Mary and Elizabeth by Dorothy Webster Hawksley

Fourth Sunday of Advent
Sunday, December 20, 2015
10:30 am
Welcome

* Indicates to rise in body or spirit

Please pass the red friendship pads to sign in at this time. If this is your first time visiting, please legibly write your name and address so we may send you a letter of welcome and more information about our church.

Voluntary

Lighting of Advent Candles

**One:** Elizabeth was barren with no hope for a child, but then a baby filled her womb. The presence of new life filled her with hope.

**All:** *May the light of Christ fill us with hope.*

(Liturgist lights the Hope candle)

**One:** Elizabeth did not know why Mary came rushing through her doors, but the leap of her unborn child filled her with the knowledge of the Lord. And with peace.

**All:** *May the light of Christ fill us with peace.*

(Liturgist lights the Peace candle)

**One:** When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child in her womb leaped for joy.

**All:** *May the light of Christ fill us with joy.*

(Liturgist lights the Joy candle)

**One:** In that moment that was filled with hope, peace, and joy, Mary opened her mouth to sing, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior…” rejoiced in the God who loves the oppressed, the humble and the hungry. Mary a young girl, unseen by the powerful of the world is filled with the light and made powerful by a God bent on overturning the world with an unwed mother and a newborn baby.

**All:** *Like Mary, let the light of Christ fill us with love.*
Sung Response      “Light Four Candles”

Prayer
One: Please join me in prayer.

All: God of Love, we thank you for bringing the light of Christ into the world. May the love shared by Elizabeth and Mary serve as a beacon for our own affections. May we, like Mary, create love that exalts the lowly and makes the low proud. May we all bear the light that transforms the world. Amen.

*Hymn #119      “My Soul Gives Glory to My God”

First Reading      Micah 2:1-5a
One: For the word of God in scripture, for the word of God among us, for the word of God within us

All: Thanks be to God!

Anthem      “Carols Around” - Nygard

Time with Children      Gary Mitchell

After a Time with Children, children may follow Gary out of the sanctuary and into a classroom for a time of religious exploration and education, and will return to the sanctuary before the last hymn. Children are also welcome to remain in worship.
*Passing the Peace

Second Reading  
One: For the word of God in scripture, for the word of God among us, for the word of God within us 
All: *Thanks be to God!*

Sermon  
“Singing Expectantly”  
Rev. Margot Pickett

*Hymn #148  
“What Child Is This”

Prayers of the People

Recognition of Volunteers  
Yolanda Adams
One: Let us pray. Almighty God, you have called us into fellowship as the Church of Jesus Christ in this place, and you have blessed us and enriched our lives through your Holy Word and Sacraments. You strengthen us and inspire us with your Holy Spirit to live lives of mutual love and service in the world. For all this, and, above all, for the all of the Spiritual gifts you have given to each of us, we give our heartfelt thanks and praise. 
ONE: For those who lead and those who follow; for Ministries, and for Executive, Personnel and Finance Boards: 
ALL: *We give you thanks, O Lord.*
ONE: For ushers and greeters, for those assisting ministers and readers, for readers and servers, for musicians and choirs: 
ALL: *We give you thanks, O Lord.*
ONE: For teachers and preachers, for those who visit and for those who call: 
ALL: *We give you thanks, O Lord.*
ONE: For cleaners and dusters, for maintainers and fixers, for those who cook and those who eat: 
ALL: *We give you thanks, O Lord.*
ONE: For administrators and helpers, for counters and record keepers, for bulletin folders and envelope stuffers: 
ALL: *We give you thanks, O Lord.*
ONE: For those who give time, talents and resources and for those who pray, for those who plan and those who guide; for those with wisdom and those with inspiration:

ALL: *We give you thanks, O Lord.*

ONE: For youth workers and youth, for parents and grandparents, for loving sisters and brothers in Christ:

ALL: *We give you thanks, O Lord.*

ONE: For our past and for our future, for the many ways that we embody Christ for the needy in the world, for mission and ministry and for a purpose for being the Church:

ALL: *We give you thanks, O Lord.*

ONE: Keep us ever close to You, O God that we might find strength to endure to the end:

