"Don't be afraid. I bring wonderful news."
Merry Christmas!

Whoever you are, and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

Restrooms are located down the hall on the main floor.

All Gender Restrooms are located at the back of the sanctuary and downstairs in the Fellowship Hall (which is accessible).

Changing tables are located in the Nursery on the main floor and at the back of the sanctuary.

*An asterisk is an invitation to rise, in body or spirit. Bolded text is an invitation for the congregation to read or sing in unison.

Please take a candle from one of the ushers at each entrance to the sanctuary to be lit during the singing of "Silent Night." We have glow sticks for the children.
Festive Prelude  "O Thou That Tellest" from The Messiah G.F. Handel
"Bring a Torch" arr. Alfred V. Fedak
"Hark, the Herald Angels Sing" arr. Alfred V. Fedak

Welcome

*Call to Worship

Leader: Do not be afraid;
   for see I am bringing you good news of great joy.
People: To us is born this day in the city of David a Savior,
   the Messiah, the Lord.

*Gathering Hymn  "O Come, All Ye Faithful" Music 18th Century
   Text translated by F. Oakeley

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come, and behold Him, born the King of angels!

Refrain:  O come, let us adore Him;
   O come, let us adore Him;
   O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels; sing in exultation;
sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest! Refrain

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to Thee be all glory giv'n!
Word of the Godhead, now in flesh appearing! Refrain

*Passing of the Peace & Christmas Offering
As you pass the peace, we invite you to place your offerings into one of
the offering plates the ushers are holding at the front and the back of the
sanctuary.
Please remain seated and join in the singing of carols throughout the Christmas story.

Story "... 'I am not scared for you to be my wife, Mary,' he said. 'I will be with you and we will name the boy Jesus.'"

Carol "Joy to the World"  Music by G.F. Handel  Text by Isaac Watts

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her king;
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room
And heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Story "... 'I have no room,' the innkeeper said. 'But you can stay in the little stable in the back. It's warm, and the hay is fresh.'"

Carol "O Little Town of Bethlehem"  Text by Phillips Brooks  Tune by Lewis H. Redner

O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie;
above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by:
yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting Light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.
"... The animals kept them warm as they waited for morning."

Carol
"Away in a Manger"  Attr. Martin Luther

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head;
the stars in the heavens looked down where He lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

"The angel continued, 'Go to Bethlehem! You will find the child laying in a bed of hay!'"

Carol
"Angels We Have Heard on High"  Trad. French Carol

Angels we have heard on high,
sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply
echo back their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo,
gloria in excelsis Deo.

"Later the shepherds returned to their sheep, praising God for all they had seen and heard. Jesus was born!"

Carol
"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"  Music by Felix Mendelssohn  Text by Charles Wesley

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King:
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with th'angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King"
Christ Candle Litany

Leader: In a world where so many experience violence, 
God lights a candle of peace in our hearts.
People: And so we have lit the Advent candle of Peace.
Leader: In a world where so many despair, 
God lights a candle of hope in our hearts.
People: And so we have lit the Advent candle of Hope.
Leader: In a world where so many are sorrowful, 
God lights a candle of joy in our hearts.
People: And so we have lit the Advent candle of Joy.
Leader: In a world where so many experience hatred, 
God lights a candle of love in our hearts.
People: And so we have lit the Advent candle of Love.
Leader: In a world where so many wait in darkness, 
light comes into our hearts through a baby born in a manger. 
He is Immanuel, God With Us!
People: May the light of the Christ candle remind us of the light of God 
within each of us, now and always. Amen.

Lighting the Christ Candle

Anthem
"A Cradle in Bethlehem" words and music by Al Bryan
& Lawrence Stock arr. Fred Bock

Sing sweet and low your lullaby 'till angels say, "Amen."
A mother tonight is rocking a cradle in Bethlehem.
While wise men follow through the dark a star that beckons them,
A mother tonight is rocking a cradle in Bethlehem.
"A little child shall lead them," the prophets said of old.
In storm and tempest keep them until the bell is tolled.
Sing sweet and low...

Christmas Prayer
A Ceremony of Lights

The ushers will light the candles of the people on the aisles. Please pass the light down the pew, making sure that the person with the unlit candle tilts into the flame of the lit candle. The children may crack their candle glowsticks.

*Carol "Peace Peace/Silent Night" Words and Music by Rick & Sylvia Powell

Choir:
Peace, peace, peace on earth and goodwill to all.
This is a time for joy; This is a time for love.
Now let us all sing together of peace, peace, peace on earth.

Silent night, holy night. All is calm, all is bright
'Round yon virgin, mother and child
Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Congregation:
Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light.
Radiant beams from thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

Please extinguish your candles following the final verse of "Silent Night"

*Blessing
Leader: The Lord look upon you with favor
People: And give you peace, hope, joy, and love.

Postlude "Fanfare on 'Joy to the World'" arr. Sarah Rimkus
"In dulci jubilo, BWV 729" arr. J. S. Bach
Announcements

Worship Services: Sundays at 10:00 AM
In Person and Streaming Online

All are invited to join us for worship each Sunday at 10:00 AM, both in person and online. We livestream our services to our website, YouTube, and facebook.

