

West Parish of Barnstable

Gathered in London 1616 - Present Meetinghouse Erected in 1717

A Church in the Congregational Tradition

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

West Barnstable, Massachusetts



THE CHURCH AT WORSHIP

Christmas Eve

December 24, 2023

4:30 p.m.

OUR STATEMENT OF WELCOME

As a congregation which covenants to walk together in Christian love,
believes that all persons are created equal before God,
and affirms the inclusive love of Jesus Christ,
we welcome to our work and worship all people
regardless of race, gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation,
ability, or economic circumstance.

Adopted at Annual Meeting, June 26, 2005

GOD GATHERS US

WELCOME

Pastor Reed Baer

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

One: This Advent season, we have waited.

Two: We have waited for family to arrive.

One: We have waited for Amazon deliveries.

Two: We have waited for cookies to bake.

One: We have waited for snow to fall.

Two: We have waited in grocery store lines.

One: We have waited by fireplaces and around dinner tables.

Two: We have waited to raise our candles.

One: We have waited to sing Silent Night.

Two: We have waited for the magic of this night.

One: And now the waiting is over. It is Christmas Eve, which means God is here and you are loved.

Two: May that truth change you. May it inspire you, challenge you, and burn in you like the light from these candles.

One: For tonight, in the illumination of candles of hope, peace, joy and love, we add the light of the Christ candle, for the wait is over.

Two: Love is here. Thanks be to God! Amen.

(The Christ candle is lit)

* HYMN #132 (Red)

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

ADESTE FIDELES

RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP

Associate Pastor Christie Burns

One: If you are like Joseph, and you are seeking truth,

All: There is room here for you.

One: If you are like Mary, and you are seeking rest,

All: There is a seat here for you.

One: If you are like the wise men, and you are looking for a sign:

All: These candles are here for you.

One: If you are like the angels, and you cannot help but sing,

All: There is a melody here for you.

One: Come in. You are in God's house. Love was born tonight, and there is love here for you.

All: Let us worship the God of love.

PRELUDE

On Christmas Night All Christians Sing

HANDBELLES

SUSSEX CAROL/arr. Lloyd Larson

UNISON PRAYER

**God of kings and shepherds, God of teenage mothers and step-parents, God of
angel choruses and starlight –**

We confess to waiting.

We have waited to extend grace.

We have waited to say “I love you.”

We have waited to apologize.

**We have waited to be just, choosing comfort and convenience over the needs of
our neighbors.**

We have waited –

**Waited for someone else to make a move, waited for a sign, waited until it was
our issue.**

You ask us to be the body of Christ, but in many ways, we have waited.

**Forgive us. Change us. Remind us of your love for this world, which cannot
wait. Amen.**

THE 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 sins, as we forgive those who sin 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.**

THE NATIVITY, IN WORD AND SONG

DUET

“Who Will Go to Bethlehem?”

Maxie Davidson & John Murelle

Donald Goldstrom & Simon Andrews

CHRISTMAS ON THE ROAD

Luke 2:1-5 (The Message)

HYMN (seated) #134 (Red) “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

ST. LOUIS

CHRISTMAS WITH THE ANIMALS Luke 2:6-7 (N.R.S.V.)

HYMN(seated) #122 (Red) “God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen” (v. 1) GOD REST YOU MERRY

CHRISTMAS IN COMMUNITY, BELOW AND ABOVE – Luke 2:8-18

SOLO Christmas Night John Murelle
16th c. French melody/John Rutter

A CHRISTMAS REFLECTION “Let’s Be Shepherds” Pastor Reed

WE RESPOND TO THE GOOD NEWS

*HYMN #130 (Red) “Joy to the World!” ANTIOCH

ANNOUNCEMENTS, JOYS AND CONCERNS

CALL TO PRAYER

One: God be with you.

Many: And also with you.

One: Let us pray.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

SOLO O Holy Night Maxie Davidson
Adolphe C. Adam

INVITATION TO OFFERING OUR TITHES AND GIFTS

*In thanksgiving to God and giving witness to generous hearts,
our financial gifts support our ministries here and in the wider community.
Donations can be made by Venmo, instructions and QR code are on the back page.*

OFFERTORY The Christ Child’s Lullaby HANDBELLES
Trad. Scottish melody/arr. Malcolm C. Wilson

*SONG OF PRAISE

**To God, all glorious heavenly Light,
To Christ revealed in earthly night,
To God the Spirit now we raise,
Our joyful songs of thankful praise. Amen.**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

GOD SENDS US FORTH IN JOY!

A CANDELIGHT LITURGY

One: This, then, is how Love is born: like a seed planted in the darkest of soils that rises to meet the sun's warming rays, so love emerges from the deepest places. Despite our willing it, and without the force of hand, may love rise graciously to life.

Many: This, then, is how Love is born: as the morning slowly dawns – first a sliver, then a burning horizon – causing the night to fade away, so love transforms our sorrow and fear. Into our need, moving against resistance, may love change things in our lives and in the world.

Two: This, then, is how Love is born: as winter's gentle hibernation gives way to the bursting of spring and the delights of summer, so love is woven through every season. Amidst our doubts and disappointments, when the sands seem to shift under our feet, may love be steadfast and present at all times.

All: The light from even a single flame makes watching an easier task. Christ's flame reminds us that God is with us.

