

Start, Again: You Are A Blessing December 8, 2024



Vision Statement:

We Are a Nurturing, Beloved Community.
We Are Growing Authentic Christian Faith.
We Are Living Christ-Inspired Action.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT
December 8, 2024 10:00 am

PRELUDE

Judy Widrig

WELCOME

Sharon Benton

We love children in worship—their noises and wiggles are welcome, too. There are pillows and a coloring, book, and play area in the front and in the corner near the windows. Younger kids may enjoy the Narthex play area. Their movements back and forth are a joy for us as they participate fully.

RINGING THE BELL

WE ARE A NURTURING, BELOVED COMMUNITY

WELCOME SONG

“While We Are Waiting, Come”
Sing through twice

WAITING

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 3/4. It consists of four staves of music. The lyrics are: "1 While we are wait - ing, come; while we are wait - ing, come. Je - sus, our Lord, Em - man - u - el, while we are wait - ing, come." The first staff begins with a "1" indicating the start of the first phrase. The music features a mix of quarter and eighth notes, with some notes beamed together. The final note of each phrase is a half note with a fermata, indicating a pause.

TEXT: Claire Cloninger, 1986
MUSIC: Don Cason, 1986
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WAITING (Cason)
SM

**Rise in body or spirit*

THE STORY

Sharon Benton

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Sharon Benton

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH Amanda & Brian Savery with Benji, Nathan, & Noah

Adapted from a prayer by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed, A Sanctified Art LLC

One Voice: In a weary and worn world, how do we start again?
Where do we begin?

All Voices: Let us begin with the good news!
Let us begin by trusting that we are a blessing,
loved by a gracious God.
Let us begin with music and singing!
Let us begin with warmth and welcome.
Let us begin with hope.

One Voice: Yes, let us begin with hope.
Today we light the candle of hope
to shine a light in a worn and weary world.

All Voices: May this be our foundation.
May this be our fresh start.
May this be our new beginning.

One Voice: May hope flow forth from here. Amen!

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

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Sharon Benton

The Prayer of Jesus

*We invite you to use the language for God that is most comfortable for you:
"Our Creator," "Our Father" or "Our Mother."*

Our Creator

**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,

and the power,

and the glory,

forever and ever. Amen.

*If you have a prayer request you'd like to share confidentially with our pastors,
have added to the confidential prayer list, or spoken aloud in worship,
go to www.fccb.net/contact-us/ to send a message or call the church to talk with a pastor.*

WE ARE GROWING AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN FAITH.

A READING FROM SCRIPTURE

Luke 1:26-38

Mary Swenson

Common English Bible

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

Mary Swenson

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

"Start, Again: You Are a Blessing"

Sharon Benton

A GIFT OF MUSIC “The Bleak Midwinter’s Moonlight” Intergenerational Orchestra
*arr. Mark Lewis, this is a combination of the Gustav Holst carol, “In the Bleak Midwinter”
and the traditional Canadian “Huron Carol”*

WE ARE LIVING CHRIST-INSPIRED ACTION.

TESTIMONY

Janie Collins

ANNOUNCEMENTS & OFFERING

Sharon Benton

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 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 on the back cover of the bulletin.

MUSICAL OFFERING

“It Came Upon the Midnight Clear” Intergenerational Orchestra
Directed by Sharon Camblin

***HYMN**

“Canticle of the Turning
See hymn sheet.

STAR OF THE COUNTY DOWN

***BENEDICTION & PASSING THE PEACE**

Sharon Benton

POSTLUDE

Judy Widrig

*Please join us in the Social Hall for our Advent Celebration, Christmas Presence,
where we’ll make graham cracker “gingerbread” houses.*



Advent & Christmas 2024

December 8, 10:00 am: You Are a Blessing (*Advent Celebration/Christmas Presence after worship*)

December 15, 10:00 am: We Can't Go Alone (*pageant during worship*)

December 18, 7:00 pm: Blue Christmas Service

December 22, 10:00 am: Hope Is Worth the Risk

December 18, 7:00 pm: A Blue Christmas Service

December 24 5:00 pm & 11:00 pm: Love Knows Your Name



COVER ART "Favored One" by Lauren Wright Pittman, inspired by Luke 1:26-38. Digital painting. *If we could open ourselves up to receive the incomprehensible love of God, maybe we would constantly feel wrapped up in a soft, cozy, lovingly-stitched-together quilt. Favored one, God delights in you—every single bit of you. Never forget: you are a blessing.*

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. Contact them by email or call the pastoral care line, 360-733-4255.

Sharon **sharon@fccb.net**
Davi: **davi@fccb.net**

Davi's office hours will be on
Sunday, Monday, & Tuesday

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: 10:00 am-4:30 pm

LEAD PASTOR: Sharon Benton, she/her

PASTOR: Davi Weasley, they/them

CHURCH SCHOOL COORDINATOR:

Josh Marchand, they/them

ORGANIST: Judy Widrig, she/her

OFFICE MANAGER: Cydne Cochran, she/her

CUSTODIAN/MAINTENANCE:

Kurt Aagard, he/him

BOOKKEEPER: Eric Bowen, he/him

INTERIM MUSIC COORDINATOR:

Dallas Geil, he/him (music@fccb.net)

WORSHIP MEDIA COORDINATOR:

Georgia Drost, she/they

MODERATOR: Scott Ward, he/him

VICE MODERATOR:

Diane Cooper-Schick, she/her

PAST MODERATOR: Mark Schofield

CLERK: Janet Malley, she/her

TREASURER: Craig Jennings

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