



Advent Week 3: Joy

Sunday Worship December 14, 2025

We are a progressive community of faith seeking to follow the teachings of Jesus, pursue justice and live God's love.

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.



A Note for Families / Folks of All Ages: Today we begin worship together. After the Time For All God's Children, young people grades K-8 are invited to follow teachers upstairs to our one-room classroom.

There are clipboards with paper and coloring pages at the back of the sanctuary, for worshippers of any age to use during the service.

PRELUDE *Comfort, Comfort Ye My People* Louis Bourgeois
Arr. Melissa Blanton

WELCOME TO WORSHIP Rev. Alison Buttrick Patton and Rev. Steve Savage

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING** The Joy Candle Sarah Lupien & Joyce Brown

SUNG RESPONSE *When God is a Child*, verse 3 Three candles are lit
Congregation joins second time through:

**Joy is a song that welcomes the dawn,
telling the world that the Savior is born.
When God is a child there's joy in our song.
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,
And none shall be afraid.**

CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: Jeremiah said, "I am only a boy."

One: Moses said, "Who am I to do this work?"

One: Mary said, "How can this be?"

ALL: We often say, "But God, I am afraid."

One: Even when we are afraid, God invites us closer.

ALL: So may we trust the Inviter.

May we heed God's invitation.

May we summon our courage and sing God's praise.

Let us worship our courageous, inviting, calling God. Amen!

***OPENING HYMN** *O Come, Take Heart* Insert

*Please rise, on your feet or in your hearts.

PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS**

One: Courageous God,
you invite us to live into our call.
You invite us to act, to serve, and to trust.
Instead of responding with a resounding “yes,”
we often hide our face.
We dig our heels in.
We look for someone else to volunteer.

ALL: Spark courage in us.

Remind us that every person is capable of making a difference.

Remind us that even when we’re scared, we are not alone.

You invite us forward.

With baby steps we hope, we pray, amen.

PRAYERFUL PAUSE

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

***SUNG RESPONSE** *Angels We Have Heard on High* (Chorus, twice through)

Gloria ... In excelsis Deo;

Gloria ... In excelsis Deo!

TIME FOR ALL GOD’S CHILDREN

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION**

Peggy Murray

One: Holy One, the story of this season is not a new one.

We’ve heard this tale before. We’ve seen the nativities, watched the plays,
sung the songs, witnessed the children act it out.

The story of this season is not a new one, and yet we long to hear it as if it is.

ALL: So spark our spirits awake.

Call forth awareness, attention, and reverence in us.

Allow us to hear this ancient tale with brand new ears.

With hope we pray, amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 1:26-39

SERMON *When we find ourselves neck deep in it anyway...* Rev. Stephen Savage

MOMENT OF CONTEMPLATIVE SILENCE

ANTHEM *Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming* Michael Praetorius

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father-Mother in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kin-dom 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 kin-dom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

SUNG RESPONSE *Hear Our Prayer, O God*

**Hear our prayer, O God. Hear our prayer, O God.
Incline your ear to us and grant us your peace.**

OFFERING INVITATION

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

PRAYER OF BLESSING

CLOSING HYMN *My Soul Gives Glory to My God* INSERT

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Intermezzo Op. 118 No.2* Johannes Brahms

* * * * *

WORSHIP NOTES

Thank you to this morning's ushers: Team A, Terry Dallaire, captain.

The flowers on the altar are in joyful celebration of our children: Kari, Alyssa, and Brian and wife Lauren, and in celebration of this Christmas season from Jennifer and Joe Meko.

Livestream: Thank you to Alex Ratta for managing our worship livestream!

****Our Advent Liturgy** was written by/adapted from Rev. Sarah Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.

Cover design by Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman | Photography by Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.

WEEKLY @ FCC UCC

Meetinghouse Choir rehearses on Wednesdays, 6:15 – 8 pm. All singers are welcome. We meet in the Choir Room on the lower level of the church. Questions? Contact choir director Deirdre McClure at dmclure@fccucc.org.

Handbells rehearse on Wednesdays, 4:45 pm in Wright Pavilion. If you are interested in ringing in the choir or would like more information, please contact bell choir director Sharon Potter: handbells@fccucc.org.

Families and their children's wish lists are on the wall with the "CCM Christmas Program". Any help you might provide would be welcomed, as these children won't have Christmas gifts without it. **Christmas is coming and gifts need to be back to the church by 5:00 on December 16.** Your participation is very much appreciated by parents and children alike, Thank you very much!

NEW TO FCC UCC?

Newcomers Reception, TODAY, Sunday, December 14, 11:30 am, Davidson Lounge: Thinking about joining or just curious to learn more about FCC UCC? Join Rev. Alison Patton and Rev. Steve Savage for conversation and an informal information session. Bring your questions; connect with others who are also newer.

MISSION AND SOCIAL WITNESS

Holiday Mitten Tree: December 14 - Epiphany, January 4

Decorate the sanctuary tree with your donations of adult and children's hats, mittens and scarves. Covering the branches with every color and size ensures the warmth of our neighbors in the community.

