

# *First Congregational Church of Georgetown*



## ***Our Church Mission Statement:***

*“To nurture those in our own faith community and  
to act on our faith by reaching out to others.”*

*We are an Open and Affirming Congregation  
of the United Church of Christ.*



**Order of Worship  
January 5, 2025**

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The Reverend Holly S. Brauner, Pastor

Robert Knapp, Director of Music

Emily Knapp, Organist

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**We Gather**

**GATHERING MUSIC**

**WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Rev. Holly

**OPENING MUSIC**

*There's Always Tomorrow*

Band

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

Bob Knapp

ONE: However far we have wandered from God:

**ALL: God comes to find us, and to gather us in generous love.**

ONE: However broken we have become:

**ALL: God comes to heal us, and make us whole in hope.**

ONE: However empty our spirits may be:

**ALL: God comes to feed us, until we are filled to the brim with grace.**

**\*HYMN**

# *Angels, from the Realms of Glory*

James Montgomery

Henry T. Smart

An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er  
Shep - herds, in the field a - bid - ing, watch - ing o'er your  
Sag - es, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, bright - er vi - sions  
Saints be - fore the al - tar bend - ing, watch - ing long in  
all the earth; as you sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry  
flocks by night, God with us is now re - sid - ing;  
beam a - far, seek the great de - sire of na - tions;  
hope and fear, sud - den - ly the Lord, de - scend - ing,  
now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth.  
yon - der shines the in - fant light; Come and wor - ship,  
you have seen Christ's na - tal star;  
here a - mong us shall ap - pear;  
come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born King.

Words - 1816 Music - 1867

## **PASSING OF THE PEACE**

### **We Pause**

## **OPENING PRAYER**

Mirror of Abba: by light and word, you come to us, so we can hear well enough to see your songs all around us. Through grace and truth, you teach us, so we come to know how graciousness is the gift we can offer to others. In promise and hope, you call us, trusting that we will accept the joy delivered to us and count on the fulfillment of your dreams for us and for all creation.

All this we pray, God in Community, Holy in One, as we speak the words Jesus teaches us to say together,

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**Our Father/Mother/Creator, 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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

## **CALL TO RECONCILIATION**

Our words, our actions, our silence may make it seem that we are on that path which only hurts others and harms us. But God has destined us for healing, for hope, for joy. Let us pray to the One who loves us beyond compare. Please join me as we pray, saying,

## **UNISON PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION & NEW LIFE**

**In the winter of our lives, Tender God, our passion for following Jesus wilts in the chill of indifference. We could walk in the light, but tiptoe through the shadows of missed chances. We could look for your glory in others, but gaze instead in the mirror of selfishness, seeing our desires staring back at us. We could gather the broken of the world to our side but hold them at arm's length from us.**

**Forgive us, Redeeming Grace. Jesus was bringing life and hope to all people. With grace and truth, he calls us to follow. Filling us with peace, he gathers us up and brings us home to you, serving as our Brother, our Savior, our Friend.**

## ***SILENCE IS KEPT***

## **ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Grace upon grace; mercy upon mercy; hope upon hope: these are the gifts God pours out on us in this moment, and all the moments of our lives to come. Thanks be to God! We are filled to overflowing with God's tender love and peace. We are forgiven! Amen.

\*HYMN (vs 1,3 & 5)

*It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*

Edmund H. Sears

Richard S. Willis



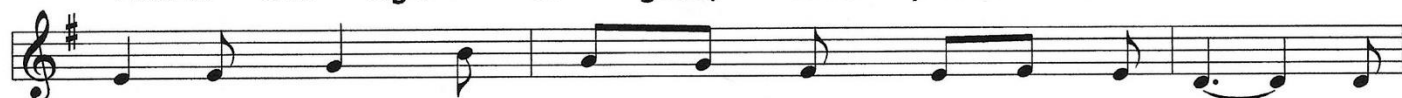
It came up - on the mid - night clear, that glo - rious song of  
Still through the clo - ven skies they come, with peace - ful wings un -  
Yet with the woes of sin and strife the world has suf - fered  
And ye, be - neath life's crush - ing load whose forms are bend - ing  
For lo, the days are hasten - ing on, by proph - et bards fore -



old, from an - gels bend - ing near the earth to  
furled, and still their heav - en - ly mu - sic floats o'er  
long, be - neath the an - gel - strain have rolled two  
low, who toil a - long the climb - ing way, with  
told, when with the ev - er - cir - cling years comes



