

A close-up photograph of a Christmas tree. The tree is covered in green needles and is decorated with numerous colorful lights in shades of red, green, blue, and white. Several large, shiny, multi-colored ornaments are visible, reflecting the lights. The overall scene is festive and brightly lit.

# A Family Christmas

December 24, 2023



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**A Family Christmas**  
**December 24, 2023**

Tolling of the Bells

Prelude *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence* Trad. French/Hayes

Call to Worship

\*Processional Hymn *O Come, All Ye Faithful* #132 (v1,2,4)

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...

*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 heaven above!  
Glory to God, all glory in the highest...

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,  
Jesus, to thee be all glory given;  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing...

Greeting & Welcome

Responsive Prayer

*One:* Creator God, the earth was a formless void and a shadow lingered over the face of the deep, until your breath moved over the face of the waters. Then you spoke: "Let there be light!"

**All: And there was light.**

*One:* Calling God, you appeared to the ancient prophets, to Mary and Elizabeth. Out of the blazing light of your glory you spoke: "Do not be afraid!"

**All: And they did not fear.**

*One:* Mysterious God, on this holy night, we gather to remember the strange and wonderful ways you show up in our lives. Lest we become distracted, we remember the courage of your servants who said: "Here I am."

**All: We are here.**

*One:* Settling God, on this silent night, we gather to hold and share the candlelight. Alone it can never be enough; but together we can light the world. Amen.

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\* As the Spirit guides you, we encourage you to rise in body or spirit.

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First Lesson	Isaiah 52:7-10 <i>The Peace of the Messiah</i>	Jaime Prince
Junior Choir Anthem	<i>God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen</i>	Robinson
Second Lesson	John 1:1-9 <i>In the Beginning</i>	Jerry Harting
*Carol	<i>O Little Town of Bethlehem</i>	#134 (v1,4)
	<p>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.</p> <p>O holy Child of Bethlehem! Descend to us, we pray;  Cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.  We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell;  O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Emmanuel.</p>	
Third Lesson	Isaiah 42:1-7 <i>A Light to the Nations</i>	Leigh Remington
Senior Choir Anthem	<i>Love Came Down from Heaven</i>	Trad. English/Kellner Lisa Putukian, oboe
Message for the Children		
Fourth Lesson	Luke 2:8-15 <i>Angels Appear to the Shepherds</i>	Robert Clark
*Carol	<i>Hark! The Herald Angels Sing</i>	#120 (v1,2)
	<p>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 the angelic host proclaim: "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"  <i>Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"</i></p> <p>Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord!  Late in time behold him come, offspring of the virgin's womb.  Veiled in flesh the Godhead see. Hail the incarnate deity.  Please with us on earth to dwell, Jesus our Emmanuel.  <i>Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"</i></p>	

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The Christmas Offering		Rev. Morisse
Offertory	<i>Still, Still, Still</i>	<i>Larter</i>
Fifth Lesson	Luke 2:1-7 <i>Jesus Is Born</i>	Cora Allen
Senior Choir Anthem	<i>Ubi Caritas</i>	<i>Gjielo</i>

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

*Our Creator, who art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom 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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

Lighting the Christ Candle

The Mehta Family

*One:* Jesus Christ, You are the light of our world.

**All: Your light burns forever!**

*Candle Lighters will ignite the candle of the person closest to the center aisle. Please pass the light to those next to you. Remember, lit candles stay upright, and unlit candles tilt to the flame to set alight. Please remain seated once the light has been shared.*

\*Carol

*Silent Night*

#138

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.  
Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight.  
Glories stream from heaven afar.  
Heavenly hosts sing alleluia; Christ, the Savior, is born!  
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.

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Benediction

Rev. Morisse

\*Carol

*Joy to the World!*

#130

Joy to the world! The Lord is come: Let earth receive her King!  
Let every heart prepare Christ room,  
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the world, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ!  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains,  
repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

Christ rules the world with truth and grace  
and makes the nations prove the glories of God's righteousness,  
and wonders of God's love, and wonders of God's love,  
and wonders, wonders of God's love.

