All is Calm, All is Bright:

Zechariah and Elizabeth



We Are A Nurturing, Beloved Community.
We Are Growing Authentic Christian Faith.
We Are Living Christ-Inspired Action.

first congregational
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

First Sunday of Advent
November 29, 2026 at 10:00am

Welcome to Worship

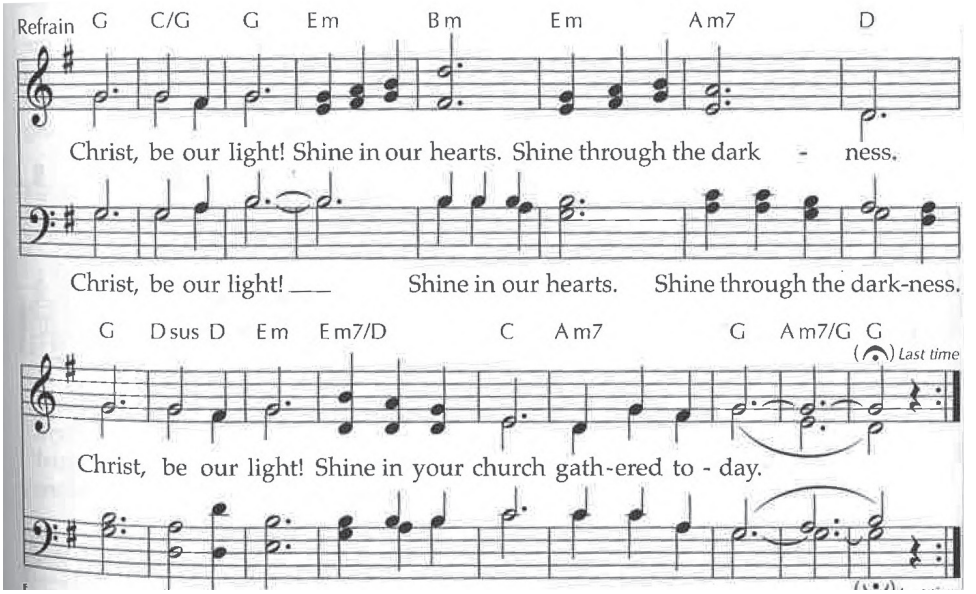
Prelude Judy Widrig

Ringing the Bell Children of the Church

We Are A Nurturing, Beloved Community

Welcome Song

"Longing for Light" Farrell



Welcome Sharon Benton & Scott Ward

We love children in worship; their noises and wiggles are welcome, too. There are pillows and a coloring, book, and play area in the corner near the windows. Younger kids may enjoy the Narthex play area. Their movements back and forth are a joy for us as they participate fully.

The Story Jim Hollander

Lighting of Advent Candles Jamie and Becca Elliott
Scout Mitchell, Liturgist

One: When the nights are long and the roads are hard,

All: we turn our eyes to the stars.

One: When the work is demanding and injustice unending,

All: we stand together, arm in arm.

One: When fear looms large and grief weighs heavy,

All: we cry out to God without holding back.

One: And when the dawn of tomorrow feels far away,

All: we gather together to light the candle of hope

{Light Candle}

One: Like the stars above may this light shine bright.

Many: May it guide our path. May it inspire deeper hope.

One: Until God's promised day, may it be so.

Many: Amen.

***Hymn #116 (black hymnal)** *"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" verses 1,2,6 & 7* Veni Emmanuel

**Rise in body or spirit*

Community Prayer Scout Mitchell

One: Faithful God, who spoke through an angel in the temple and left Zechariah silent with wonder and doubt:

All: Quiet in us the voices that tell us hope is foolish, and the fears that keep us from believing your promises.

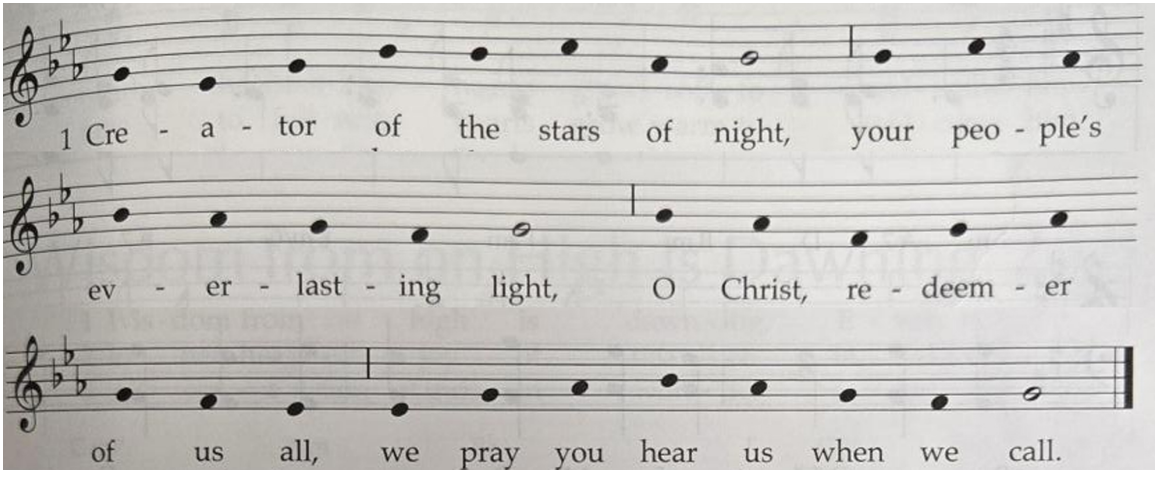
One: Give us the courage of Elizabeth, who welcomed new life when the world had stopped expecting it from her.

