



**Pilgrim Congregational Church, UCC
Sunday Worship Service
December 24, 2023**



PILGRIM
Congregational Church



**Welcome to Pilgrim Congregational Church,
United Church of Christ
A Welcoming, Open and Affirming Congregation**

Statement of Welcome

We honor the Biblical call to love one another as God first loved us. We welcome into the full life and ministry of the church all people of any race, nationality, religious background, educational background, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, economic status, and physical, mental, and emotional abilities.

Mission Statement

*A welcoming home to all spiritual seekers
Making a difference in our world,
By fusing our Christian faith with
everyday life and Serving God by serving others.*

Children at Pilgrim

Children are an important part of our worshipping community. We try to make them feel at home!

All are welcome. Professional childcare for infants and toddlers is available in the nursery from 10:15 to the end of the service.

Please note: The video of this service is posted online. If you prefer not to be filmed, please sit near the rear of the sanctuary.

Visual and Hearing Aids

Hearing devices may be picked up from the table in the narthex.

Large Print bulletins and Sermons texts are available.

Sunday Worship Service, December 24 2023

PRELUDE

Dona Nobis Pacem
arr Yo Yo Ma

GREETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Reebee Girash

PASSING THE PEACE

ONE: Peace be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

ONE: Let us share the peace of Christ with one another.

CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: When Jesus is born to Mary and Joseph,

ALL: God is there.

ONE: When Jesus is presented at the temple,

ALL: God is there.

ONE: When Simeon holds Jesus in his arms,

ALL: God is there.

ONE: When Anna recognizes Jesus in the temple,

ALL: God is there.

ONE: This very morning,

ALL: God is here.

ONE: In the future we cannot see,

ALL: God is there.

ALL: Let us worship God!

UNISON PRAYER

Shine in our hearts, Lord Jesus.

Shine in our lives.

Shine in the Word now read,

Shine in the hymns now sung

**and we, children of your light, shining for all people,
will follow. Amen.**

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES

ONE: Holy One, we give you thanks

for your presence among us

in Jesus, your Child,

born into a poor family.

Christ has entered our lives,

and embraced our hope and our struggle;

showing forth the power of your love

in healing, teaching and challenging
the powers of the world that lead to death.
With confidence in your faithfulness,
we welcome your beloved Child in our midst.

ALL: God be with us in the Light of Christ.

MUSIC

Angels We Have Heard on High
recorded by John and Zac Girash

SCRIPTURE READING

Gospel Reading: Luke 2:1-20

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock

by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

MUSIC

Love Came Down at Christmas by John Rutter
Recorded by the Pilgrim Church Choir

THE POETRY OF CHRISTMAS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Reebee Girash

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father (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 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.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**God of Vision,
Take these offerings of money
and turn them into vision;
vision of all people fed,
vision of all people safe,
vision of all people housed,
vision of all people educated. Amen**

SCRIPTURE READING

Rev. Reebee Girash

John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word,
And the word was with God,
And the word was God.

The Word was in the beginning with God.
All things came into being through the Word,
And without the Word,
Not one thing came into being.
In him is life,
The light of all people.

The light shines in the darkness,
And the darkness cannot overcome it.

The light shines in the darkness,
And the darkness did not overcome it.
The light shines in the darkness,
And the darkness will not overcome it.
The Word became flesh and lived among us,
And we have seen this glory,
Glory as of God's own Child, Full of grace and truth.

*BENEDICTION

Rev. Reebee Girash

POSTLUDE

Joy To the World
SNEUCC Choir

**Please be in a posture of praise.*

SOURCE NOTES

Today's music is provided by the Pilgrim Church Choir and by the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ. The Advent Candle Lighting is by Susan Blain.

The Call to Worship and Prayer of Dedication are by Rev. Dr. Robert George included in UCC Worship Ways. The Unison Prayer is by Rev. Dr. Avedis Boynerian. Cover image: Swanson, John August. Shepherds, from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=58575> 2021].

Original source: www.JohnAugustSwanson.com - copyright 1985 by John August Swanson.

