



Rangeley Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Rangeley, Maine

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An Open and Affirming Church
First Sunday of Advent

December 3, 2023

10:00 AM

Meditation:

“O that you would tear open the heavens and come down”

– Isaiah 64:1

ORDER OF WORSHIP

OUR GATHERING AND PRAISE

RINGING OF THE BELL

PRELUDE *“Of the Father’s Love Begotten”*

12th Century Plainsong/Arr. Penny Rodriguez

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Liturgist

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader & People

Leader: Tear open the heavens and bring forth your
presence. We watch and we wait for the glory to
come.

**People: We gather with hope, remembering your mercy.
Lead us in love; shine from above.**

Leader: Awaken the earth, enflame and enflesh. We watch
And we wait for what's birthing ahead.

**People: We gather with hope, remembering your justice.
Revive us, restore us; shine from above.**

Leader: Help us be hands and feet of love to broaden your
reach. We watch and we wait for your deeds to
appear.

**People: We gather with hope, remembering your
handiwork. Make us, mold us; shine from above.**

INVOCATION

CELEBRATION OF ADVENT

Reader:

The word "Advent" comes from an ancient Latin phrase meaning "until the coming." It is a period of spiritual preparation in which many Christians make themselves ready for the coming of the Christ-child. In this time for reflection, we take each Sunday leading up to the celebration of the birth of Jesus to reflect on some themes that center us as we wait with eager expectation for the glory of God to be revealed. This Sunday, many across the globe center on "Hope.

Unison:

**When the world is frightening
And we desire to escape from the ongoing suffering,**

The Womb of Creation invites us to remember a hope within.

It is the hope within us that leads us to transform the conditions around us.

We cling to hope in a world full of despair.

We search for it;

We dare to discover hope in the small, yet magnificent moments of our days.

Let us light this candle of hope as we remember the God-with-us and the hope within us.

(candle lit)

Sung Response

Come, surely, Lord Jesus, as dawn follows night,

Our hearts long to greet you, as roses, the light.

Salvation, draw near us, our vision engage.

One candle is lit for the hope of the age.

*GATHERING HYMN #109 (PH)

"Watchman, Tell Us of the Night"

CALL TO CONFESSION

People: Great God of Presence and Promised Coming,

We confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart.

We have failed to fulfill your desire for us to love one another.

We have not followed the paths you have given us, Choosing instead to follow our own.

We have broken relationships.

We chase consumer desires.

**We have rebelled against your love.
We have not heard the cry of the needy.
The mouth of the poor is still hungry for mercy.
The cause of the oppressed is still thirsty for
justice.
Free us for joyful obedience, through the Advent of
Christ,
Our Lord, Our Messiah, Our Hope. Amen.**

Time for silent contemplation

WORDS OF HOPE AND ASSURANCE

THE WORD OF GOD

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 64:1-9

Mark 13:24-37

Liturgist

Leader

SERMON Hopes

*HYMN OF RESPONSE (insert) *“Christ, Be Our Light”*

SERVICE OF PRAYER

PRAYER FOR ALL GOD’S PEOPLE

(As you name a joy or concern later in the prayer, please finish by saying “This is my prayer.” The church family responds by saying “This is our prayer.”)

We pray for: Victor Borko, Forrest Stephens, Kit Caspar, Kris Nozal, Anne Crump, Jeff & Carol Ellinwood, Bobby & Leeanna

Wilbur, Tim & Sarah Johnson, Erin Smith's parents Carol & Dan Perkins, Patrick Egan, Pastor Scott Hatfield and Dave Walker's brother, Peter Walker who passed away peacefully on Wednesday, Nov. 22nd.

PASTORAL PRAYER

OUR LORD'S PRAYER

**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 (debts, sins, trespasses) as we forgive those who (sin,
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 forever and ever. AMEN.**

CHORAL AMEN #812 (NCH)

"Threefold Amen"

OFFERTORY

OFFERTORY MUSIC *"Early Winter"*

Penny Rodriguez

DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God all creatures here below;
Praise God above ye heavenly host;
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION

COMMUNION PRAYER

Holy God,

We give thanks for your creation,
fragile, yet fruitful, enough for all.

We give thanks that you call us into community
where love and justice may flourish, enough for all.

We give thanks that you invite us on this Advent
journey. Awake, curious, longing to meet you, we set
out for your table of grace.

You light our path one step at a time,
beckoning us onto a Way that offers us
new eyes to explore the vision of the Promised One;
new senses to feel the heartbeat of the Vulnerable One
new courage to share the urgency of the Ruler of
Peace.

One more step, one more stretch, one more challenge
takes us deeper into the mystery of your abundant
life:
a world healed, renewed; all nature, all people at
peace.

Along the Way we join our voices with those of all
created beings in Heaven, and on Earth singing:

**Holy, holy, God almighty
You are wholly, Love and light
Hea'vn and earth are flowing with your glory,
Holy God of power and might.
Sing Hosanna, in the highest
Sing hosanna, we proclaim!
Crying blessed be the faithful, who are coming in
your name.**

We give you thanks for sending us Jesus, Emmanuel,
God- with-Us, whose life, death and resurrection
have become for us the Way
to find you,
to know you,
to join with you in creating
your new heaven and new earth.

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE CONSECRATION

SHARING THE BREAD AND THE CUP

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

**God, we give you thanks that you have come to us...
in the child of Bethlehem, in this bread and cup, and
in your answer to all our hopes and with your offer
of peace.**

May God himself, the God of peace, make each of you perfect and holy; and keep you all safe and blameless, in spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN #112 (NCH)

"Keep Awake, Be Always Ready"

*THE BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE AND EXTINGUISHING OF THE CANDLES

"Deck the Hall"

Traditional Welsh Carol/Arr. Melody Bober

~Special thanks to all who contributed their time, talents and gifts for today's service:

- Pastor Scott Hatfield, **Leading Worship Service**
- Bob Silva, **Liturgist**
- Linda Caspar, **Deacon of the Week**
- Claire Chase, **Zoomigo**
- Tim & Sarah Johnson, **Coffee Hour & bread for Communion**
- Joann Bean, **Lighting of Advent Candle**

~This Week:

- Piano Lessons with Erin, Dec 4, 5, 7 & 8, Sanctuary

~Next Week:

- Tony MacNaughton, provides Worship, Dec 10th.
- Piano Lessons with Erin, Dec 11, 12, 14, & 15, Sanctuary

Pastoral Care Services	Rev. Tony MacNaughton	207-864-3355
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<u>Deacon of wk</u>	Linda Caspar	207-670-5073

For 43 years, the Rangeley Friends of the Arts has been sponsoring the annual “Walk to Bethlehem” celebration, this year to be held on Sunday, December 10th. This unique event, which recreates Mary and Joseph’s journey to Bethlehem, complete with community members costumed as nativity figures, will begin at 5:30 p.m. at the Rangeley Inn, then proceed to the Church of the Good Shepherd at 6:00 p.m.

Pageant participants and Carolers/Walkers will walk through the streets of Rangeley, singing and stopping at the churches to ask if there is “any room at the Inn?” When the participants reach the Church of the Good Shepherd, they will join others in anticipation of the evening’s program: a traditional family-oriented Christmas presentation of carols, classical music, and dance.