



*Second Congregational Church in Wilton,
United Church of Christ
Open and Affirming*

ORDER OF WORSHIP
Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost
Veterans Sunday
November 12, 2023

Welcome to the worship of God at the
Second Congregational Church in Wilton,
United Church of Christ.

We are glad you are here today!

Bold print means congregational participation.
An asterisk (*) indicates to please stand, if you are able.

OUR LIFE TOGETHER

PRELUDE

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

responsively

One: God of love, peace and justice, it is your will for the world that we may live together in peace. You have promised through the prophet Isaiah that one day the swords will be beaten into ploughshares. Yet we live in a broken world, and there are times that war seems inevitable. Let us recognize with humility and sadness the tragic loss of life that comes in war. Even so, as we gather here free from persecution, we may give thanks for those that have served with courage and honor.

People: God, we praise you for those that are willing to serve. Let all Soldiers, Marines, Sailors, Airmen and Coast Guardsmen serve with honor, pride, and compassion. Do not let their hearts be hardened by the actions they must take. Strengthen their families. Keep them surrounded in your love and peace.

One: God, we praise you for those that have served. We thank you for those that put the welfare of others ahead of their own safety. Let us all be inspired by their self-sacrifice in service to those who needed protection.

People: God, we praise you for those that have made the ultimate sacrifice. We ask that you comfort those that still feel the pain of their loss. Keep us mindful that you have promised to comfort those that mourn.

All: God, we praise you for granting us these freedoms. Let us honor those who have served by working for peace. Let us never forget those that have served, and let us never let go of your promise of peace.

***GATHERING HYMN:** "God Bless America" *Irving Berlin*

God bless America, land that I love
Stand beside her and guide her
Through the night with the light from above.

From the mountains to the prairies
To the oceans white with foam
God bless America, my home sweet home.

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PRAYER OF THE DAY

unison

"Today we remember all of our veterans past and present. We ask for the healing of those who have been wounded in body and soul, wounds both visible and invisible. We pray for those who have returned and those who are returning from the Middle East, for those who served in Vietnam, Korea and World War II and live

with injured bodies and traumatized spirits to receive your solace and healing. We ask that those who are unable to pray for themselves will receive the blessings of our prayers offered on their behalf. Bring peace to those places where our women and men have fought. Bless those who served in non-combatant roles. May their service continue in their lives and may that service be positive for all of us. Give us the vision to see a world in which all grow weary with war and fighting, and turn their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. These things we ask in the name of the Prince of Peace. Amen.”

-Rt. Rev. James “Jay” Magness, Episcopal Bishop of the Armed Forces

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

unison

God of Peace, Our news is filled of wars and rumors of wars, our families and friends are called away, veterans return with experiences that have aged them beyond their years. Forgive us when we participate in what tears people apart rather than draws them together. You call us to love one another, you offer us hope of freedom and a life of joy. Build peace among us, that we may continue to build your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

-Rev. Kathy Randall Bryant

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

John 3:16:17

Brothers and sisters, God does not leave us in our distress. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

PASTORAL PRAYER

PRAYER RESPONSE

HYMN:

“Amazing Grace”

No. 422

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

***DOXOLOGY (tune: Old Hundredth)**

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

For the beauty of your good earth, for the people you
have given us to love, for the tasks you call us to do,
we give you thanks, O God. We offer ourselves with these
gifts that your love may be known in this church, in our
community, and beyond. Amen.

ANTHEM

THE WORD OF GOD

John 15:12-13

Jesus said, "This is my commandment, that you love one
another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than
this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."

Matthew 7:13-14

"Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and
the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are
many who take it. For the gate is narrow and the road is
hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it".

John 14:27

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not
give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be
troubled, neither let them be afraid."

SERMON

“The Narrow Gate”

PRAYER FOR PEACE AND LORD’S PRAYER

unison

Lord of all, we long for a time when all nations will be ruled with justice and a world where everyone lives in safety and harmony. Until that time when swords are beaten into plowshares and the wolf and the lamb eat together, we give thanks for veterans who have served their country with honor and courage.

We remember the sacrifices made by members of the military and their families. We know that they endured long seasons apart from loved ones, the disruption of moves and deployments, the stress of being sent to regions engulfed by violence, and the repercussions of physical, spiritual and moral injuries.

Where the pain of those injuries persists, bring healing. Where the memories of that trauma are harrowing, grant relief. Where the grief of those losses threatens to overwhelm, grant hope.

We pray, gracious God, for an end to war and for the new earth where there will be no need for military might. But now, we ask your blessing upon our veterans and those closest to them that they may know the gift of your presence and the peace that passes understanding. In Jesus’ name, who taught us to pray saying:

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 trespasses,
as we forgive those who 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. Amen.

*SENDING HYMN:

“Let There Be Peace on Earth”

No. 614

***BENEDICTION**

May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

***POSTLUDE**

On The Calendar/Announcements

Would you like to become a member?
If so, please speak with Rev. Gary or any Deacon

- Project Linus, November 14, 9:30 AM
- Fidget Blankets, November 21, 8:30 AM
- Church Council, November 21, 7:00 PM via Zoom
- Decorate Church for Christmas - Sunday November 26 after worship service. Light lunch will be provided - Please plan on staying to help us decorate. The more folks we have, the less time it takes.

Praising God's Glory, the flowers are presented by
Joe and Liz Torre in loving memory
of her father George Goodale.



PARTICIPATING IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Kermit Williams, Worship Leader
Jane Herlihy, Liturgist
Patricia Cauchon, Director of Music
Congregation, Ministers to the World

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