Radical Inclusion Adult Formation Series

This year we began a Radical Inclusion Adult Formation Series. The series will continue in 2022 with a study of the book "White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism" by Robin Diangelo. Jim Hartley will lead the study, beginning with an introduction on Sunday January 23. The study will continue for four weeks on Tuesdays: Feb. 1, 8, 15, and 22. All discussions will take place via Zoom. Please contact Hannah Rice in the church office if you would like to participate.

2022 Mission Trip

Emily Stokes is leading a mission trip to the Hinton Center in Hayesville NC from June 12-18, 2022. All ages are welcome (youth under age 12 must have a parent present). We will serve on a Healthy Home Repair project in the local Appalachian community. The total fee for the all-inclusive experience: $450/person. Talk to Emily Stokes for more information and register by January 15.
**Piano Trio Concert**  
Sunday January 23, 3:00 PM

All are welcome at a piano trio concert in our sanctuary, featuring Daniel Schene (piano), Wanda Becker (violin), and Andrew Ruben (cello).

**Early Music @ 1st:**  
FCC's concert series in partnership with Early Music Missouri

- **Sun. March 13, 3 PM** - Gaelic Song and Dance  
- **Sun. April 24, 3 PM** - Music for Viola d’Amore by Haydn, Stamitz & Others

**2022 Pledge**

Thank you to those who have turned in your pledge cards for 2022. Extra pledge cards are available at each entrance to the sanctuary.

**Resources Used in This Service:**

- Cover image is from Illustrated Ministry  
- Christ Candle litany adapted from "Litany for Advent Candle Lighting", carolpenner.typepad.com, November 24, 2015  
- The Christmas story is from the Spark Story Bible

Scan these QR codes to learn about these events and more, and to give online.

(Open your phone's camera and point it at the codes)
Poinsettias

Ken and Celeste Blumer, in memory of Millicent Hubby, Leo and Dixie Blumer
Paul, Clare, and Joe Brady, in memory of all of our church members
Michele and Bruce Bryan, in honor of their grandchildren,
   Charlotte and Finn Grant
Carol and Ward Klein
Mary Lou Mellish
John and Chrissy Paterson, in honor of Molly S. Paterson
Hannah Rice, in celebration of Shaun, Shayla, and Shamdon
The Wurst Family, in celebration of Melissa Wurst's nephew, Jack Keeven;
   and in celebration of Jeanruie Neil

The Molly Suzanne Beavers Scholarship Fund

Educational assistance for FCC members

Ken and Celeste Blumer, in honor of Erin and Kerri Blumer
Paul, Clare, and Joe Brady
Michele and Bruce Bryan
Carol and Ward Klein
Mary Lou Mellish
Sheila and Bert Merrell, in memory of Dad, Mom, Carol & Steve Olson
Robert M. and Barbara Kelley–O’Neil, in memory of Jane Briner Beavers
   and Dr. Paul Evensen
John, Chrissy, and Molly Paterson, in honor of Suzanne K. Forsyth,
   Carrie Sayers, Mary Paterson Hinze, Pastor Mia White & FCC Staff;
   and in memory of Kenneth Biddle, Carol Duhme, Bill Mellish, Ann Homan,
   and Mary Claire Schultz
The Rezny Family
The Wurst Family, in appreciation of Lucy and Gunnar Wurst
The Clara B. & Paul S. McElroy Scholarship Fund
Providing scholarships for students at Eden Seminary

Paul, Clare, and Joe Brady
Carol and Ward Klein
Sheila and Bert Merrell, in celebration of the Joe Rezny Family
Robert M. and Barbara Kelley–O’Neil, in memory of John W. and Dorothy Merrell
O’Neil and Dr. Robert W. and Helen Kelley
The Rezny Family, in memory of Barbara Rezny
The Wurst Family, in memory of Hank Sinatra

The Tevis Huber & William Stanley Mellish Scholarship Fund
Providing scholarships for students at Eden Seminary

Paul, Clare, and Joe Brady
Carol and Ward Klein
Mary Lou Mellish
Sheila and Bert Merrell, in memory of Bill Mellish
Robert M. and Barbara Kelley–O’Neil, in memory of Bill Mellish, Dr. Stan and Tevis Mellish; and in honor of Mary Lou Mellish
The Rezny Family, in memory of Bill Mellish
The Wurst Family, in memory of Hank Sinatra

The UCC Christmas Fund
Supporting UCC clergy in times of financial or other crisis

Michele and Bruce Bryan
Carol and Ward Klein
Mary Lou Mellish
Hannah Rice, in honor of her grandparents, Rev. Dr. Orval and Ruth Willimann
Thank you to our ushers serving tonight:

Ken Blumer, Clare Brady, Paul Brady

Our Ministry Team:

Dr. Sarah Bereza (MM, MA, PhD), Minister of Music
(sbereza@firstcongregational.org)

Mehran Moslehikhah, Maintenance

Hannah Rice (MDiv), Minister of Administration and Membership
(hrice@firstcongregational.org)

Emily Stokes (MAPS), Minister of Children & Families
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Rev. Mia White (MDiv, MATS), Senior Minister
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