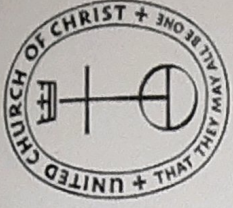


The Congregational Church of Laconia
United Church of Christ
18 Veterans Square
Laconia, NH 03246-3425

Rev. Neil H. Wilson, Senior Pastor
Rev. Paula B. Gile, Associate Pastor
K. Robert Bengtson, Director of Music
Church office: (603) 524-0668

An underwater photograph of a whale swimming in deep blue water. The whale is positioned in the lower right quadrant, moving towards the left. The water is dark blue with some lighter blue highlights from light filtering through the surface.

Possibilities UNFOLDING

Gathering for Worship

January 12, 2020

www.laconiaucc.org

9:30 a.m.

Third Sunday after Christmas

+ * + * + * + * +

The Congregational Church of Laconia, United Church of Christ, is a welcoming Christian community with a scriptural foundation seeking Justice and peace for all.

Preparing

Organ Prelude

K. Robert Bengtson

Meditative Thought *"A great man [person] is always willing to be little."*

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

Welcome & Announcements

Introit

"Praise the Lord with the Sound of Trumpet"

Chancel Choir

Praising

Call to Worship - Adaptation on Psalm 29

God of glorious skies and treacherous depths

Whose voice rains down with majestic power

God of engulfing flames and endless wilderness

Whose voice shakes and strips all before it bare

God of the Cosmos and of the Earth, come to us now as you come to a child

In the shape of a dove, Holy One, gently upon our heads

For in your presence, we are all as children,

Rejoicing in your embrace. Amen

***Opening Hymn**

"O Radiant Christ, Incarnate Word"

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Peace-loving God, we come to you now in a time of trial. Trial in our world and trial in our hearts. We ask that you come to us now and settle our minds. Breathe your Holy breath upon us, God, and allow us to settle into this space. Help us during this time to hear your word and allow it to change us in ways only you can predict. Help us to feel your presence and take it with us as we continue this journey towards peace. Be with us now, Holy God, as we pray the words taught to us so long ago – Our Mother and Father, who are in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your Kingdom come. Your 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 yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen

Musical Offering

"Teach Me, My God and King"

Chancel Choir

A Moment with Our Children

Pastoral Interim Derek Waldron

*** Passing of the Peace & the Gloria**

*Halle, Halle, Halle-lu-jah, Halle, Halle, Halle-lu-jah, Halle,
Halle, Halle-lu-jah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah*

Reflecting & Praying

Scripture Reading

Matthew 3:13-17

Pew Bible p. 720

Sermon

"Who's Blessing Who?"

Pastoral Interim Derek Waldron

Meditative Moment

Preparation for Prayer

"Spirit of the Living God"

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*Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me; Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.
Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me. Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.*

Pastoral Prayer (Yellow prayer cards may be placed in the offering plate. Also you may go to the Church's website click on Prayer Wall and post your requests. www.laconiaucc.org)

Prayer Response

"Hold Us on Your Grace"

Chancel Choir

Committing

Invitation to Stewardship

Offertory

"I Walk the King's Highway"

Chancel Choir

*** Doxology**

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below:
Praise God for all that love has done; Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen*

*** Prayer of Consecration/Dedication** (Unison)

Merciful God, please accept these humble gifts we offer up to you and your Church. We give to you these offerings and we give ourselves as well. By your grace, transform all that is yours into agents of peace for this world. In your Holy name we pray, Amen.

Going to Serve

*** Closing Hymn**

"We Cannot Own the Sunlit Sky"

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Pastoral Benediction

Benediction Response

"Be Still"

Chancel Choir

Organ Postlude

***You may stand as able.**

This Week's Committee Meetings and Gatherings

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Today Jan 12- 9:30 a.m. | Sunday Worship |
| 10:45 a.m. | Hand-Bell Practice |
| 4:00 p.m. | Channel 25 Worship Broadcast |
| 9:30 p.m. | Channel 25 Worship Broadcast |
| 5:00 a.m. | Channel 25 Worship Broadcast |
| Monday Jan 13- 6:30 p.m. | Property and Finance Mtg |
| Tuesday Jan 14- 7:00 p.m. | Stitches of Love |
| Wednesday Jan 15- 6:30 p.m. | Council Mtg |
| Thursday Jan 16- 7:00 p.m. | Choir Practice |
| Next Sunday Jan 19-9:30 a.m. | Sunday Worship |
| 10:45 a.m. | Budget Review Mtg |

Some Announcements

January 19 Budget Presentation by Property and Finance

A Call to the 195th Annual Meeting

of the

Congregational Church of Laconia United Church of Christ

January 26, 2020

The Annual Meeting of the church will be held immediately following worship in the church sanctuary to conduct the following:

- 1) The presentation and vote on the proposed 2020 budget,
- 2) To receive and vote on the Nominating Committee's slate of officers and committee members,
- 3) To receive the reports of all Officers and Committees,
- 4) To present the Church Service Award,
- 5) To act upon any other business that may be brought to the congregation for consideration or action,
- 6) To Install newly elected officers and committee members.

