

WE GATHER IN CELEBRATION

Prelude

An Advent Prelude
By William Ringham

Opening Sentences

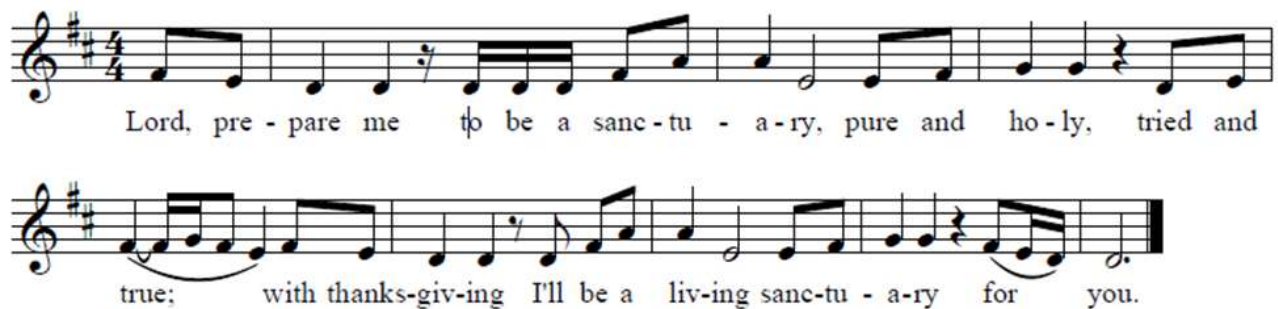
One: This is the day that our God has made!

Many: **Let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

Welcoming Words

Centering Song

Lord, Prepare Me



Lord, pre - pare me to be a sanc - tu - a - ry, pure and ho - ly, tried and true; with thanks-giv-ing I'll be a liv-ing sanc-tu - a-ry for you.

Call to Worship

One: We come to glorify God, to rejoice in the One who saves us.

Many: **God comes, so we might believe,
so we might be blessed.**

One: Our hearts leap for joy!
For God is coming to us in a child.

Many: **God comes for those who hunger for hope,
for those who thirst for grace.**

One: Holy is the One who comes in God's name,
who fulfills every promise of God.

Many: **God comes to walk with those who follow in faith,
to bring peace and light to the world. AMEN.**

Opening Hymn

My Heart Sings Out with Joyful Praise (verses 1 & 2)

Words and music on page 5

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Brittany and Rob Baird

One: We light one candle for the prophets, one for John the Baptist, the third for the shepherds, and the fourth for Mary, who gladly responded to the call of God.

One: “I am the Lord’s servant,” said Mary, “may it happen to me as you have said.” God is born through the courage of a young woman – humble, unexpected and inviting revolution.

ALL: Gracious God, we thank you for the courageous obedience of Mary. We ask that you fill us with grace so that we may open our hearts and lives to be bearers of God’s love in the world.

Hymn of Response

*Come, O Long-Expected Jesus
Come, O Long-Expected Jesus,
Born to set all people free;
From our fears and sins release us;
Grant us your true liberty*

Passing of the Peace

Children’s Moment

Rev. Karma Cloud

Offertory

WE OFFER OUR PRAYERS

Sung Preparation to Prayer *Our God Is Holy*

Musical notation for the song "Our God Is Holy". The notation is in 4/4 time and features two staves of music. The first staff begins with a tempo marking of 115 and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: "Ho - ly, our God is ho - ly. Ho - ly, our God is ho - ly." The second staff continues the lyrics: "Ho - ly, our God is ho - ly. Ho - ly, ho - ly is our God." The piece concludes with a double bar line and the word "Fine".

Chords indicated above the notes: F, C/E, B^b/D, C⁷, F, Am, D⁷, Gm, F/C, C⁷, F.

Prayers of the People

Response: One: God, in your mercy,
Many: hear our prayers.

Lord's Prayer

ALL: Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kin-dom come.
Your 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 Yours is the kin-dom, and the power,
and the glory, forever. Amen.

Sung Response to Prayer *The Universe Is Bending*

The u-ni-verse is bend-ing, stretch-ing long and
stretch-ing out and it's lead-ing t'ward whole-ness by the
com-ing of our Lord.

The musical notation is written on three staves in 4/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of lyrics, with a 3-measure triplet over the final three notes. The second staff continues the melody for the second line of lyrics. The third staff concludes the phrase with a final cadence.

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WISDOM

Scripture

Luke 1:39-56

39In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, 40where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. 41When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit 42and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. 43And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? 44For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. 45And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." 46And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, 47and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, 48for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; 49for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. 50His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. 51He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the

thoughts of their hearts. 52He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; 53he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. 54He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, 55according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.” 56And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

One: May God’s wonder be revealed to us through the mystery of these words.

