



Rangeley Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
Rangeley, Maine

**Rangeley Congregational Church**  
**United Church of Christ**  
*An Open and Affirming Church*  
**Third Sunday of Advent**

December 17, 2023

10:00 AM

*Meditation:*

*“The world is a dangerous place to live. Not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don’t do anything about it.” –*

**-Albert Einstein**

**ORDER OF WORSHIP**

**OUR GATHERING AND PRAISE**

RINGING OF THE BELL

PRELUDE *“Emmanuel, God With Us”*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Liturgist**

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Gathered to worship the Lord our God, let us  
rejoice!

**People: Even all who now are grieving, may you find a**

**time of joy, for the Lord stands with us all.**

**Leader:** Our God has done great things for us, so come!

**People:** Let us celebrate with joy and songs of glad  
thanksgiving!

## INVOCATION

Holy God of Joy, We look, open-eyed, for the real you.  
Help us recognize you as we delight in this gathering,  
Joined to worship you. Contentment comes and  
goes. Happiness can flash like lightning, and then be gone.  
We know our feelings are transient, depending on our  
health, our inner satisfaction, our circumstances. But remind  
us today that our JOY can be rooted in our identity as your  
beloved daughters and sons. AMEN.

## CELEBRATION OF ADVENT

Reader:

Isaiah 61:10 says: "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my  
whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me  
with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the  
robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a  
garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels."

Each Sunday leading up to the celebration of the birth of  
Jesus, we reflect on a theme that centers us as we wait with  
eager expectation for the glory of God to be revealed. This  
Sunday, we center on "Joy."

**Unison:**

**Today is the Gaudete Sunday—the 3rd Sunday of Advent. It is a joyous celebration that is set up to provide relief or a break from the more reflective rituals, as well as focus away from all of the hardships in our midst. The rose colored candle reminds us to be encouraged, to lean into a softer sentiment. Let us light the candle of joy.**

SUNG RESPONSE

One Candle Is Lit

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.

Come quickly, shalom, teach us how to prepare  
for a gift that compels us with justice to care.  
Our spirits are restless till sin and war cease.  
One candle is lit for the reign of God's peace.

Come, festively sing while awaiting the birth,  
join angels in dancing from heaven to earth.  
Wave banners of good news, lift high thankful praise.  
One candle is lit for the joy of these days.

\*GATHERING HYMN #110 (PH)

*“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”*

CALL OF CONFESSION

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

PRAYER TO CONFESSION (Unison)

**Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

WORDS OF HOPE AND ASSURANCE

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11

Luke 1: 46b-55

John 1: 6-8, 10-28

SERMON Some Thoughts on **ADVENT**, and Who **WE** Are

\*HYMN OF RESPONSE #8 (PH)

*“Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee”*

## 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, The Gacki family on the passing of Rich Gacki, 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. 22<sup>nd</sup>.*

### 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"*

## SERVICE OF GIVING

### INVITATION

## OFFERTORY

OFFERTORY MUSIC *"Twas in the Moon of Wintertime"*  
Huron Carol/Arr. Susan T. Nelson

## 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.

\*CLOSING HYMN #122 (PH)

*"God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen"*

## \*THE BENEDICTION

## POSTLUDE AND EXTINGUISHING OF THE CANDLES

*"Christmas Rejoicing!"*

Traditional Carols/Arr. Douglas Wagner

Thank you to the Rangeley Ringers Ecumenical Bell Choir  
for today's special music:

### **Rangeley Ringers**

Jennifer Atwood

Carol Batchelder

Marie Beauregard

Sarah Johnson

Adrienne Marden

Mary Richards

Erin Smith

Susan Tourtillotte  
 Ana Wetherill  
 Benjamin Wetherill  
 Brittany Wetherill

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

- Stan Wheeler, **Leading Worship Service**
- Linda Caspar, **Liturgist**
- Claire Chase, **Deacon of the Week**
- Lucy Simonds, **Zoomigo**
- Tim & Sarah Johnson, **Coffee Hour**

**~This Week:**

- Piano Lessons with Erin, Dec 18, 19, 21, 22 Sanctuary
- Deacons’ Meeting, Dec 18, 3:00pm, Zoom & East Rm

**~Next Week:**

- Pastor Scott Hatfield provides Christmas Eve Service, Dec 24<sup>th</sup>, 5:00pm
- Deacons’ Meeting, Dec 18, 3pm, Zoom & East Room

Pastoral Care Services	Rev. Tony MacNaughton	207-864-3355
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<u>Minister of Music:</u>	Sue Downes-Borko	207-864-3951
<u>Council President:</u>	Cyndy Egan	207-864-2255
<u>Co-Chair of</u>	Claire Chase	207-712-0490
<u>Deacons:</u>	Lucy Simonds	207-462-2101
<u>Deacon of wk</u>	Claire Chase	207-712-0490