frost - y wind made moan,  
2. Heav - en can - not hold Him, Nor the earth sus - tain;  
3. What can I give Him, Poor as I am?



Earth stood hard as i - ron, Wa - ter like a stone.  
Heav'n and earth shall flee a - way When He comes to reign.  
If I were a shep - herd, I would bring a lamb;



Snow had fall - en, snow on snow, Snow on snow,  
God Him - self be - came a man - Born to pay sin's price;  
If I were a wise man, I would do my part.

In the bleak mid - win - ter, Long, long a - go.  
 He's the great Re - deem - er, Je - sus Christ.  
 What can I give Him? Give Him all my heart.

WORDS: Christina Rossetti, 1830-1894

MUSIC: Gustav T. Holst, 1874-1934

CRANHAM

Irregular

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## Hymn "Prepare the royal highway"

Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772–1847; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*

Music: BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN, Swedish folk tune, 17th cent.

Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress

- 1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!
- 2 God's peo - ple, see him com - ing: your own e - ter - nal king!
- 3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised king!
- 4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heav'n a - bove.

Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley a lev - el road ap - pear!  
 Palm branch - es strew be - fore him! Spread gar - ments! Shout and sing!  
 Your king, yet ev - 'ry na - tion its trib - ute too may bring.  
 His rule is peace and free - dom and jus - tice, truth, and love.

Then greet the King of glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:  
 God's prom - ise will not fail you! No more shall doubt as - sail you!  
 All lands will bow be - fore him; their voic - es join your sing - ing:  
 So let your praise be sound - ing for kind - ness so a - bound - ing:

*Refrain*

Ho - san - na to the Lord, for he ful - fills God's word!

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*.After Communion, all say*

**Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*The Priest bestows the blessing*

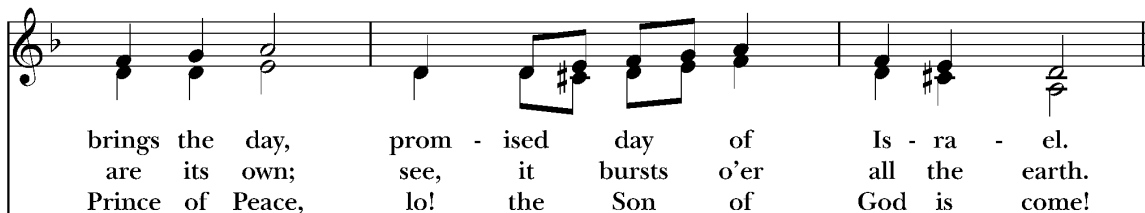
## Closing 640 "Watchman, tell us of the night"

1 Watch-man, tell us of the night, what its signs of prom - ise  
2 Watch-man, tell us of the night; high - er yet that star a -  
3 Watch-man, tell us of the night, for the morn - ing seems to

are. Trav - eler, o'er yon moun-tain's height, see that glo - ry -  
scends. Trav - eler, bless - ed - ness and light, peace and truth its  
dawn. Trav - eler, dark - ness takes its flight, doubt and ter - ror

beam - ing star. Watch-man, does its beau - teous ray  
course por - tends. Watch-man, will its beams a - lone  
are with - drawn. Watch-man, let thy wan - derings cease;

aught of joy or hope fore - tell? Trav-eler, yes; it  
gild the spot that gave them birth? Trav-eler, a - ges  
hie thee to thy qui - et home. Trav-eler, lo! the



brings the day, prom - ised day of Is - ra - el.  
are its own; see, it bursts o'er all the earth.  
Prince of Peace, lo! the Son of God is come!

*Words: John Bowring; Music: Joseph Parry. Public domain.*

*The Deacon (or if no Deacon, the Priest) dismisses the People.*

Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

*People* **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude

### In Our Prayers

**LARCC:** All who do tasks for the church at First Congregational UCC

**For Healing & Convalescing:** Audrey Himes, Lotte Rosenberg, Patti Rockwell, Debbie Sanborn, Carol Hart, Betty Bartley, Lee Harris, Ginny French, Bruce Connon, Maggie Lamb, Matthew Van Zetten, Bob Hanna, Daryl Hebert, Jim Tanner, Mike Tanner, Andrew, Joyce, Carol Putkamer, Phil, Jim Gilmet, Jane McClain and The Most Rev. Michael Curry.

**Birthdays:** Bruce Michaud (27), Betty Masters, Elijah Harbison, Betty Westrope (29)

**Military:** Ashley Alexander, Tyler Ferrier, Joshua Gapske, Isaac Graham, John Hartman

**Cycles of Prayer:** Diocesan: Presiding Bishop, and the Diocesan Staff of Eastern and Western Michigan; Anglican: the Diocese of Ilesa South West (Nigeria)

### Announcements

#### CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT PARTICIPANTS

Director - Tina Wilson

Assistants - Cheryl Lemke & Bronwyn Woolman

Participants:

Madison & Max Wilson

Josie LeMonds

Dominic & Jayce Losano

Felix Duthler

Ron Lemke

Cailyn Peters

Kaylee & Cody Krupnek

Hunter Ellis

Sophia & P.J. Wilkinson

#### WORSHIP LEADER TRAINING OFFERED

The Diocese is providing training for those interested in becoming worship leaders, the first training occurring via Zoom on Saturday, January 13, from 10 am - 2 pm. Anyone who is interested or wants more information can contact Ellen Eagan.



# Future Worship Schedule

## Sunday, December 24

*(Only 1 morning service today)*

- 11 am - Holy Eucharist/Rev. Tom Downs
- 4:30 pm - Musical Prelude Prior to Festal Eucharist
- 5 pm - Festal Eucharist/Rev. Mark Rutenbar

## Monday, December 25

- 11 am - Holy Eucharist/Rev. Bruce Michaud

## Sunday, December 31

- 9 am - Holy Eucharist/Rev. Tom Downs
- 11 am - Holy Eucharist/Rev. Tom Downs

## Wednesdays, December 20, 27 and January 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

- 12:05 pm - Holy Eucharist/Rev. Bruce Michaud
- 1:00 pm - Bible Study/Rev. Bruce Michaud

### This Week's Calendar

Today	11 AM 4 PM 4:30 PM 5 PM	Holy Eucharist Sunday Supper Musical Prelude Christmas Eve Festal Eucharist
Monday	11 AM All Day	Christmas Day Eucharist Church Office Closed
Tuesday	All Day 1:30 PM 7 PM	Church Office Closed Prayer Group AA
Wednesday	12:05 PM 1:05 PM 5:15 PM 7 PM	Holy Eucharist The Good Book (Bible) Study Choir Practice AA
Friday	5:30 PM	AA

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The Rev. Dr. Daniel Maxwell, Deacon  
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✘

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