

First Congregational Church of Ithaca
Fourth Sunday of Advent (December 20, 2020)

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!

Prelude Vom Himmel hoch (From Heaven on High) J. S. Bach

Welcome and Announcements

***Call to Worship**

We have waited long for the Christ.

Deep has been the darkness.

We long for the light of Christ to shine.

May it shine right here among us.

We will not fear the shadows that surround us.

Christ is coming among us – hope is kindled!

***Hymn** Watchman, Tell Us of the Night (insert, #97)

Lighting the Advent Candle

The prophet Isaiah declares, "A young woman is with child, and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel [which means: God-With-Us]." The risen Christ declares, "I am with you always, to the end of the age." (*Isaiah 7:14 and Matt. 28:20*)

That we may trust that God is with us and live in the light of Christ's coming –

Risen Christ, Light of the world, shine in our lives and shine among us now.

Unison Prayer

Holy and Loving God, whose Spirit rested on Joseph, calling him to parenthood; and on Mary, preparing her for motherhood and birth; by your Spirit, call and prepare us for our relationships, our work, our ministry, that we also may say, "Your will be done in us," to the glory of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

***Advent Candle Song, v. 4**

*Four bright candles, light our way. Fill the world with love, we pray,
Love of God that deeply delves, love of neighbors as ourselves.
Candles burning, candles bright, fill the world with endless light;
Fill our hearts that we may, too, burn more brightly, burn more true.*

***Sharing the Peace of Christ**

***Sung Response** *Glory to the Creator, and to the Christ, and to the Holy Ghost
As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, amen.*

Scripture Lessons Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26
Romans 16:25-27
Luke 1:26-38

Anthem Sweet Little Jesus Boy Mark Hall, Bernhard Herms

Sermon "The Annunciation and the Humanities"

***Hymn** The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came (insert, #972)

Morning Prayers and Lord's Prayer

Litany Prayer

Leader: We pray to God

People: Hear us, O God

Sung Response *Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me (twice).
Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me. Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.*

Sharing our Gifts O Holy Night Adolphe Adam

***Doxology** *Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise God, all creatures here below.
Praise God above, ye heavenly host, Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. AMEN.*

***Prayer of Dedication**

***Hymn** O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (insert, #88)

***Benediction**

Postlude *Presto Agitato* from the *Moonlight Sonata* Ludwig van Beethoven
Commemorating the composer's 250th birthday, Dec. 16

*** Congregation stands (*live-streamers, feel free to lift your hearts!*)**

Participating Today

Rev. Dr. David A. Kaden, Senior Minister
Susan Fast, Director of Caring Ministries, sustfast@yahoo.com
Dr. William Cowdery, Director of Music
David J. Kaden, Tech Support
H. Donald Hinman, bass soloist
Siu-ling Wong Chaloemtiarana, piano accompanist
Samuel Smith, piano (postlude)

Watchman, Tell Us of the Night 97

*
 1 Watch-man, tell us of the night, what its signs of prom-ise are.
 2 Watch-man, tell us of the night; high-er yet that star as-cends.
 3 Watch-man, tell us of the night, for the morn-ing seems to dawn.

Trav-eler, what a won-drous sight: see that glo-ry-beam-ing star.
 Trav-eler, bless-ed-ness and light, peace and truth its course por-tends.
 Trav-eler, shad-ows take their flight; doubt and ter-ror are with-drawn.

Watch-man, does its beau-teous ray news of joy or hope fore-tell?
 Watch-man, will its beams a-lone gild the spot that gave them birth?
 Watch-man, you may go your way; has-ten to your qui-et home.

Trav-eler, yes; it brings the day, prom-ised day of Is-ra-el.
 Trav-eler, a-ges are its own; see, it bursts o'er all the earth.
 Trav-eler, we re-joice to-day, for Em-man-u-el has come!

