

First Congregational Church of Pelham United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Church - Sharing What God's Love Looks Like

December 7, 2025 Advent 2 Jerusalem: A Place of Waiting

+Please rise in body or spirit.

TOLLING THE HOUR

PRELUDE

WELCOME

THRESHOLD "O Little Town of Bethlehem" traditional "We're On Our Way" Chuck Bell & Marsha McFee

***ALL: O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.***

CHOIR: *We're on our way We're on our way Dream of the day When hope holds sway
With all the earth In all our hearts We're on our way This is the day.*

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

Joe & Deb Calabro

The journey continues, and this candle will help light our way.

We are on our way to more peace.

Life is full of expectations and waiting for the right time, the right answer, the right opportunity.

We are a people who wait for Good News.

It is hard to wait, but there are moments when we get a glimpse of what true peace feels like.

God's light goes before us, we are not alone.

+HYMN

"I Wonder as I Wander"

#117

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy and Living God, we pray to you in the midst of unanswered questions. Often we are anxious and impatient as we desperately want to know outcomes and chart our life's path with certainty. Give us patience, God. Call us to pause in peaceful surrender, even and especially when the pieces of our lives seem to be falling apart rather than getting put together. Open our hearts to know your enduring presence in this very moment, in this waiting. We pray this in the name of your Son, Jesus, the Christ, the Prince of Peace. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Let this be a marker of assurance that we are moving in a faithful direction:

God is with us every step of our way toward the Hope of Bethlehem.

Jesus is being born into our lives even now. The Spirit is transforming us in this place.

SINGING "Little Donkey" worship supplement

SHOWING THE WAY

***Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen***

COMMUNION

Whether your journeys are by choice or by necessity, each one requires a moment of pause to nourish body and spirit. We cannot move forward into new places, into new stories, without the sustenance that makes life possible. There is no way to navigate the difficulties that arise on the way without a connection to the One who gives us life. Jesus knew this when he gathered the disciples for a meal that would come to sustain a movement on its way throughout the ages. And he offers that same meal to us now. Won't you pause for a while at this table set for you?

The God of Peace be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts! **We lift them up to the Lord!**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth. Especially on this road to Bethlehem, we remember that like the first breath of all things born, you formed each of us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life.

When we forget this connection of life with you, when we think we travel alone and the journey is too hard, you never leave us. You guide us and protect us every step of the way as you did with our spiritual ancestors, making the promise of presence more real than we could have imagined.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

***[sung] Joyful, joyful, we adore You, God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before You, Op'ning to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; Drive the dark of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness, Fill us with the light of day!***

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. By your Spirit, he was born to offer hope to the poor and those poor in spirit; peace to the captive and those imprisoned by fear; joy to the despairing and those who mourn; and love to the lonely and those disparaged by the world.

Christ was born into a world that needed to hear the good news that the time had come when you would save your people. Just as Bethlehem offered a warm place to lay his infant head, as an adult he offered healing and wholeness and hospitality to all.

By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection, you gave birth to your church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

When Christ Jesus ascended, he promised to be with us always, in the power of your Word and Spirit.

***[sung] All Your works with joy surround You, Earth and heav'n reflect Your rays,
Stars and angels sing around You, Center of unbroken praise;
Field and forest, vale and mountain, Flow'ry meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird and flowing fountain Praising You eternally!***

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:

“Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:

“Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

And so, in remembrance of your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ’s offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

***[sung] Always giving and forgiving, Ever blessing, ever blest,
Well-spring of the joy of living, Ocean-depth of happy rest!
Loving Father, Christ our Brother, Let Your light upon us shine;
Teach us how to love each other, Lift us to the joy divine.***

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here and wherever we are on our journeys of life. Pour out your Spirit on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the sustenance of Christ’s presence on the way so that we may be for the world the presence of Christ, redeemed by his love. By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit in your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever. Amen.

***[sung] Mortals, join the mighty chorus, Which the morning stars began;
God's own love is reigning o'er us, Joining people hand in hand.
Ever singing, [move] we onward, [Trav'lers] in the midst of strife;
Joyful music leads us sunward In the triumph song of life.***

SHARING THE MEAL

SCRIPTURE READING

Romans 12: 9-18 & Luke 1: 5-17

CHORAL ANTHEM

“Will We Know Him”

Don Besig and Nancy Price

“Are we ready for the Babe of Bethlehem to be born in a lowly stall? Are we ready to greet the tiny little King who will come to save us all? Are we ready for the star of Bethlehem to appear in the winter sky? Are we ready to follow anywhere it leads and let its light fill all our lives? Refrain: Prepare ye the way for the King of Glory; once again proclaim the wondrous story. God will send God’s own true Son, but will we know Him when He comes? Are we ready for the song of Bethlehem to declare our Savior’s birth? Are we ready to hear the angels as they sing and spread the news to all on earth? Refrain. Are we ready for the Babe of Bethlehem, God’s true and promised Son? Are we ready to greet the tiny little King, and will we know Him when He comes?”

REFLECTION

+HYMN

“Silent Night”

insert

PRAYERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE

SUNG CALL TO PRAYER

"Still, Still, Still"

#124 vs 1

SILENCE

SHARING OUR PRAYER REQUESTS

PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER (*SUNG*) #412

OFFERING OUR GIFTS TO GOD

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY

+SUNG RESPONSE

"The Doxology"

#563

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done; Creator, Christ and Spirit, One. Amen.***



venmo

+PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Gracious God, in this season of anticipation, we offer our gifts with open hearts. As we prepare for the fullness of your kingdom, may these offerings be a sign of our readiness and desire to live attentively. Use them to bring justice, righteousness, and joy to our world. Surprise us with your presence and help us to look up, to pay attention, and to embrace the hope you bring. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

+HYMN

"Away in a Manger"

#132

+BENEDICTION

+SUNG BENEDICTION

"O Little Town Of Bethlehem"

worship supplement

**O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us we pray,
cast out our fear, and draw us near; be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.**

POSTLUDE

Ministers: All Members of the Church

Pastor: Rev. Carlos Jauhola-Straight

Seminarian: Heather Ivone Milliken

Director of Music: Tom Seniow

Organist: Carolyn (Sue) Howard

Bell Choir Director: Sharon Hone

Administrator: Stephanie Noel

Sexton: Lupe Nova

Deacons: Joe Calabro, Paula Fowlie, Alice Galuppo