Annual Christmas Split Plate Offering The loose plate offering (not pledge giving) on Sunday morning Dec 21 will be divided between our Church and ILAP, the Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project. ILAP is Maine's only state-wide immigration

legal services organization. ILAP helps low-income immigrants improve their legal status and works for more just and humane laws and policies affecting immigrants.

The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund

The Christmas Fund is a program of the Pensions Board of the United Church of Christ. The Christmas Fund provides emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas “Thank You” gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees. There will be Christmas Fund offering envelopes in the pews at the evening service December 24.

Donation options:

1. Place checks or cash in envelopes mailed to the church or placed in the offering box at the rear of the Sanctuary. Include your name if you wish the offering to be listed in your report.
2. Securely online at www.FCCUCC.org. Just click the “donate now” button on the home page. Please use the other option, enter the amount, and write Christmas Fund in the box provided. Add your name to have your offering be included in your report.

Volunteer for Preble Street Food Hub: On the last Friday of each month, we prepare meals at the Food Hub, 75 Darling Avenue, South Portland, for delivery to Preble Street satellite sites. Please join us! To learn more about how to volunteer, see the Weekly Word or contact Danna Wiggins at dannawig2@gmail.com

On Friday, December 26, the day after Christmas, 5 volunteers are needed to fill the FCCUCC shift from 11:30 am - 2:30 pm.

THE WIDER COMMUNITY

Climate Changed Podcast, Behind the Scenes, Episode 10: Listen to BTS Center Executive Director Allen speak on “Small Experiments with Radical Intent.” Our *Toss the Tanks* community forum was one of those experiments!

<https://thebtscenter.org/climate-changed/podcast-behind-the-scenes-episode-ten/>

Weekly Multi-Faith Vigil outside the Cumberland County Detention Center, at the corner of Congress and County Way, every Wednesday from 2:45 – 3:15 pm
Community faith leaders host these vigils, which may include songs, silence, prayer or other spiritual practices to honor the sacred worth of all people, and to hold up everyone involved - those detained, officers, and our entire community.

Annual Homeless Persons' Memorial Vigil, at 20 Portland Street and proceed to Monument Square, Friday, December 19, 4:30 pm: A candlelit procession to remember the unhoused friends we have lost this past year.

www.preblestreet.org/vigil/

Is FCC UCC on Your Gift List? As you make your holiday to-do lists this year, please consider a few items to support FCC UCC:



☑ **Fulfill your 2025 pledge:** Now's the time to wrap up 2025 giving. If you don't know whether you have fulfilled this year's pledge, reach out to Melissa Yosua-Davis at business@fccucc.org. She is glad to lend a hand!

☑ **Consider an end-of-year gift:** Do you have a little extra this year? Are you feeling grateful for this community and the difference we make? Say, "Thank you" with a year-end gift to FCC UCC.

☑ **Make a 2026 pledge:** If you have already responded to our 2026 campaign, *thank you!* If not, it's not too late! Pick up a pledge card in the narthex (back of the sanctuary) or email your commitment to business@fccucc.org. Your pledges help us to plan!

Thank you for all the ways that you support FCC UCC. Your generosity helps us to respond to the world around us, tending to bodies and spirits. Together, we are making love and justice take flight!

* * * * *

WHAT'S UP?

Want to stay in the loop? Make sure you are on our email list! To UPDATE or ADD your contact info, go to: fccucc.org and select "Contact Us" then select "Contact Info Update Form."

Your positive reviews on social media help others to find us.

Write a review on Google (Thanks!). Like and follow us:

Facebook: facebook.com/fccucc

Instagram: instagram.com/fccucc_s.portland

YouTube channel: youtube.com/@FCCUCCSouthPortland



ADVENT - CHRISTMAS - EPIPHANY

Advent Bible Study, Tuesdays, 12:30 - 1:30 pm in Davidson

Lounge: Explore the scripture from the past Sunday, along with art and reflections from our Advent Devotional, *What Do You Fear?* Led by Rev. Steve Savage.



Fellowship Club Christmas Cookie Sale, TODAY, Sunday,

December 14, during Social Hour. Plates of homemade cookies will be for sale in the Narthex and downstairs in Guptill Hall. \$10 for one plate or \$18 for two plates. Stock up on cookies for the holidays!

Make Luminaries and Snowflakes During Social Hour, December 14: Since you will already be there enjoying coffee hour and perusing the cookie sale, take a moment and create a paper bag luminary to take home, or a snowflakes to hang in our windows.

WORSHIP EVENTS

Longest Night Worship - Tuesday, December 16, 7 pm, A gentle, candlelit service for those seeking company, comfort or encouragement. Special music by the handbell choir.

Tuesday, December 24: Christmas Eve

5 pm: All-Ages Christmas Pageant - We will gather and tell the story together

8 pm: Candle-lit Christmas Eve Worship with lessons and carols

Sunday, December 28: Worship led by members of Spiritual Life and Worship. Sing and pray together and reflect on the turning of the year.

Sunday, January 4: Epiphany: A creative, All-Ages Worship with a fresh take on the story of the Magi.

Church Offices will be closed December 25, 2024 - January 1, 2025.