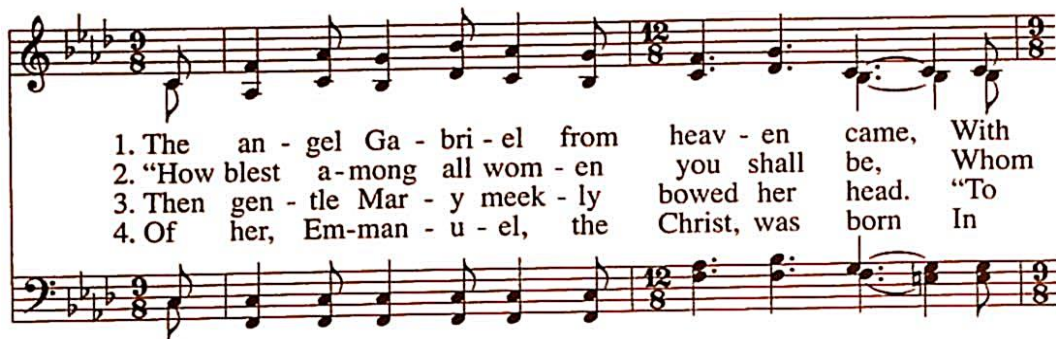
**May be sung antiphonally.*

This unusual dialogue hymn alternates between the voice of a traveler and that of a watchman, setting up an exchange that creates parallels between the coming of dawn and the birth of Christ. The tune is named for a Welsh town whose name means "mouth of the bending river."

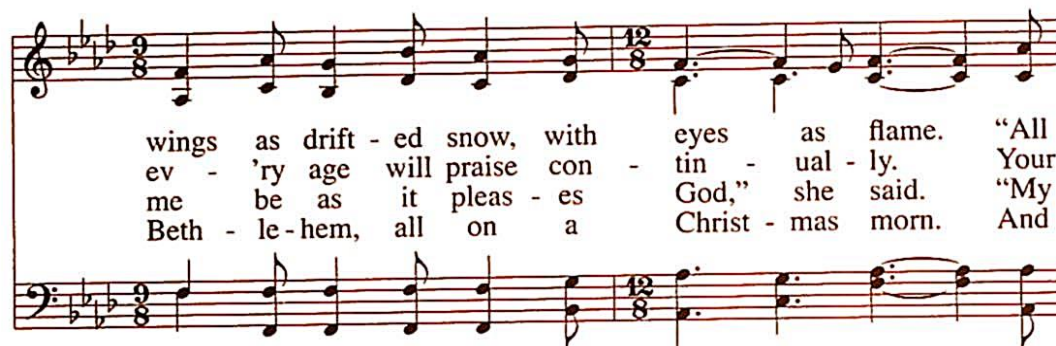
TEXT: John Bowring, 1825, alt.
 MUSIC: Joseph Parry, 1876

ABERYSTWYTH
 7.7.7.7.D

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came 972



1. The an - gel Ga - bri - el from heav - en came, With
 2. "How blest a - mong all wom - en you shall be, Whom
 3. Then gen - tle Mar - y meek - ly bowed her head. "To
 4. Of her, Em - man - u - el, the Christ, was born In



wings as drift - ed snow, with eyes as flame. "All
 ev - 'ry age will praise con - tin - ual - ly. Your
 me be as it pleas - es God," she said. "My
 Beth - le - hem, all on a Christ - mas morn. And



hail," said he, "O low - ly maid - en Mar - y, Most
 Son shall be Em - man - u - el, by seers fore - told, Most
 soul shall laud and mag - ni - fy God's ho - ly name." Most
 Chris - tian folk through - out the world will ev - er say: "Most



high - ly fa - vored la - dy." Gló - ri - a!
 high - ly fa - vored la - dy." Gló - ri - a!
 high - ly fa - vored la - dy, Gló - ri - a!
 high - ly fa - vored la - dy." Gló - ri - a!

Text: Basque carol; para. by Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834-1924, alt.
 Tune: GABRIEL'S MESSAGE, 10 10 12 10; Basque carol; harm. by Charles E. Pettman, 1865-1943

88 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som
 2 O come, thou Wis - dom from on high, who or - derest
 3 O come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy
 4 O come, thou Root of Jes - se, free thine own from



cap - tive Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile
 all things might - i - ly: to us the path of knowl - edge
 tribes on Si - nai's height in an - cient times didst give the
 Sa - tan's tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell thy peo - ple



here un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
 show; and teach us in her ways to go. Re-joice! Re-joice!
 law in cloud and maj - es - ty and awe.
 save and give them vic - tory o'er the grave.



Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>5 O come, thou Key of David, come,
 and open wide our heavenly home;
 make safe the way that leads on high,
 and close the path to misery.
 Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
 shall come to thee, O Israel.</p> | <p>6 O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
 our spirits by thine advent here;
 disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
 and death's dark shadows put to flight.
 Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
 shall come to thee, O Israel.</p> |
|--|--|
- 7 O come, Desire of nations, bind
 all peoples in one heart and mind;
 bid envy, strife, and discord cease;
 fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
 Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
 shall come to thee, O Israel.

One stanza of this paraphrase of the great O Antiphons may be sung on each of the last days of Advent as follows:

Dec. 17: O Wisdom (2)

Dec. 20: O Key of David (5)

Dec. 23: O Emmanuel (1)

Dec. 18: O Lord of might (3)

Dec. 21: O Dayspring (6)

Dec. 19: O Root of Jesse (4)

Dec. 22: O Desire of Nations (7)

These titles of the coming Christ appeared in daily Vesper antiphons sung during the week before Christmas; their roots date at least to the reign of Charlemagne. Both text and tune are the fruit of 19th-century efforts to reclaim Christian treasures from pre-Reformation sources.

Welcoming New Members Liturgy

Do you desire to become a member of First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ? If so, please say, "I do."

I do.

Will you, as best as you are able, continue on your faith journey by participating in the life and mission of the church as it serves our community and world? And will you draw upon our spiritual resources when you need them? If so, please say, "I will."

I will.

Will you, as best as you are able, work with us in the spirit of Christ to create a better world for all people? If so, please say, "I will."

I will.

Will the congregation of First Congregational Church please rise as you are able: Will you help these gathered find their place in the church, pray with and for them, welcome them fully, be "angels" for them in times of distress, and servants to them in times of need? If so, please say, "We will."

We will.

Let us, the congregation of First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ express our welcome and affirm our mutual ministry in Christ.

We welcome you with joy in the common life of this church. We promise you our friendship and prayers as we share the hopes and labors of the church. We will continue to grow together in our journeys of faith, loving one another, and being witnesses for God, who moves in our world, and whose hands and feet we are.

Let us pray: Loving Mother-Father God, give to each of us strength for life's journey, courage in time of suffering, the comfort of faith, love that cannot die, laughter in the company of friends, and the hope of new life; through Christ, who makes us one. Amen.

Introducing FCCI's Newest Members!

Lydia and Laura Dolch come to FCCI from St. Paul's United Methodist Church. They have four children: Freya (b. 7/21/07) is in eighth grade, Simka (b. 1/13/11) is in fourth grade, and Dowan (b. 9/13/13) and Greta (b. 9/13/13) are in first grade. Laura has lived in Ithaca since 1997 when she began attending Ithaca College. She is from Simsbury, CT. Laura has her own business doing bookkeeping for various clients. She enjoys the outdoors with her family – hiking, swimming skiing, visiting the beach, and kayaking. Lydia has lived in Ithaca since 1992. She is the founder of www.openthelid.com, web-based empowerment courses and community for teens and adults with neuro-diverse and neuro-typical needs such as autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, and sensory processing challenges. Lydia has an education background, working as a special education teacher and consultant as well as an art teacher. She also enjoys being outdoors with her family – bike riding, swimming, hiking, and cross-country skiing. Lydia also loves singing and the arts. “I am an artist,” she says, “currently putting my creativity into expanding my company.” “We are new to FCCI,” says Lydia, “and grateful for the vibrant children’s and youth programming and powerful Sunday sermons as well as the Vespers!”

Allison Burchell-Robinson (“Burchell” is pronounced *Bur-shell*) comes to FCCI from the Storrs Congregational Church (UCC) in Storrs, CT where she served both as Treasurer and Council President. She lived in Ashford, CT in a 305-year-old house that had been in her family since it was built (ca. 1715). Allison’s husband Wally (d. January 2020) restored the house – plumbing, electric, insulation, etc. Wally was a news and sports correspondent for NBC and ABC national networks. Allison’s son Jonathan (d. 2003) was a bush pilot tracking lions for the Wildlife Conservation Society and National Geographic. Allison and Wally lived in New York City for many years where Allison worked for Covenant House and served as Vice President of the Corporate Purchasing Department. Prior to her time at Covenant House, Allison worked in theatre management for 20 years, including co-founding Prince Street Players Ltd. Among her many interests, Allison says, “I am an exercise enthusiast, an avid walking, and passionate about riding. At one point I had four horses in my barn.” Her horse Gitane still resides in Connecticut.