Join us for a time of fellowship downstairs following the service for refreshments served by the Outreach Ministry. Fair Trade coffee is served in biodegradable cups.

Welcome & Information

Welcome to our service of worship! Please introduce yourself to those sitting near you & use a pew rack card to inform us of requests.

Wireless hearing assistance devices, back cushions, large print bulletins and children's activity bags are available; please ask an usher.

Nursery & Child Care Children younger than 1st grade are welcome in the Nursery before the service begins or following the Moment with our Children. Please escort your child to the Nursery room across The Bridge and pick them up after the service. Visitors are always welcome!

Faith Formation The concept of "the beloved community" is seen throughout the Bible and in literature from around the world. The African term "Ubuntu" refers to this and is translated from a longer phrase to mean "I am because you are". As you consider this phrase, also consider donating your spare coins this year to the Faith Formation offering. It will be given to our local family homeless shelter, Belknap House. **Our Service** is video recorded and published. Please speak to one of our ushers if you have any concerns.

The Altar Flowers today are *"In loving memory of my husband, Don and other family members"* given by Claudia Wright.

Sunday, January 19, 2020 • 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. The Beane Center

The Laconia Human Relations Committee is hosting the Annual Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This year they will be featuring a screening of the documentary film **"Here Am I, Send Me: The Journey of Jonathan Daniels"**. Daniels was an Episcopal seminarian and civil rights activist from Keene, NH, who was shot and killed in 1965. There will be an introduction Q&A time with the co-producer of the film, Dr. Lawrence Benaquist.

2020 Church Service Award

It's time to consider that special person or persons who have served this church and community in exemplary ways. The award will be presented to the deserving person (s) at our Annual Congregational meeting January 26, 2020. Forms to submit your suggestions are at each entry way. Ask an usher for one!

If anyone would like to send a card of encouragement to Jenn Moholland Black, please send it c/o Raymond Marden, 7 Church St. Apt. 108, Laconia, NH 03246.

THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST

January 12, 2020

Matthew 3:13-17

Possibilities Unfolding

The Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson, (recently elected) Associate General Minister of Global Engagement and Operations of the United Church of Christ, raised her prophetic and poetic voice addressing General Synod delegates (last June). She shared a memory of a clock without hands she'd seen in Clujj-Naropa, Romania, which became for her an image of the contemporary Church. It looks useless, she noted, unable to perform its stated function of telling passers-by the time. Yet it retained power and relevance.

“That clock in Clujj was a source of inspiration for me as a poet and a theologian,” she said. “It reminded me of what the church is and is supposed to be. That clock did not have the ability to tell time anymore, but I could tell from its location and the fact that it was still there that it pointed to a time when things were different.”...

Thompson wove the theme of time throughout her address. Memory of other times comes relatively easy to the Church. Old stories inspire us with the faith and courage of people who have gone before. There is also a history we would prefer to forget, times when the Church has been on the side of injustice. Misunderstood history, anxiety over loss of numbers and resources, and the rise of fascist dogmas all diminish the Church's faithfulness and effectiveness.

She stressed the power of ecumenical partnerships for addressing these challenges. As the UCC's Minister for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, she has seen these strengths first hand. In an interview, she contrasted this vision with the one dominating domestic politics, obsessed with closing borders. “I think that's a challenge to our theologies of love of neighbor and love of neighbor as self,” she said. “We need to be something different.”

Thompson told the delegates: “Yes, the world is changing. Yes, our communities are changing, too. Yes, the resources that are available for ministry and mission are shrinking. None of these markers name or define the relevance of the church, the possibilities we have for ministry, and the services that can be provided in partnership with the communities we serve locally and globally.”

“The time we have is now,” she declared. “The decisions we make are for today. We are living on borrowed time with the commitment to change the world.”*

*Excerpted from an article by Anderson, Eric S. (June 22, 2019) A Vision of Endless Possibilities for Changing the World. Retrieved from

https://www.ucc.org/news_a_vision_of_endless_possibilities_for_changing_the_world_06212019

