

**The Sound that Love Makes:  
Silent Wonder  
December 17, 2023**



**first**  **congregational**  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
timeless worship + modern faith

**THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

December 17, 2023

10:00 am

*Still, still, still*  
*One can hear the falling snow*  
*For all is hushed*  
*The world is sleeping*  
*Holy star, its vigil keeping*  
*Still, still, still*  
*One can hear the falling snow*  
~from "Still, Still, Still," an Austrian Carol

**PRELUDE**

"The Yearning"  
by Craig Courtney

One Accord

**WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Sharon Benton

**RINGING THE BELL**

**WELCOME SONG**

"Come, Sound of Love"  
by Ruth Cunningham

Come sound of Love in - to our hearts. Come  
Spir - it of Ad - vent in - to our hearts.

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\*Rise in body or spirit

**THE STORY**

Sharon Benton

**TIME WITH CHILDREN**

Tina Anderson

*Children may go with Josh to church school in the social hall  
or remain in the sanctuary as they choose.*

**MUSIC FOR CONTEMPLATION**

Alia Kerr

*When in your week might you take time for silence?  
Or, what form of silence might reveal love's essence in this season of waiting?*

**\*LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH**

Ted, Susan, Elliot, Emmala, & Eliza Huffman

One: When you can hear the "shhhhhhhhhh" of winter rain falling to earth,

**All: That's the sound that love makes.**

One: When a car door makes the dog's tail go "wsk wsk wsk,"

**All: That's the sound that love makes.**

One: When the microwave quietly whirs,  
and you know a loved one is making you tea,

**All: That's the sound that love makes.**

One: When we light three candles,  
each wick crackling as the flame catches,

**All: Advent reminds us that love can be heard  
as we listen in silent wonder.**

**\*HYMN 345** (black hymnal)

"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"

PICARDY

## WE ARE A NURTURING BELOVED COMMUNITY

### SUNG PRAYER

“With Sighs Too Deep for Words”  
by Anne Krentz Organ. Used with permission.

Leader:



This is the sound of our Prayers And the Spirit in - ter - cedes for us

All:



with sighs, with sighs too deep for words. With sighs, with sighs too deep for words.

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Sharon Benton

## WE ARE GROWING AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN FAITH

### A READING FROM SCRIPTURE

Luke 1:5-25a, 57-63  
Common English Bible

Lou Vetri

### SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

Lou Vetri

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**

“Silent Wonder”

Sharon Benton

**MUSICAL REFLECTION**

“Let My Heart Be Quiet”  
By Heather Schopf

One Accord

**WE ARE LIVING CHRIST-INSPIRED ACTION**

**TESTIMONY**

Pat Gillham & Mark Schofield

CREATOR GOD,  
who multiplies blessings,  
bless these symbols  
and the actions they represent  
as we join with you to heal and protect  
our planet from pollution and destruction.

HELP US  
to set aside the desire for material riches,  
opening our hearts to the myriad life forms  
around us and the rich beauty  
of this planet that we hold dear.

GUIDE US  
as we learn to make sustainable changes  
in our everyday lives.

AND BLESS  
the scientists, researchers, activists,  
and advocates for climate justice  
as they multiply the blessings we offer.

WE PRAY  
in awe  
of the life and the beauty  
on this planet that we call home.

AMEN

**\*SENDING SONG**

*“O Come, O Come Emmanuel 2023”*

VENI EMMANUEL

*Lyrics by Maren Tirabassi, who writes, “For 2023, some lyrics for a hymn that’s shifted and changed for 1200 years. The first two verses and the refrain are mine and the third is much older and often sung.”*

*O Come, O come Emmanuel  
make true the stories prophets tell –  
so all those chained by fear find release,  
and, war forgotten, bring a world of peace.*

*Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel  
is come to birth where all God’s children dwell.*

*O Come, Love’s-season, to our lonely days,  
and guide us in our words and ways  
to be the ones whose Advent begins  
with healing earth and all that live within.*

*Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel  
is come to birth where all God’s children dwell.*

*O come, Desire of Nations, bind  
all peoples in one heart and mind;  
Make envy, strife, and quarrels cease;  
fill the whole world with heaven’s peace. (Original)*

*Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel  
is come to birth where all God’s children dwell.*

**\*BENEDICTION**

Sharon Benton

*When in your week might you take time for silence?  
Or, what form of silence might help you in this season of waiting?  
You may make an offering either in the plates at the door or online.*



*Your generosity allows the work of this place nurture beloved community,  
grow authentic Christian faith, and live Christ-inspired action. Thank you! .*

*There are several other ways to give: 1) Give at our website, <https://fccb.net/giving/>.*

*2) Mail checks to First Congregational Church, 2401 Cornwall Avenue, Bellingham, WA 98225.*

*3) Use the Breeze app. Download from your app store, set up an account, and give!*

*4) Give by text. Text a dollar amount to (360) 205-1297, and set up your account.*

*5) Scan the QR code above or on the back cover of the bulletin.*

**Artist Statement for Sanctuary Art:**

*Inspired by the artwork "Seeing Shepherds" by Daniel Bonnell and our Advent theme "The Sound That Love Makes" I wanted to create a 'choir of angels'. Many hands and hearts came together to paint the angel banners. It's that spirit of community and collaboration that makes them 'sing'.*

*~Scott Ward*

*Cover Image "The Seeing Shepherds" by Daniel Bonnell.*

*Used with permission*

**Upcoming Services:**

- **December 20, 7:00 pm:** Blue Christmas
- **December 23, 7:00 pm:** O Antiphons (Vox Antigua)
- **December 24, 10:00 am:** Beloved Carols (Carol Sing)
- **December 24, 5:00 pm:** Angel Voices
- **December 24, 11:00 pm:** Candlelit Contemplation

**Open and Affirming (ONA):** As an Open and Affirming congregation believing in a loving God, all people are welcome in this church without regard to gender, race, ethnicity, economic or social status, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

**We Try To Use Language** which will help people feel included in our worship. Since not everyone is comfortable with the same language, we invite you to amend the words of the service as we sing and pray if they do not adequately express your faith. We invite you to assist us in creating new expressions of our common faith and life together.

**Technical Support:** If you need help streaming our worship services or connecting in other ways, please let us know.

### **APPOINTMENTS WITH PASTORAL STAFF**

Pastoral staff are available by appointment virtually, or in person with masks. Contact them by email or call the pastoral care line, 360-733-4255.

Sharon     **sharon@fccb.net**

Davi:       **davi@fccb.net**

You can also email our Office Manager  
Cydne at **office@fccb.net**  
and she'll pass your message on.

### **FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH United Church of Christ**

*An Open & Affirming Congregation*

2401 Cornwall Avenue, Bellingham, WA 98225

Church Office: 360-734-3720

**24/7 Emergency Pastoral Care: 360-733-4255**

office@fccb.net • www.fccb.net

Facebook: facebook.com/fccbucc

*Office Hours: M-Th, 10:00 am-5:00 pm*

**LEAD PASTOR: Sharon Benton, she/her**

**PASTOR: Davi Weasley, they/them**

**CHURCH SCHOOL COORDINATOR:**

**Josh Marchand, they/them**

**MINISTER OF MUSIC: Lucy Bledig, she/her**

**ORGANIST: Judy Widrig, she/her**

**OFFICE MANAGER: Cydne Cochran, she/her**

**CUSTODIAN/MAINTENANCE:**

**Kurt Aagard, he/him**

**WORSHIP MEDIA COORDINATOR:**

**Georgia Drost, she/they**

**MODERATOR: Mark Schofield**

**VICE MODERATOR: Scott Ward, he/him**

**PAST MODERATOR: Beth Tyne**

**CLERK: Janet Malley, she/her**

**TREASURER: Craig Jennings**

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