All: Teach us to wait as she waited—not in silence alone, but in silence that is making room for song.

One: We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, the Word who was coming even before we had words for him.

All: Amen

Sung Prayer *"Creator of the Stars of Night"* Sarum Plainsong



Prayers of the People Sharon Benton

The Prayer of Jesus - We invite you to use language for God that is most comforting for you: "Our Creator, "Our Father "or "Our Mother."

Our Creator
who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kindom come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil,
For thine is the kindom,
And the power,
And the glory,
Forever and ever.
Amen

We Are Growing Authentic Christian Faith

A Reading from Scripture Luke 1:1-25 Common English Bible — Scout Mitchell

Scripture Response

One: For the Word of God in scripture,
for the Word of God among us,
for the Word of God within us:

All: Thanks be to God.

Sermon *If the Christmas Story was a Musical* — Muriel Otto

Gift of Music Judy Widrig

We Are Living Christ-Inspired Action

Announcements & Offering Scott Ward

Your generosity allows us together to nurture beloved community, grow authentic Christian faith, and live Christ-inspired action. Thank you!
You are welcome to put an offering in the basket during worship. Or, if you prefer, you may:

1. *Give at our website, https://fccb.net/giving/*
2. *Mail checks to First Congregational Church, 2401 Cornwall Avenue, Bellingham, WA 98225*
3. *Use the Breeze app. Download from your app store, set up an account, and give!*
4. *Give by text. Text a dollar amount to (360) 205-1297, and set up your account.*
5. *Scan the QR code on the back cover of the bulletin.*

Musical Offering Judy Widrig

***Hymn #121 (black hymnal)** *"All Earth is Waiting"* Taule

***Benediction & Passing the Peace** Muriel Otto

Postlude Judy Widrig

Appointments with Pastoral Staff

While our pastor is on personal leave, our pastoral care line remains active and staffed by our Chaplain, Charlene Epp.
You can reach Charlene by email at chaplain@fccb.net, or by calling the pastoral care line: 360-733-4255.
You can also email our Admin Assistant: office@fccb.net

UCC Christmas Fund

For over a century the Christmas Fund has provided direct financial assistance to retired and active ministers and church workers in the United Church of Christ.
Last year, thanks to your generosity, The Christmas Fund provided almost $1.7 million in emergency grants and thank-you checks to retired clergy and their families.
Every gift came from people like you. This year, consider giving what you can to continue supporting those who have devoted their lives to serving others.
This Christmas, celebrate the blessings in your life by making a gift to our ministers, church workers, and their families.
Visit christmasfund.org to learn more and donate online.

We will take up a special Christmas Fund Collection on December 20th.

Open and Affirming (ONA):
As an Open and Affirming congregation believing in a loving God, we welcome all people in this church without regard to gender, race, ethnicity, economic or social status, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

We Try to Use Language which will help people feel included in our worship. Since not everyone is comfortable with the same language, we invite you to amend the words of the service as we sing and pray if they do not adequately express your faith. We invite you to assist us in creating new expressions of our common faith and life together. Technical Support: If you need help streaming our worship services or connecting in other ways, please let us know.

Appointments with Pastoral Staff
While our pastor is on personal leave, our care line remains active, staffed by Chaplain Charlene Epp.

Contact Charlene by email: Chaplain@fccb.net.

Pastoral care line: 360-733-4255
You can also email the church office: office@fccb.net.

24/7 Emergency Pastoral Care:
360-733-4255
office@fccb.net

cover photo by Ira E on Unsplash

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
United Church of Christ
An Open & Affirming Congregation
2401 Cornwall Avenue
Bellingham, WA 98225
Church Office: 360-734-3720
www.fccb.net
Office Hours: 10:00 am-2:00 pm, M-F

PASTOR: Sharon Benton, she/her
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY LIFE: Scott Ward, he/him (scott@fccb.net)
CHAPLAIN: Charlene Epp, she/her (chaplain@fccb.net)
ORGANIST: Judy Widrig, she/her
MUSIC COORDINATOR: Niko F C Pen, he/they (music@fccb.net)
CHURCH SCHOOL/ YOUTH COORDINATOR: Maya McEachern, they/them (churchschool@fccb.net)
WORSHIP MEDIA COORDINATOR: Moxxy Rogers, she/her (tech@fccb.net)
CHURCH FACILITY MANAGER: Eric Whitaker, he/him (facility@fccb.net)
CUSTODIAN: Karen Russell, she/her (custodian@fccb.net)

MODERATOR: Jordan Sandoval, she/they
VICE MODERATOR: Kate Destler
PAST MODERATOR: Diane Cooper-Schick, she/her
CLERK: Michael Bunitsky
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