



Rangeley Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Rangeley, Maine

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

Mediation:

(I pray) not because God is good and I am good so I get what I ask for, but because God was, is and will be, meaning that God is already present in the future I am fearing..."

Nadia Bolz-Weber

December 14, 2025

10:00 AM

ORDER OF WORSHIP

OUR GATHERING AND PRAISE

RINGING OF THE BELL

PRELUDE

"Mary Did You Know"

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Liturgist

Lighting of the Advent Candles

Reader One: Children of God, what are we waiting for?

People: We wait for joy that cannot be stolen, joy that wells up, even in wilderness places. We wait for laughter to ring out in mourning, for songs of gladness to rise in broken streets. We wait ... for joy that is more than happiness, to rejoice in God's unshakable love.

Reader Two: Today we light three candles. Hope still shines, peace still glows, and now joy joins the chorus of light. Their glow reminds us that Christ is coming, filling our hearts with a delight no darkness can quench.

People: O Giver of life, you turn mourning into dancing. You surprise us with beauty in unlikely places. Joy is your gift and an invitation to rejoice always, to pray without ceasing, to give thanks in all things. May we carry this joy like a lantern, shining steadily through the waiting.

Reader One: We call this candle Hope. (Light the first candle.)

We call this candle Peace. (Light the second candle.)

We call this candle Joy. (Light the third candle.)

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: What if joy were to break out unrestrained in our world? What would we notice?

People: **The wilderness and dry land would be glad;
the desert rejoice and blossom.**

Leader: The blind would see and the lame would walk.
Lepers would be cleansed, and the deaf would
hear. The dead would rise and the poor would
receive good news.

People: **May joy break out in our worship today as we
anticipate the One who comes into our world!
Come thou long expected Jesus!**

*GATHERING HYMN #70 (NCH)

“God Is Here! As We Your People Meet”

CALL TO CONFESSION

There are two great equalizers among us. One is that we have all sinned and fallen short of God’s glory. The other is that we are all now justified by God’s grace through the gift of Christ Jesus. Confident of both, let us admit where we have fallen short and receive grace without limit.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Unison)

Holy and wonderful God, we confess that we have closed our eyes to what you are doing. We prefer to concentrate on problems, bad news and violence. When we do, we miss all wonderful works you accomplish in our world. We pass up opportunities to participate in your Good News. We rob ourselves of so much joy. Forgive us and give us eyes to see, ears to hear, minds to understand, and hearts to treasure your mission in the world. Fill us with unquenchable joy at the coming of Jesus. Amen.

Silent reflection on these words

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

The angel told Joseph, "You are to name the baby Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." Friends, Believe the good news of the gospel: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Hallelujah! Amen.

THE WORD OF GOD

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 35:1-10

Liturgist

Matthew 11:2-11

SERMON Looking for Joy

*HYMN OF RESPONSE #55 (NCH)

"Rejoice, You Pure in Heart"

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: Zonda Belmont, Tony MacNaughton, Sheila Raymond, Mark Whiteside, Marlene Knowles' daughter-in-law Shannon Linder, Crystal Haley, Susan & Jack Tourtillotte, Maxie & AJ Elmes and their baby, Granger, Carol & Dan Perkins, Bill &

Mary Richards, Kathy & Jim Wilcox, Heidi Ross, Tim & Sarah Johnson, Sue Downes and those serving in the Peace Corp: and finally, we pray for all those whose lives are impacted by natural disasters, violence, war, and those suffering from personal life challenges around the world and here at home.

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

CALL FOR THE OFFERING

We give to God's work in the world in response to all that God has done for us. In awareness and gratitude and joy, let us give to God our tithes and offerings.

OFFERTORY MUSIC

"Carol Our Christmas"

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.

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION (Unison)**

We thank you God, for all the ways you work and heal and bless and free us. Accept these gifts given in great gratitude and in anticipation of Christ's return. Multiply them for your glory and for the good of all people. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN #506 (NCH)**

"What a Friend We Have in Jesus"

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE AND EXTINGUISHING OF THE CANDLES

"Noel"

Today's liturgy (with the exception of the Advent Candle Liturgy) is adapted from The Presbyterian Outlook, written by Tracy Davenport.

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

- Rev. Stan Wheeler **for leading worship service**
- Sarah Johnson, **Liturgist**
- Joann Bean, **Deacon of the Week**
- Rick Baker, **Zoomigo**
- Women's Fellowship, **Coffee Hour**
- Erin Smith, **Music Leader**

~This Week:

- Mahjong in the Barn, Dec 15, 1-3pm, Barn
- Deacons' Meeting, Dec 15, 4:00pm, Zoom & East Room
- Mom & Baby Social Hour, Dec 18, 10am, Barn

~Next Week:

- Rev. Stan Wheeler offers worship service, Dec 21, 10am
- Christmas Eve, Lessons and Carols, Sanctuary, **5 PM**

<u>Church Secretary</u>	rangeleyucc@gmail.com	207-864-5966
<u>Song Leader:</u>	Erin Perkins Smith	207-670-5153
<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 week</u>	Joann Bean	207-670-5000