

United Church of Christ

Groton Congregational Church

Founded in 1702



November 29, 2020



We Gather in Community as God's People



**Prelude:
Choir**

“Praise Unfolding”

Handbell

Announcements:

A special Zoom Event is being held on December 2, 2020 at 7pm. We will be hosting Reverend Peter Baldwin Panagore author of *Heaven is Beautiful*. He will discuss his fascinating book *and his own Near Death Experience*. Invitations to this Zoom event will be sent to Members and Friends of the Church on November 30th. This event is limited to 100 people but it is open to the public, if you have a friend outside the Church who would be interested please have them sign up on our Facebook page under Events.

On December 9, 2020 at 6:30pm, Reverend Lee Ireland will lead the Book Study Group through *Listening for the Heartbeat of God a Study of Celtic Spirituality* by J. Philip Newell. Books are available from the Church for \$10.00/each. Sign up on our Facebook Page <http://www.facebook.com/grotoncongregationalchurch>

Our Annual Pledge Drive is still in gear. If you have not received your letter from the Stewardship Committee with pledge card please contact the office. You may submit your pledge cards at any time.

Zoom Meetings

1- Don't forget about our Zoom Coffee Hour at 11:30am on November 29th

2- Our weekly Wednesday Prayer meeting at 5:30pm. If you are not receiving our weekly Zoom invitations, please email the office.

Call to Worship

Leader: Now is the time of watching and waiting.

People: The time of great expectation of new life.

Leader: Now is the season of hope unfolding.

People: The dark winter season when hope is waiting to be born.

Leader: Let us come before God with receptive and willing spirits.

People: May our souls magnify God's name

Leader: and may our spirits rejoice in God our Savior!

People: Rejoice! God comes to bring the birth of new life
and peace!

Prayer of Invocation

Gracious God, with great gentleness and care, you call us to be your people, to do your work. Be here with us today, for we come, asking your support in all that we do. Clear our minds, open our hearts, touch us with your presence, and empower us to worship and serve you. Help us hear anew, the cry of those who would lead us to Christ. Tune our ears to your heralds, that we might also testify to your light. Teach us to live in expectation, that what we do today may be anchored in the certainty of your tomorrow. Keep us faithful in love and watchful in prayer, so that we may stand with confidence and hope at the coming of Christ, our redeemer and Lord, Amen.



Opening Hymn: “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” (verse 1, 3, &4)

O come, O come, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come thou wisdom from on high
and order all things far and nigh
to us the path of knowledge show
and cause us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one
heart and mind; bid envy, strife, and quarrels cease;
fill the whole world with Heaven’s peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

Lighting of the First Advent Candle

The Candle of Hope

Burt & Sally Turner



One: O Holy One, we light this first candle,
a candle of grief,
in the midst of the stories of the last year;
Let it burn through these weeks as a beacon
to become the light of Hope.
Let it guide us to your presence in our midst,
Leading us to your Justice and Joy in the
service of Peace.

People: God be with us in this light of hope

Moment of Silence

Assurance of Grace 1 Corinthians 1: 3-9

God is faithful and gives us grace in Christ Jesus. In this fellowship we can count on being enriched
In speech, in knowledge, in every spiritual gift. Let us give thanks, in Christ, we are forgiven
and sent forth to work for God’s reign among us.



Hymn: *“One Candle Is Lit”* *(verse 1)*

Come surely, Lord Jesus, as dawn follows night,
Our hearts long to greet you, as roses the light.
Salvation draws near us our vision engage,
One candle is lit for the hope of the age.

- We Express Our Gratitude -

Call To Offering: In struggle and in joy, God is faithful to us.

We bring forth our offerings – our tithes, our treasures, our least coins –to demonstrate our faithfulness to God.

Offertory Anthem:

“Come Emanuel”

Prayer of Dedication

God of calendars and candles, God who comes to be with us, we make visible our praise through our offerings. Though not wrapped in paper and bows, we offer these and ourselves and ask for your blessings upon them and us to help spread the good news of your love and grace in the world as we await that special morning again to celebrate the Christ child’s presence in our midst.

Amen.

We Share our Concerns with God and Each Other

Sharing our Concerns

Pastoral Prayer



We Hear God’s Words and Guidance for Our Lives

Isiah 60: 1-5a The Ingathering of the Dispersed

60 Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.² For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you.³ Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. ⁴Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses’ arms. ⁵ Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice,^[a] because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

Mark 13: 24-37 The Coming of the Son of Man

²⁴ “But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light,

²⁵ and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶ Then they will see

‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. ²⁷ Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

The Lesson of the Fig Tree

²⁸ “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he^[a] is near, at the very gates. ³⁰ Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

The Necessity for Watchfulness

³² “But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Beware, keep alert;^[b] for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴ It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵ Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶ or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷ And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

Sermon: “Keep Awake”

Closing Hymn

“People, Look East” #142 (all verses)

1. People, look east. The time is near
Of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
Trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the guest, is on the way.

2. Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,
One more seed is planted there:
Give up your strength the seed to nourish,
That in course the flower may flourish.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the rose, is on the way.

3. Birds, though you long have ceased to build,
Guard the nest that must be filled.
Even the hour when wings are frozen
God for fledging time has chosen.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the bird, is on the way.

4. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim
One more light the bowl shall brim,

Shining beyond the frosty weather,
Bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the star, is on the way.

5. Angels, announce with shouts of mirth
Christ who brings new life to earth.
Set every peak and valley humming
With the word, the Lord is coming.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Lord, is on the way.

Benediction

Send us into the world refreshed in hope,
Awake, alert, attuned to your presence
ready to join your work of blessing for all.
Amen.

***Benediction Sung Response**

“Go Now in Peace” by Besig

Go now in peace. Never be afraid.
God will go with you each hour of every day.
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true.
Know God will guide you in all you do.
Go now in love, and show you believe.
Reach out to others so all the world can see.
God will be there watching from above.
Go now in peace, in faith, and in love. **Amen**



Minister: Reverend Lee Ireland
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The Groton Congregational Choir
The Groton Congregational Handbell Choir