Postlude

*Christus Natus Est*

*Titcomb*



*A special word of gratitude to the people who make this service special,  
before & during, in front & behind. Thank you to our Deacons, Choir members,  
ushers, greeters, and readers.*

## *New Year's Eve*

*December 31, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.*

*Breakfast Church is back! Come comfortable for worship in the Parish Hall.  
Breakfast will be provided by your Deacons. Remember the story. Sing the  
Carols. Leave full and happy.*

## *Epiphany*

*Sunday, January 7, 2024, at 10:30 a.m.*

*First Congregational Church Natick (2 East Central Street)  
In partnership with Edwards Church, Eliot Church, and First Church,  
we consider the Holy Family's journey to Egypt.*

*Executive Conference Minister Rev. Liz Garrigan-Byerly, preaching  
and a special forum after worship featuring Lucia Panichella who leads refugee  
and immigration services for Jewish Family Services.*

# *Love Came Down from Heaven*

Jeffrey & Kellner

*Love came down from heaven; in flesh it did appear  
As pure as freshly fallen snow when winter time is here.  
As innocent as one who sleeps, as lustrous as a star,  
Love came down from heaven to touch us as we are.*

*Hope came down from heaven; in flesh it did appear.  
The silent Word proclaimed by God to wipe away each tear.  
As tender as a newborn child who comes without a scar,  
Hope came down from heaven to touch us as we are.*

*Joy came down from heaven; in flesh it did appear.  
It was proclaimed to all the earth by angels drawing near.  
A source of joy for learned ones who traveled from afar,  
Joy came down from heaven to touch us as we are.*

*Peace came down from heaven; in flesh it did appear.  
A Lamb unblemished, going forth without a trace of fear  
To build a kingdom free from hate that sin can never mar.  
Peace came down from heaven to touch us as we are.*

*Christ came down from heaven; in flesh he did appear.  
The Son of God in human form was Mary's child so dear.  
He came all people to redeem and death's gates to unbar.  
Christ came down from heaven to touch us as we are.*

## *Ubi Caritas*

Gjielo

*Where there is caring and love, God is there.  
The love of Christ has brought us together as one.  
Let us rejoice and exult in that.  
Let us fear and love the living God.  
Let us love from a sincere heart.  
Where there is caring and love, God is there.*



# Christmas

## Poinsettias

Carole Blackman, in loving memory of Warren Blackman and of our parents

Vicki Bruce, in sweet memory of Mac. Sometimes, the most real things are those you cannot see

Kathy Copson, in celebration of our grand nieces and nephew, Cora Casaceli, Hannah Palmgren, and Teddy Sobenko

Leslie & Mark Dooley, in memory of Vivian & Walter Dooley

Ruth Griffin, in honor of my family

Cher Hamilton, in memory of Delores & Richard Kleine

Roberta Kwiatkowski, in celebration of my family

Nancy Lawson, Beth, Frank, Nick & Stefan Marascio, in loving memory of Bob Lawson, and in fond and loving memory of Kurt Lawson

Beth, Frank, Nick & Stefan Marascio, in loving memory of Bob Lawson, Dad & Grandpa

Joyce Miller, in memory of A.J. & Maryellen Busch; in honor of Vivian & Genevieve Busch; in memory of Winona & Robert Miller; in memory of Harvey & Brian Miller

Rebecca Reiner, in memory of Van Reiner, beloved father and grandfather

Mattie & Rob Schadt, in memory of Katy Shander

Alison Simons, in memory of Nana Anna Pooler, who was kind to everyone and who loved her church

Nancy Spence, in celebration of the birth of my great-grandson, Cameron Downing, born on November 29

Hilary Sullivan, in memory of loved ones: William G. Sullivan, Cecil D. Andrews, Elinor E. Sullivan, Deborah Eve Reade Kochka; and in honor of those we can still hug

Elizabeth Tustian, in memory of all my departed family, but especially Dean O'Donnell



# Epiphany

Sunday, January 7, 2023, 10:30 am  
First Congregational Church of Natick  
2 East Central Street, Natick

A shared worship service among four congregations of the United Church of Christ.  
Edwards Church in Framingham, The Eliot Church of Natick,  
First Congregational Church Natick, The Plymouth Church in Framingham

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**AFTER THE THREE MAGI LEFT, BY ANOTHER ROAD, MARY, JOSEPH, AND  
JESUS WERE FORCED TO FLEE TO EGYPT.  
WHAT CAN OUR FAITH TEACH US ABOUT THE MIGRANT JOURNEY?**

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The Rev. Elizabeth Garrigan-Byerly, Executive Minister for Area Conference Ministry, for the Southern New England Conference will preach. After worship, Lucia Panichella, LCSW, will lead a discussion. Lucia is the Senior Director, Programs and Partnership for Jewish Family Services.

A special collection will be taken for Jewish Family Services of Metro West Immigrant & Resettlement Services.



Show up at 9:30 a.m. to join our Pick-up Choir!

Bring a snack to share at Coffee Hour.

Learn how to access worship remotely at [www.fcc1651.org/content/worship](http://www.fcc1651.org/content/worship)