

# DENNIS UNION CHURCH, UCC

an open and affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ

## Fourth Sunday of Advent

**December 22, 2024**

**10:00 a.m.**

*In essentials, unity. In nonessentials, liberty. In all things, charity. (Early disciples' motto, attributed to Rupertus Meldenius)*

Bells Toll the Hour

Prelude

“Partita on ‘In Dulci Jubilo’ ”

Raymond Haan

Welcome and Announcements

Silence

### \*Call to Worship

O people of God, rejoice, for God is among you.

**We give thanks, God, and welcome your presence.**

Blessed are you, and blessed is the fruit of your faith,  
for God is alive in you.

**As we hear the Word something deep within us leaps for joy,  
for God within us rejoices.**

Blessed are you who believe that there will be a fulfillment  
of what God has spoken.

**God, you are coming into our lives in new ways.**

**In trust, we open the womb of our hearts to you.**

**Come, God of love, be born in us today.**

### \*Hymn #136

“Christians All, Your Lord Is Coming”

Verses 1 & 4

*Christians all, your Lord is coming, drawing near in holy birth.*

*Ring the bells and sound the trumpets, let your music fill the earth.*

*Dance and move to show God's glory; kneel and pause to hear God's word.*

*Alleluia! Alleluia! Rise and let your songs be heard.*

*Christians all, your Lord is coming, hope for peace is now at hand.*

*Let there be no hesitation, walk in faith where life demands.*

*Bear the word that God has given; share the birth that stirs your soul.*

*Alleluia! Alleluia! Christ will come and make you whole.*

### \*Invocation

**God of love, you promise your presence, and you pledge to us your mercy and  
grace. Open our eyes to see the dawning of your light within us and among us.**

**Open our hearts to your Word, that we might trust in what you have spoken to us.**

**Speak to us again, that we may live in the light of your coming. Amen.**

Because too many people are wandering in the wilderness, because too many people are sitting in the valley of the shadow of death, because too many of our conversations are laced with conflict and bitterness, we light candles...

**Because people all over the world are suffering, and we're too often distracted to notice, we light candles...**

One for hope, one for peace, one for joy, and one for love...

*The fourth candle is lit.*

Choral Response "Christ, Be Our Light"

Choir: *Longing for shelter, many are homeless.  
Longing for warmth, many are cold.  
Make us your building, sheltering others,  
walls made of living stone.*

Congregation: ***Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.  
Shine through the darkness. Christ, be our light!  
Shine in your church gathered today.***

Melody

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the dark - ness.

G Dsus4 D Em Em7/D C Am7 D G Am7/G G

Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gath-ered to - day.

May the light from these candles shine bright around the world.

**May the light from these candles illuminate the valley of the shadow of death.**

And may the fire from these candles burn away whatever would prevent God's love from being born within and among us.

**Friends, be not afraid.**

Be not afraid for even now — even now — God's love is overwhelming the world, on earth as it already is in heaven!

**Amen!**

Children Invited to Go to Sunday School

Anthem

"Lift Thine Eyes"

Katie Clancy, Shannon Goheen, Ellen Sheetz

Scripture Lesson

Luke 1: 26-46

**Response**

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
**my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,**  
**who has looked with favor on me, a lowly servant.**  
 From this day all generations shall call me blessed:  
**the Almighty has done great things for me and holy is the name of the Lord,**  
**whose mercy is on those who fear God from generation to generation.**

**Response**

The arm of the Lord is strong,  
 and has scattered the proud in their conceit.  
**God has cast down the mighty from their thrones and lifted up the lowly.**  
 God has filled the hungry with good things, and set the rich away empty.  
**God has come to the aid of Israel, the chosen servant,**  
**remembering the promise of mercy, the promise made to our forebears,**  
**to Abraham and to his children forever.**

**Response**

Homily

"And She Pondered All These Things"

Rev. Connie Bickford

\*Hymn #139

"All Earth Is Waiting"

Verses 1, 2 &amp; 3

***All earth is waiting to see the Promised One,  
 and open furrows, the sowing of our God.  
 All the world, bound and struggling, seeks true liberty;  
 it cries out for justice and searches for the truth.***

***Thus says the prophet to those of Israel,  
 "A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel":  
 one whose name is "God with us," our Savior shall be,  
 through whom hope will blossom once more within our hearts.***

***Mountains and valleys will have to be made plain;  
 open new highways, new highways for our God,  
 who is now coming closer, so come all and see,  
 and open the doorways as wide as wide can be.***

Offerings of the People

Offertory

“Were You There on That Christmas Night?”

