

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

**ORDER OF WORSHIP
Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 24, 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
Words of Welcome and Announcements

PRELUDE

***LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE OF LOVE** *responsively*

Our Advent Family: Debra and Gary Klingsporn

L: A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

P: **In the wilderness places of our lives,
we gather to make ready for the
One who is coming.**

L: Today we light the Advent candle of Love,
proclaiming that God loves us.

P: **"For God so loved the world that God gave us
his only Son" – a child born by lamplight
in the late night silence.**

L: "Since God loved us so much,
we also ought to love one another."

P: **The candles of Hope, Peace, Joy,
and Love now shine into the darkness.**

L: Our watching and waiting are almost over.

**All: Come, Lord Jesus, fill our hearts with your love.
Make us ready to celebrate your birth, that we
may receive you in joy and serve you always.**

***GATHERING HYMN**

“Good Christian Friends, Rejoice” No. 198

PRAYER OF THE DAY

unison

Light of the World, you came in flesh, born into human pain and joy. Your light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it. Grant us faith, O Christ, as we celebrate your birth, to know your presence with us, and walk in the way of love. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

PASTORAL PRAYER

SILENT PRAYER

PRAYER RESPONSE

HYMN “Go, Tell It on the Mountain” No. 218

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

Holy God, tonight we celebrate Christ’s birth.
Praising you for every blessing in our lives, we thank
you for the greatest gift, Jesus. Bless our offering,
that your love may be shared with others who are
lonely, hurting, or in need of any kind. Amen.

ANTHEM

THE WORD OF GOD

The Gospel Reading

Luke 2:8-14

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace, good will among all!”

The Epistle Reading

1 John 3:1

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are.

SERMON

“Christmas Still Comes”

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND LORD’S PRAYER

unison

God of love, you spoke and your Word became flesh,
breathing a new song of joy and praise into the world.

Grant that we may bear the good news
of your love to the ends of the earth.

Praying now the prayer Jesus taught us:

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

“Angels, from the Realms of Glory” No. 189

*BENEDICTION

*POSTLUDE

On The Calendar/

Announcements

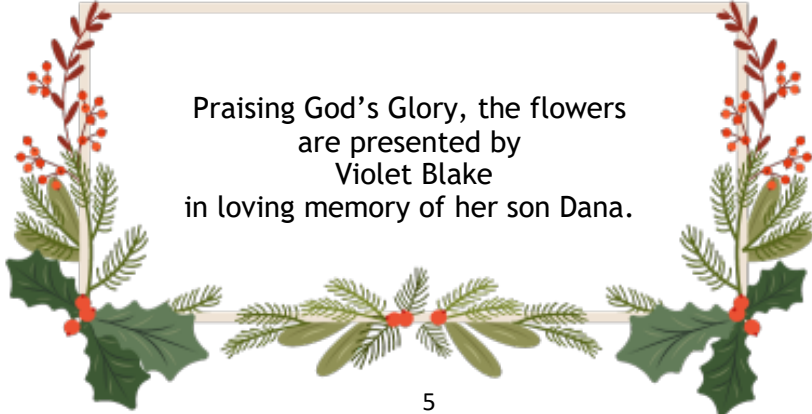
- Christmas Eve Service, 7:00 PM
- Project Linus, December 27, 9:30 AM
- Deacon's Meeting, December 27, 7:00 PM via Zoom
- Leadership and Committee Reports are due to Leslie Tuttle by January 1, 2024
- Church Annual Meeting, January 21, 2024, following Worship

Sign Up Sheets

for January Scripture Readers,
snacks and 2024 Flowers are in the Parish Hall
on the bulletin board near the coffee.
Please consider signing up.

Church Office

Closed Monday, December 25



Praising God's Glory, the flowers
are presented by
Violet Blake
in loving memory of her son Dana.

PARTICIPATING IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Rev. Dr. Gary Klingsporn, Pastor
Violet Blake, Liturgist
Debra and Gary Klingsporn, Advent Readers
Patricia Cauchon, Director of Music
Congregation, Ministers to the World

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