(The Meetinghouse will be darkened during this part of the service. The central candle in the Advent Wreath is symbolic of Christ's light. Lighting their candles from that candle, the pastors will light the candles of the ushers. The ushers will then light the aisle candles of each pew. In turn, the aisle candles will light the candles of those next, and so on. During the singing of the last verse of "Silent Night", the candles will be held aloft. To prevent the hot wax from dripping, please tilt your unlit candle as you receive the flame from your neighbor's lit candle. Please be age-appropriate with respect to sharing candles with children.)

HYMN #138 (Red) (seated)

"Silent Night"

STILLE NACHT

WORDS OF SENDING

(Following the benediction and during the Postlude,
please extinguish your candles and take them with you to the door as you leave)

POSTLUDE

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

MENDELSSOHN

Felix Mendelssohn/arr. Stanley E. Saxton

*All who wish, please stand.

A special word to our Christmas Eve visitors: We are *delighted* to have you with us this evening, particularly if you are from the area and are perhaps thinking it might be nice to find a church home. We hope you will consider coming back again – we gather at 4:30 each Saturday (but NOT this week, 12/30) and 10:00 each Sunday.

IN A SEASON OF GIVING, YOU LEAD BY EXAMPLE!

At Christmas we share gifts with one another, and yet you, this gathered congregation, share gifts with the wider community throughout the year. You do this through your giving to West Parish, a substantial portion of which your Board of Outreach distributes to the wider community locally, nationally, and globally. Here are some of the organizations your giving supports:

The United Church of Christ

One Great Hour of Sharing - The oldest special mission offering of the U.C.C.

Strengthen the Church - seeks to strengthen local church ministries.

Christmas Fund for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the U.C.C

The Barnstable Association of the United Church of Christ

Cape Cod Council of Churches

A Baby Center

Covenant to Care

they match a Cape/Islands congregation with a Foster Care Family

YMCA Mentoring

Independence House

Cape Cod Times Needy Fund

Habit for Humanity Cape Cod

Cape Abilities

Champ Homes

Dart (Disaster Animal Response Team)

Luke's Love Playground

Meetinghouse Farm

Amplify POC Cape Cod

Dress a Doll

Whelden Library

Poinsettia Sponsors

Steve & Mindy Abbott in memory of Howard & Lois Abbott and Fred & Martha Strauss

Barbara Cameron in honor of my friends

Sandy and Rik Clark in memory of our parents: Eleanore, Doris, Bill, and Allen

David and Susan Cochrane in memory of Gordon and Eleanor Cochrane

Jean Birch in memory of her husband and parents

Kristine in memory of Janet's brother Roger

Bobbie Jordan in loving memory of my parents, Lloyd and Ida

Ken and Diane Juthe in memory of our parents: Randy & Evelyn and Mert & Bertha

Jane Skinner Ketchen & Greg Ketchen in memory of Clara Vergnani Skinner & Arlan Skinner
and Charlotte Parker Ketchen & Gould Ketchen

Corinne Lilie in memory of Mary Ann Regan

Kristen Lind in honor of the wonderful faculty at West Parish Family School
and all the church volunteers who oversee and assist us

Dan Lupfer & Liz Knox-Lupfer in celebration of our children and grandchildren

Heiti and Bill Manning in celebration of family and friends

The Moeller Family in memory of Alice, Jake, Bill & Helen who all loved Christmas

Laura Murphy in celebration of Martha Rosewell

Reed & Christie in celebration of Katie, Julia, Camden, Lydia, Chris, Tyler and Mel

Van & Wendy Northcross in memory of Judy Rockwell and our Northcross family

Lynn & Randy Parker to our 3 children and 5 "grands" who bring us joy!

In honor of those who seek peace

Peter & Betsy Smith in memory of our parents and loved ones

Bob and Shirley Stolte in memory of loved ones

Alan & Maggi Tyson in celebration of Bey, Libby, Grady & Lilah

Marianne & Greg Williams in memory of Florence Stasiowski
and in memory of Sharon Goguen

Sharon and Bob Wyman in memory of Sunny & Wesley Merritt
and Evelyn & Edward Wyman

1717 Meetinghouse Foundation in memory of: Mary Jane Eicholzer, John Bjork, James Otis
Ellis, Sr., Patricia Davies White and Joyce Joakim

We ask your cooperation in protecting the 1717 Meetinghouse by not parking your vehicle in or alongside the circle closest to the Meetinghouse. Although it is not marked, it is a FIRE LANE and preserves clear access to the Meetinghouse for Emergency Vehicles.

Need to get connected? Wi-Fi: Meetinghouse Password: 1717Rooster



venmo

Venmo @WestParish or scan the QR code.

To make a donation, simply scan the QR code with your phone's camera or search "@WestParish" on the Venmo app.

Be sure you select "West Parish of Barnstable" under the charity profiles.

If you would like your donation to go toward something specific like "Deacons", just note that in the description.

Church Staff

Reed Baer, Pastor and Teacher
Donna Murphy, Music Director
Kristen Lind, Family School Director
Susan Moeller, Council Chair

Christine Burns, Associate Pastor
Susan McEwen, Office Administrator
Chris Haven, Sexton
Roberta Jordan, Deacons Chair

P.O. Box 219, West Barnstable, MA 02668
Tel. No. 508-362-4445 Fax No. 508-375-6431
contact@westparish.org www.westparish.org