touch their harps of gold; "Peace on the earth, good  
all the wea - ry world; a - bove its sad and  
thou - sand years of wrong; and we, through bit - ter  
pain - ful steps and slow, look now, for glad and  
round the age of gold, when peace shall o - ver



will to all, from heav - en great news we bring." the  
low - ly plains they bend on hov - er - ing wing, and  
wars, hear not the love - song which they bring; O  
gold - en hours come swift - ly on the wing; O  
all the earth its an - cient splen - dors fling, and



world in sol - emn still - ness lay to hear the an - gels sing.  
ev - er o'er its Ba - bel sounds the bless - ed an - gels sing.  
hush the noise and end the strife to hear the an - gels sing.  
rest be - side the wea - ry road, and hear the an - gels sing!  
the whole world send back the song which now the an - gels sing.

Words 1849 - Music 1850

**SCRIPTURE****John 1: 1-14**

IN THE BEGINNING there was the Word; the Word was in God's presence, and the Word was God. The Word was present to God from the beginning. Through the Word all things came into being, and apart from the Word nothing came into being that has come into being. In the Word was life, and that life was humanity's light—a Light that shines in the darkness, a Light that the darkness has never overtaken. Then came one named John, sent as an envoy from God, who came as a witness to testify about the Light, so that through his testimony everyone might believe. He himself wasn't the Light; he only came to testify about the Light—the true Light that illumines all humankind. The Word was coming into the world— was in the world— and though the world was made through the Word, the world didn't recognize it. Though the Word came to its own realm, the Word's own people didn't accept it. Yet any who did accept the Word, who believed in that Name, were empowered to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor urge of flesh nor human will— but born of God. And the Word became flesh and stayed for a little while among us; we saw the Word's glory—the favor and position a parent gives an only child— filled with grace, filled with truth.

**MESSAGE****Staying Close to Love in 2025**

Rev. Holly

**MOMENT OF MEDITATIVE MUSIC****We Respond****OFFERING****INVITATION TO GENEROSITY**

God continues to increase love in our hearts for our neighbors within our congregation, community, and world. Through our various gifts, we are able to strengthen our connections and grow with our God, Holy Crafter of Gifts.

**OFFERTORY***Welcome, Christmas, Bring Your Cheer*

Band

## DOXOLOGY



Praise God from whom all bless-ings flow; Praise God all creat-ures here be - low;  
Praise God for all that love has done; Cre - a - tor, Christ, and Spir - it, One. A - men.

## \*PRAYER OF DEDICATION & THANKSGIVING

May the gifts we offer bring food to the hungry, healing to the broken, community to the lonely, and hope to those who live in the shadows of our time. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

## THE LORD'S SUPPER

### Invitation

ONE: This is the welcome table of God where all who seek to be at peace with their neighbor and all who seek the mercy of God in Christ are embraced.  
Today we gather around God's table from near and far

**ALL: We are the People of God!**

ONE: Though we differ in so many ways

**ALL: We are brothers, sisters and siblings in Christ!**

ONE: For there is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism

**ALL: We are One in God's Spirit!**

ONE: We are one and together we remember our Lord Jesus

**ALL: For we are the people of Christmas and Easter!**

ONE: He was born for us, as one of us, to show us the way.

## **Blessing the Communion Elements Together**

ONE: Lord, bless this bread and bless this cup, then fill us with your Spirit.  
Prepare us for this Holy meal, with love, and faith, and joy. Amen

**ALL: Saint or sinner, believer, or doubter, rich or poor, male or female, gay or straight, in-crowd or left out, member of this church or not, if God has brought us together into this room today, then God has invited to share in her grace. We are all invited into this holy mystery; all are welcome at this open table, where Jesus Christ is our host. All are welcome to receive the grace of God.**

## **Remembering Jesus**

One: We gather at the cross, reminded of Christ's death and resurrection, the presence of the Holy Spirit, and the love of God. Jesus said – "I am the bread of life. All who come to me shall no hunger, and all who believe in me shall never be thirsty."

**All: We remember Jesus' love for us when we hear his words: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." With this cup and with this bread, we renew our faith and hope in the Living Christ among us, and within us.**

*It is good and right to remember that night, when Jesus broke the bread....*

## **DISTRIBUTION OF THE BREAD & CUP**



COMMUNION HYMN (vs. 1 & 3 when bread is shared / 2 & 3 when cup is shared)

## *Let Us Break Bread Together*

American Spiritual



Let us break bread to - geth - er on our knees;\_  
Let us drink wine to - geth - er on our knees;\_  
Let us praise God to - geth - er on our knees;\_



— Let us break bread to - geth - er on our knees;\_  
— Let us drink wine to - geth - er on our knees;\_  
— Let us praise God to - geth - er on our knees;



— When I fall on my knees, with my



face to the ris - ing sun, O Lord have mer - cy on me.

### PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

**ALL:** God, we thank you for gathering us into this family, this Body of Christ. We Are grateful for this glimpse of kingdom living: all are welcomed, all are fed, all are satisfied. Send us into your beautiful and broken world to create your kingdom in all times and places. Amen.

### SENDING PRAYER

Go now, with the love of Christ in your hearts. And when you find a wanderer, stop and share with them what you have seen and felt about God's love. When you find the broken, for there are many among us, share God's healing hope of Christ. When you find an empty spirit, welcome them into the fullness of the Spirit's peace.

### \*SENDING MUSIC

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:**

*\*\* Today's scripture is from The Inclusive Bible, compiled and edited by Priests for Equality, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2007.*

## **MEETINGS & OTHER HAPPENINGS**

### **Tuesday 1/7**

10AM Bible Study

6:30PM Bell Choir

7:30PM Band

### **Wednesday 1/8**

7PM Missions

### **Thursday 1/9**

6PM Finance Meeting

### **Saturday 1/11**

8 AM Men's Group

### **Sunday 1/12**

9:30AM Bells

10:30 Worship

12PM Diaconate Meeting

### **Monday 1/13**

Annual Reports Due

*Anyone wishing to support the church by lighting the steeple is invited to make a donation.*

**Church Office Hours:** Tuesday - Thursday 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM  
**Rev. Holly's Office Hours:** Tuesdays 10AM to 1PM & Thu 9AM to 12PM  
and by appointment (781) 632-8964  
**Pastor Email:** [pastor@fccgeorgetownma.org](mailto:pastor@fccgeorgetownma.org)  
**Office Phone:** (978) 352-8443  
**Office Email:** [churchoffice@fccgeorgetownma.org](mailto:churchoffice@fccgeorgetownma.org)**Website:**  
[www.fccgeorgetownma.org](http://www.fccgeorgetownma.org)

#### **CHURCH STAFF**

Ministers ..... The Congregation  
Pastor ..... Reverend Holly S. Brauner  
Director of Music..... Robert Knapp  
Organist.....Emily Knapp  
Sexton ..... Kimberlee Knapp  
Office Administrator..... Julie Bernier  
Moderator .....  
Clerk ..... Toni Cassidy  
Finance ..... Kristen Arsenault  
Diaconate ..... Rachel Angerhofer  
Property ..... JoAnne Kelly & Tom Johnson  
Christian Development Marie Birdsall-Chaffee  
Missions ..... Rachel Angerhofer  
Collector ..... Robert Knapp  
Member-at-Large .....

## **WELCOME**

If you are a visitor from “near or far” and would like to learn more about our congregation and its ministries, please speak with an usher and/or greeter. You may also sign the visitors card found in the pews and place it in the offering plate. Please indicate whether you would like a call or visit from the pastor.

## **A COMMUNITY THAT AIMS FOR HOSPITALITY**

We are delighted you have come to join us on this Sunday. First Congregational Church is an Open and Affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ, which means that wherever you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here. We have large print bulletins, hearing assistance devices, wheelchair and elevator accessibility, and all-gender restrooms. Please let us know if you still have difficulties hearing. While we hope to anticipate needs, please share any ideas you have for ways to expand our accessibility for all.

## **CHILDREN IN WORSHIP**

We believe that children help complete our worship experience. We encourage children to be an active part of worship; this is where they learn the most about the Christian family—by experiencing it! Encourage your child to sing along, clap, wiggle, offer prayer requests, and join in communion.

## **LIGHT THE CHURCH FUND**

Contributions for lighting the church steeple can be made in memory of loved ones or in honor of someone special. If you would like to contribute or need more information, please contact Robert Knapp at 978-352-7489.

## **MEMORIAL FUND**

This is a wonderful and meaningful way to pay tribute to family or friends who have gone before us. A gift to the Church's Memorial Fund is always timely and names of those we love live on with all of us as we remember them over the years. Gifts can be mailed or placed in the offering, be sure to note who is being honored with this gift.

## **FLOWER CONTRIBUTIONS**

If you would like to contribute flowers or make a monetary donation for the Communion Table for an anniversary, birthday, or special occasion please contact Nancy Aberman at 978-457-5924.