



CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, BROCKTON, MA



December 31, 2023

10:00 am

AN ASTERISK IN THE BULLETIN INDICATES THAT ALL FOR WHOM IT IS COMFORTABLE SHOULD RISE FOR THAT PART OF THE SERVICE

RINGING OF THE CHIMES

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Moriah Park

***PROCESSIONAL HYMN**

'There's a Song in the Air'

No. 159

***CALL TO WORSHIP¹**

One: When Jesus is born to Mary and Joseph,

All: God is there.

One: When they present Jesus at the temple,

All: God is there.

Leader: When Simeon holds Jesus in his arms,

All: God is there.

One: When Anna recognizes Jesus as the answer to prayer,

All: God is there.

One: This very morning,

All: God is here.

One: In the future we cannot see,

All: God is there.

One: Let us worship God!

OPENING PRAYER

PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE

ALL: Sovereign God, you have been our help from age to age. Remind us to turn to you when confronted with difficult choices. Remind us that you strengthen us on the journey. Remind us that our actions and attitudes impact our neighbors and ourselves. Renew our minds and spirits as we strive to follow your way of love and peace in the world. Amen.

WORDS OF GRACE

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

The passing of the peace is a theologically significant portion of Christian worship. Once we have received Christ's peace we, as Christ's disciples, must share that same peace with the world. Please take this time to do just that, share a sign of Christ's peace with those around you in the sanctuary. Some may choose to shake hands, others may want to hug, and still others may want to remain distanced with their arms crossed over their chest or holding their hands up in a "peace sign". However you choose to share Christ's peace in this moment do so with love for God and God's children in your heart.

Leader: May the peace of Christ be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

A TIME FOR ALL AGES

***HYMN OF PREPARATION**

'Standing on the Promises'

No. 552

SCRIPTURE

Luke 2:22-40

22 When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23 (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), 24 and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. 26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. 27 Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what was customary under the law, 28 Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

29 "Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word, 30 for my eyes have seen your salvation, 31 which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, 32 a light for revelation to the gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

33 And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. 34 Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be opposed 35 so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul, too."

36 There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, 37 then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. 38 At that moment she came and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

39 When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. 40 The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, and the favor of God was upon him.

SERMON

"Back and Forth"

Pastor Ray Medeiros

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION

Alex Green

During this time, we invite you to embrace the transition from hearing the word to gathering ourselves in prayer by taking a moment for quiet reflection either in your pew, or by coming forward to light a candle to give light to the prayer(s) on your heart that have no words to be expressed.

Come and Light a Candle...



PRAYER OF EXAMEN FOR THE NEW YEAR²

THE PRAYER OF JESUS *(in unison)*

Our Creator (Father) who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kin-dom 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 Kin-dom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

CALL FOR OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY 'God Bless the Child' Herzog/Holiday

***OFFERTORY RESPONSE** 'Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow' No. 47.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

ALL: Generous God, we thank you for every good and perfect gift you have given to us and through us. Use our offerings this day for the benefit of creation, the redemption of humanity, and your glory. Amen.

***RECESSIONAL HYMN** This Is a Day of New Beginnings' (vs. 1-3) No. 518

BENEDICTION³

POSTLUDE 'Every Time I Feel the Spirit'
(Traditional African-American/Smith)

Participating In Today's Worship Service:

Rev. Ray Medeiros, Guest Pastor

Alex Green, Music Director

David Wilcox, ASL Interpreter

¹written by Rev. Robert George, Karen George, Judy Colby-George, in Past Meets Future: A Blessing for Today, posted on the United Church of Christ website

²written by John W. Vest and posted on John Vest. <http://johnvest.com/>

³posted on Rev. Richard J. Fairchild's **Kirshalom** website. <http://www.rockies.net/>

1. There's a song in the air! There's a star in the sky!
 2. There's a tu - mult of joy o'er the won - der - ful birth,
 3. We re - joice in the light, and we ech - o the song

There's a moth - er's deep prayer and a ba - by's low cry!
 for the Vir - gin's sweet boy is the Lord of the earth.
 that comes down through the night from the heav - en - ly throng,

And the star rains its fire while the an - gel choirs sing,
 See, the star rains its fire while the an - gel choirs sing,
 and we wel - come the glo - ri - ous gos - pel they bring,

for the man - ger of Beth - le - hem cra - dles a king!
 for the man - ger of Beth - le - hem cra - dles a king!
 and we greet in the cra - dle our sav - ior and king.

WORDS: Josiah G. Holland, 1879, alt.
 MUSIC: Karl P. Harrington, 1904

CHRISTMAS SONG
 66.66.12 12

Standing on the Promises

1. Stand - ing on the prom - is - es of Christ my king,
 2. Stand - ing on the prom - is - es that can - not fail,
 3. Stand - ing on the prom - is - es of Christ the Lord,
 4. Stand - ing on the prom - is - es I can - not fall,

through e - ter - nal a - ges let his prais - es ring;
 when the howl - ing storms of doubt and fear as sail,
 bound to him e - ter - nal - ly by love's strong cord,
 lis - t'ning ev - ery mo - ment to the Spir - it's call,

glo - ry in the high - est, I will shout and - sing,
 by the liv - ing Word of God I shall pre - vail,
 o - ver - com - ing dai - ly with the Spir - it's sword,
 rest - ing in my Sav - ior as my all in all,

stand - ing on the prom - is - es of God.

WORDS and MUSIC: R. Kelso Carter, 1891

PROMISES
11 11.11 9 w. refrain

Refrain

Stand - ing, stand - ing, stand - ing on the prom - is - es of
 stand - ing on the prom - is - es,

God my Sav - ior; stand - ing, stand - ing,
 stand - ing on the prom - is - es,

I'm stand - ing on the prom - is - es of God.

47 Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise

The first system of music consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 2/2. The lower staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. The melody in the upper staff begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, C5, and D5. The bass line in the lower staff consists of chords: G2-B2, A2-C3, B2-D3, and C3-E3.

WORDS: Thomas Ken, 1674, alt.
MUSIC: Louis Bourgeois, 1551

OLD HUNDREDTH
LM

Alt. tune: OLD HUNDREDTH (altered rhythm)

God, all creatures here below; praise God above, ye

The second system of music continues the two-staff format. The melody in the upper staff continues with quarter notes E5, D5, C5, B4, and A4. The bass line continues with chords: D3-F3, E3-G3, D3-F3, and E3-G3.

heaven-ly hosts: Cre - a - tor, Christ, and Ho - ly Ghost. A - men.

The third system of music concludes the piece. The melody in the upper staff ends with quarter notes G4, F4, E4, and D4. The bass line concludes with chords: D3-F3, E3-G3, D3-F3, and E3-G3. The system ends with a double bar line.

This Is a Day of New Beginnings 518

Unison

1. This is a day of new be - gin - nings,
 2. For by the life and death of Je - sus,
 3. Then let us, with the Spir - it's dar - ing,
 4. In faith we gath - er round the ta - ble

time to re - mem - ber and move on,
 God's might - y Spir - it, now as then,
 step from the past and leave be - hind
 to taste and share what love can do.

time to be - lieve what love is bring - ing,
 can make for us a world of dif - ference,
 our dis - ap - point - ment, guilt, and griev - ing,
 This is a day of new be - gin - nings;

lay - ing to rest the pain that's gone.
 as faith and hope are born a - gain.
 seek - ing new paths, and sure to find.
 our God is mak - ing all things new.

WORDS: Brian Wren, 1978, rev. 1987
 MUSIC: Carlton R. Young, 1984

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BEGINNINGS
 98.98

♩=50-54