ALL: *We dedicate our lives to your service.*

ONE: Bind us to your love, and through that love, to one another, and to keep listening to a Still Speaking God:

ALL: *We dedicate our lives to your service.*

ONE: Make us cheerful givers and faithful workers for the good of the Faith Community and to the Community of our World:

ALL: *We dedicate our lives to your service.*

Ministry Updates

Yolanda Adams

We Offer Our Gifts

**Offertory**  
Fantasy Un Flambeau, Jeanette, Isabella - Kosche  
**Prayer of Dedication**

*Hymn #144*  
“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

Benediction
For Today’s Service
Greeters/Ushers: Mary Ann Brackett & Randall Bowman
Liturgist: Cindy Bovee-Kemper
Candle Lighter: Linda Comer and Craig McIntosh
Deacon of the Month: Mary Kancevitch
Alternate Deacon of the Month: Sharon Stepp (Handicap Door)
Nursery/Childcare: Denise Potts.

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Creative Contemplative Group

Mondays at 5:45-8pm: Creative Contemplative Group. Join us in some meditative art-making!
No art experience or supplies needed. Drop-ins welcome. Please arrive on time. In E-107. No class on Monday, December 21st. Classes will resume on December 28th.

Announcements

• **New Sunday School Classes** are coming in January. Please stay tuned via Facebook, our website, and our e-newsletter for more information soon.

• **In the Narthex you will find a collection bin for Homeward Bound.** They are in need of cleaning and household items for the recently housed. If you are able, please bring in any of the following items for the bin: All-purpose cleaner, toilet paper, garbage bags, feminine hygiene items, dish soap & sponges, paper towels, laundry detergent, toothbrushes & toothpaste. We will be collecting through early January.

• **New Member Orientation Class:** January 17th following worship. Please plan to attend if you are interested in learning more about how our church works, what we believe, and what church membership means.

• **Offices will be closed on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.** If there are urgent pastoral needs, you may contact Rev. Margot Pickett on her cell phone: 919-414-6053.

Calendar

**Sunday, December 20, 2015**
Our Sunday to Provide Entire Meal at Pritchard Park 8:30 AM - 9:00 AM Kitchen
Bible Study with Brenda Lewis E-107 9:15 AM - 10:15 AM
Worship 10:30 am
Earth team meeting – library 12:00 PM
Laundry of Love FCUCC youth off campus 12:00 PM - 3:30 PM
Cantaria holiday concert sanctuary 4:00 PM

**Monday, December 21, 2015**
Longest Night Service sanctuary 5:30 - 6:30 PM

**Tuesday, December 22, 2015**

**Staff meeting Library 10:30 AM**

**Wednesday, December 23, 2015**
Stir The Soul Cafe - Library 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Bell choir E-101 5:30 PM
Church Choir Rehearsal 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM

**Thursday, December 24, 2015**
Christmas Eve Worship 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

**Sunday, December 27, 2015**
Bible Study with Brenda Lewis E-101 9:15-10:15 AM
Worship 10:30 AM
Not everyone finds Christmas to be filled with joy and laughter, and it’s a hard time not to be happy when everyone and everything around us says we should be!

This service is designed as a time of prayer, lament, scripture and music to help us remember that the Light came into the world and the darkness has not overcome it.

Thursday, December 24th at 6:00 pm

“All paths lead to Bethlehem” is the title of a children’s book and the theme of our Christmas Eve service. We will celebrate traditions and sing carols from around the globe as the whole world awaits Christmas morning.

Communion will be served and children are encouraged to join us.
Welcome! WE ARE...
AN LGBT OPEN and
AFFIRMING Congregation of
the United Church of Christ
and a Just Peace Church.
We are a progressive, risk-
taking Christian faith
community.
We follow the way of Jesus as
the Christ and are welcome,
open, and affirming to all.

We believe God is vibrant,
alive, and still speaking to us!
We believe that God encourages
us to engage the world through
acts of mercy, peace, and
justice.

First Congregational UCC is located at 20 Oak Street in
downtown Asheville. Please send all mail to PO Box 3211 Asheville, NC 28802.

www.uccasheville.org  828-252-8729