Many: **Thanks be to God!**

Sermon “The Courage to Say ‘Yes’” Rev. Ann Ralosky

Duet *Mary, Did You Know?* Elizabeth Honer and
By Lowry, Greene, Hayes; new text by Jennifer Henry Julie Morgan

WE GO INTO THE WORLD

Announcements

Blessing and Farewell for Maya Potter

Closing Hymn *My Heart Sings Out with Joyful Praise (verse 3)*

The Closing Commission

One: The spirit of God is upon us.

All: **God has anointed us
to bear good news to the afflicted,
to bind up the broken hearted,
to proclaim freedom to the captives,
to open the prisons of those who are bound.
Let us go forth in the name of Christ to bring
peace into broken relationships, healing to
alienated persons, action to protect our planet
and justice into oppressive structures. AMEN.**

Benediction

Postlude *Magnificat on the 6th Tone: Grand Choer*
By Jean-Jacques Charpentier

My Heart Sings Out with Joyful Praise

106

Ruth Duck, 1985

Luke 1:46-55

A D A/E E7 A

1 My heart sings out with joy - ful praise to God who rais - es me,
2 The arm of God is strong and just to scat - ter all the proud.
3 The prom - ise made in a - ges past at last has come to be,

A D A/E E7 A

Who came to me when I was low and changed my des - ti - ny.
The ty - rants tum - ble from their thrones and van - ish like a cloud.
for God has come in power to save, to set all peo - ple free.

E A D E7 A E

The Ho - ly One, the Liv - ing God, is al - ways full of grace
The hun - gry all are sat - is - fied; the rich are sent a - way.
Re - mem - bering those who wait to see sal - va - tion's dawn - ing day,

A D A/E E7 A

To those who seek their Mak - er's will in ev - ery time and place.
The poor of earth who suf - fer long will wel - come God's new day.
Our Sav - ior comes to all who weep to wipe their tears a - way.

SERVICE NOTES

Thank you to our volunteer worship leaders this morning.

Worship Leader: Rev. Ann Ralosky and Rev. John Rogers

Reader: Jasmin Vrban

Ushers: Jasmine Batista & Deirdre Nance

Coffee Hour Host: Durka Family & Christian Ed

Coffee Hour Setup Team: Steve Cutaia, Tim Duhamel, Michael Harney

Music Leaders: Julie Morgan and David Salyers

AV Techs: Jason Jinson and Joe Mondo

A gift was made to the food bank by Nneka Brooks to help feed those in need.

Gratitude to the Iona Community for some of our worship language

Upcoming Events

God's Giveaway Coat Drive for FCC Irvington

We are collecting winter coats, accessories and many other clothing items for our neighbors in need from December 1—January 26. See Dilys Burke (or see email we sent out) for details.

Christmas Eve Services, Tuesday December 24

5pm Family Service of Story and Song

Join us for a joyful Christmas celebration with special children's performance.

8pm Candlelight Service with Holy Communion

Join us for a contemplative, candlelight service with Holy Communion.

Ongoing Events

Weekly Labyrinth Walks, Wednesdays 11am-1pm in the sanctuary.

Closed on Christmas & New Year's Day. All are welcome!

Full Spectrum Spirituality (FSS) Meeting, third Friday each month at 7:30pm on Zoom

Please note: this is an LGBTQ+ only event. Special monthly small group discussion on spirituality, scripture and faith.

Underground Church (monthly), Saturday, January 25, 10:30am in the Sanctuary

An intimate and interactive worship experience that hearkens back to the early church.

For more details check the calendar on our "Upcoming Events" page:

<https://fccmontclair.org/upcoming-events-at-fcc/>



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ONLINE: Scan this QR Code or go to www.fccmontclair.org/giving.

TEXT: You can text a donation to 877-346-1045 followed by a space, and then the amount of your donation (follow the one time set up instructions.)

CHECK: If you give by check it must be made out to "First Congregational Church," (not "FCC") and can be put in the offertory basket, or mailed to 40 So. Fullerton Avenue, Montclair, NJ, 07042.
Thank you.

The Mission & Vision of First Congregational Church

Mission Statement:

We are a progressive, open and affirming Christian church. We welcome people of all ages and identities to grow spiritually in a safe and engaging community. Inspired by God's love, we bring peace, healing and justice to the world by serving our neighbors and each other.

Vision Statement:

We imagine a world in alignment with Jesus' vision for peace, love and justice, where there is nourishment for those in need, radical hospitality, and sanctuary for all seekers.

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