



Rangeley Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Rangeley, Maine

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An Open and Affirming Church
First Sunday after Christmas

Mediation:

“The Merton Prayer”

Thomas Merton

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope that I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

December 28, 2025

10:00 AM

ORDER OF WORSHIP

OUR GATHERING AND PRAISE

RINGING OF THE BELL

PRELUDE

“Breath of Heaven”

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Liturgist

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Holy One, we thank you for bringing us here today.

All: We may come feeling lonely,

Leader: But we look around and see that we are not alone.

All: We may come feeling afraid,

Leader: But we look around and realize that our fears are shared.

All: We may come carrying grief,

Leader: But we see too that others also grieve.

All: We may come feeling weary,

Leader: But we recognize that others are also bone-tired.

All: Bless us as we hold each other in this sacred space,

Leader: You have drawn us here to rest, to put down all that we carry, and turn our hearts to you.

All: Remind us that in you we are loved and in you we are known.

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Loving and gracious God, we don't always know what your plans are for us. Sometimes we hear a still, small voice and think it might be you, but we brush it off. Other times we hear your voice loudly and clearly and don't act because of fear. We ask you to bless our sleeping and our waking.

When we hear your voice, help us to act without hesitation, as Joseph did.

*GATHERING HYMN #4 (NCH)

"Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You"

CALL TO CONFESSION

(Please join in reciting this Unison Prayer of Confession)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Unison)

O Lord, you are our shepherd, And yet we want. We lie down when we could act, We stir the pot when we could offer peace, We wander tempting paths instead of following you. We see courage and comfort in earthly things rather than in you. We hate our enemies and refuse to break bread with them. We see scarcity even when you offer us abundance. We pray for forgiveness, for your goodness and mercy, So that we might dwell in You, in your grace, forever. Amen.

From Beth Merrill Neel's blog "Hold Fast to What is Good"

Silent reflection on these words

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

The good news of the Gospel is that no matter what our human failings, we are all already forgiven. What a blessing!
Amen

THE WORD OF GOD

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 148

Liturgist

Isaiah 63: 7-9

Liturgist

Matthew 2: 13-23

SERMON The Gifts of Dreams

*HYMN OF RESPONSE #132 (NCH)

“Joy to the World”

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: Corinne Morton, Zonda Belmont, Tony MacNaughton, Kristen Flagg on the passing of her husband, Cyndy Egan’s parents David and Dianne Scammon, 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

Out of gratitude for all that God has provided for us and
with hope for a future that continues to unfold toward God's
promised end, we bring our tithes and offerings for God's
work among us.

OFFERTORY MUSIC

"While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks"

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 give you thanks, Creator of heaven and earth and all
that is within them, for the gift of this day, this moment of**

worship, and your word which is engraved upon our hearts. Receive and bless these gifts that we return to you, as a symbol of the dedication of our entire lives, that we as your church might be ever more faithful in your work of reconciliation, love and joy. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN #125 (NCH)

"Angels We Have Heard on High"

BENEDICTION

May the nourishment of the earth be yours,
May the clarity of light be yours,
May the fluency of the ocean be yours,
May the protections of the ancestors be yours.

And so may a slow
Wind work these words
Of love around you,
An invisible cloak
To mind your life.

From "A Blessing for the New Year" by John O'Donohue

POSTLUDE AND EXTINGUISHING OF THE CANDLES

"O Holy Night"

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

- Gretchen Legler for leading worship service

- **Linda Caspar**
- Joann Bean, **Deacon of the Week**
- Claire Chase, **Zoomigo**
- Women's Fellowship, **Coffee Hour**
- Music recorded by Erin Smith, **Music Leader**

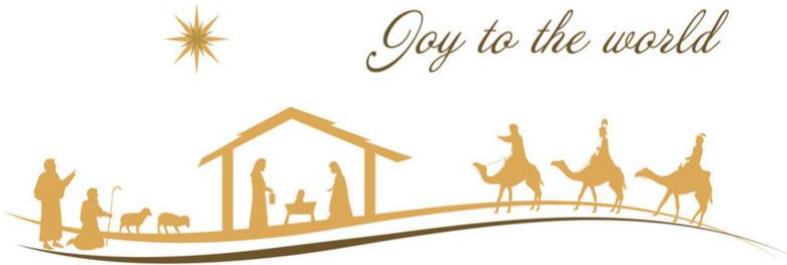
~**This Week:**

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2026

- Moms & Babies Group, January 1, 10am Barn

~**Next Week:**

- Pastor Scott Hatfield leading Communion service, Jan 4



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<u>Deacon of week</u>	Joann Bean	207-670-5000