Natalie Sleeth

\*Doxology

***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.***

Joys and Concerns of the Community

Prayers of the People and Lord’s Prayer

**+O Holy One, 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 as we forgive  
our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.  
(+Our Father/Creator)**

\*Hymn #142

“People, Look East”

Verses 1 & 4

***People, look east, the time is near of the crowning of the year.  
Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth and set the table.  
People, look east: Love, the Guest, is on the way.***

***Angels announce with shouts of mirth him who brings new life to earth.  
Set every peak and valley humming with the word, the Lord is coming.  
People, look east: Love, the Lord, is on the way.***

\*Sending Forth

The Spirit of God is upon us.  
**God has anointed us to bear good news to the afflicted  
and to bind up the broken hearted  
To proclaim freedom to the captives.  
To open the prisons of those who are bound.**

Before we leave this time of worship let us greet one another  
with the peace of Jesus the Christ, who seeks peace in broken relationships,  
who seeks healing in alienated persons, who seeks justice in oppressive structures.  
**Let us share in this shalom with one another.**

May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.  
**And also with you.** (Please turn and acknowledge those around you).

\*Benediction

*The congregation may remain seated for the music or depart.*

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**\*Please stand in body or spirit.** Music reproduced with permission: *One License #8-730116*. Candle lighting liturgy adapted from [saltproject.org](http://saltproject.org). Portions of the liturgy today come from [unfoldinglight.net](http://unfoldinglight.net) by Rev. Steve Garnaas-Holmes.

We are glad you have joined us today for worship, for we are the church whether we are gathered or scattered. Please feel free to contact the church at 508-385-3543 if you have concerns, prayer requests, or desire a pastoral call.

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Deacon of the Day: Sue Martin

Ushers & Greeters: Mary Czajkowski, Dottie Damon, Elise & Jeff Gordon,  
Patti & Dennis Goyette, John & Suzanne Paulson

Advent Candle Lighters: Katherine Lopez, Elizabeth, Ethan & Lucina Mendiola

### **CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES**

The message of Christmas — of light coming into a world of darkness —  
is a message that is needed this year as much as ever before.  
We hope you will join us on Christmas Eve for one of the worship services:

#### **Children's Pageant at 4 p.m.**

Our children and young people will be sharing the story of baby Jesus being born with us!

#### **Evening Worship at 7:30 p.m.**

Traditional Christmas Eve candlelight service  
with scripture, carols and contemporary readings.

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**We need Children and Youth for our Christmas Pageant: There will be a rehearsal today immediately after worship, so everyone is ready to go.**

**Volunteers to help the kids get ready and help supervise are needed as well!**

Please plan to arrive around 3:30 pm on Tuesday to get dressed. Please see Evy today if you have questions or email her at [dennisunion.evy@gmail.com](mailto:dennisunion.evy@gmail.com).

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**Poinsettia plants for Christmas are a beloved tradition at DUC and an opportunity to acknowledge and honor those dear to us.**

**Donations of \$10 to the Flower Committee may be placed with the church office until tomorrow. Dedications will be included in Christmas Eve worship bulletins.**

## **Dennis Union Church Open and Affirming Covenant of Welcome**

*Believing that everyone is a child of God, it is with joy, and in the love of Christ, that we welcome all persons into the full life, ministry and mission of Dennis Union Church. We choose not to turn away anyone whom Christ would welcome. We affirm the dignity and worth of every person including, but not limited to, people of every race, ethnicity, age, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, family structure or economic circumstance. We celebrate God's creative love shown in the wide diversity of humanity and the unique gifts each of us brings to the world. It is our intention to love one another as Christ has loved us.*



**Dennis Union Church**  
713 Main Street (Route 6A at Old Bass River Rd.)  
Dennis, Massachusetts 02638  
508-385-3543 [www.duchurch.org](http://www.duchurch.org)

**Ministers: All the people**  
**Pastor: Rev. Nancy S. McHugh**  
**Director of Music: Margaret Bossi**  
**Director of Children and Family Ministries: Open**  
**Interim Sunday School Leader: Evy Sirignano**  
**Finance Secretary: Elise Gordon**  
**Office Administrator: Jane Wilson**  
**Sexton: Dave Crocker**