



Second Sunday after Christmas
Congregational Church of Laconia United Church of Christ
 9:30 a.m. January 3, 2021

Meditative Thought *“We may not all be gathered in the same building, but at this time, when we need each other so much, we are invited to worship together, from where we are – knowing that God can hear us all and can blend even distant voices into one song of worship.”*

- National Worship Team, Church of Scotland

Prelude

Call to Worship (in prayer form)

Lord of yesterday, today and tomorrow, we gather here this first Sunday of the New Year, **in a mixture of hope, anticipation, fear, excitement, and expectation.**

We do not know what the year holds for us. There are things we are afraid of: **worries about health and family, job security and finances.**

There is much to look forward to –

Possible weddings or anniversaries, holidays to enjoy, friends to laugh with.

Lord God, the coming year is full of uncertainty as well as hope.

Whatever the year holds for us, though, we trust You, and we place every day of this year in your care knowing that, as in the past, You are with us, caring for us with constant love.

And so Lord, we place ourselves into your keeping and dedicate our lives to your service through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Savior.

Amen.

Opening Hymn *"Who Would Think That What Was Needed"* # 153 New Century Hymnal

**Who would think that what was needed to transform and save the earth
Might not be a plan or army proud in purpose, proved in worth?
Who would think, despite derision, that a child should lead the way?
God surprises earth with heaven, coming here on Christmas day.**

**Shepherds watch and sages wonder, monarchs scorn and angels sing;
Such a place as none would reckon hosts a holy, helpless thing;
Stabled beasts and passing strangers watch a baby laid in hay:
God surprises earth with heaven, coming here on Christmas day.**

**Centuries of skill and science span the past from which we move,
Yet experience questions whether with such progress we improve.
In our search for sense and meaning, lest our hopes and humor fray,
God surprises earth with heaven, coming here on Christmas day.**

Prayer of Invocation and Lord's Prayer

**Hovering Spirit, because of you there was a beginning.
Heavenly Dove, because of you there is a continuing.
Untameable Wind, because of you there will be a completing.
From the emptiness before the birth of time to the fullness of the new earth and heaven,
Holy Spirit, You breathe and blow, dancing to our Creator's tune,
in step with our Savior's purposes.
Fill our expectant hearts as we stand on this threshold of a new year.
We have been here so many times; and we have never been here before.
Source, Savior, Spring of life, refreshing and replenishing God,
all that pours from you is good and wise and true.
Soak us with the delight of your surprising nearness and let us splash in puddles of joy.
God in Community, how privileged we are to be your people, chosen and known and loved
by you, here and now this morning and in all our days gone by and still to come. To this end
and more we pray the prayer Jesus taught: Abba, holy Parent, 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 debts as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

Musical Offering *"It Came Upon a Midnight Clear"* Jaylene Bengtson

Scripture Reading Jeremiah 31: 7-14

Message *"Coming Home to God"*

A Musical Reflection *"Jesus, Jesus Rest Your Head"* Cathy Lord, piano

Pastoral Prayer

Communion Song: *“As We Gather at Your Table”* verse 1 # 332 NCH

We invite to prepare your “bread” and “cup” at home.

As we gather at your table, as we listen to your word,
 Help us know, O God, your presence; let our hearts and minds be stirred.
 Nourish us with sacred story till we claim it as our own;
 Teach us through this holy banquet how to make Love’s victory known.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

Communion Prayer

Words of Institution

Bread & Cup

Prayer for the Holy Spirit

Prayer of Thanksgiving (Unison)

You have called us the body of Christ, the people of the New Jerusalem.

You have claimed us as your own.

Help us to look bravely into the future and see the promise of the New Year,

to see the abundance of your gifts and to feel the presence of your Spirit

in the world and move with this Spirit forward in strength, love and grace. Amen.

Hymn *“Forward Though the Ages”* # 377 NCH

Forward through the ages, in unbroken line,

move the faithful spirits at the call divine;

Gifts in differing measure, hearts of one accord,

Manifold in service, one the sure reward.

Forward through the ages, in unbroken line,

Move the faithful spirits at the call divine.

Wide grows God’s dominion, reign of love and peace;

for it we must labor, till all strivings cease.

Prophets have proclaimed it, teachers testified,

Poets sung its glory, martyrs for it died.

Forward through the ages, in unbroken line,

Move the faithful spirits at the call divine.

Not alone we conquer, not alone we fall;

In each loss or triumph, lose or triumph all.

Bound by God’s far purpose in one living whole,

Move we on together to the shining goal.

**Forward through the ages, in unbroken line,
Move the faithful spirits at the call divine.**

Benediction

**Lead us on, to learn willingly,
to love well and to live in trust.
Surround us with hope, shield us from harm,
set us on our way rejoicing.
Let all God's people say "Amen."**

God Be with You 'til We Meet Again

**God be with you 'til we meet again
By God's counsel's guide uphold you
With God's sheep securely fold you.
God be with you 'til we meet again.**

Postlude



**Today's flowers are given in loving memory of our parents
Ned and Vivian McKenney and Robert and Ruth Kreitler
By John and Margie Kreitler.**



Announcements

Church office hours

The office will be open 9 AM – 3 PM Monday, Wednesday and Friday
Please make every effort to conduct any business you may have with the church office on these days.

Prayer Requests: *If you're watching today's service on YouTube, you may send in your prayer requests via the comment section on the YouTube page. You may also post your prayers on the Prayer Wall on the website. Throughout the week, feel free to contact Pastor Neil. While we may not be able to pray by your side physically, we do want to be in prayer with you.*

January Devotionals

Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m. on Zoom.

Here is your link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84679318442>

Meeting ID: 846 7931 8442

Dial by your location

+1 929 436 2866 US (New York)

Book Discussion for January

“The Little Old Lady Who Broke All the Rules”

By Catharina Ingleman-Sunberg

Friday, January 21, 2021 Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87814469927?pwd=MWpFaXpwRjhoSmZONXVQUzd0Ukt1UT09>

Meeting ID: 878 1446 9927

Passcode: dr5fq6

For those planning ahead: February book “The Vanishing Half” by Brit Bennett

And March book “Peace Like a River” by Leif Enger

If you have questions you may contact Martha Clement 603-520-8219

