



The Congregational Church of West Medford
An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ
The Fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas Sunday Worship
December 22, 2013
10:00 o'clock am



WELCOME

The Congregational Church of West Medford, United Church of Christ, is a community that strives to live according to the teachings of Jesus Christ and to share in the costs and joys of discipleship. We unconditionally welcome and affirm people of every age, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, race, culture, ability, and economic circumstance, and invite everyone into full participation in our church life and ministry.

If you're visiting for the first time, feel uncertain about church, find yourself here infrequently, or attend weekly, there's a place for you here.

There are many ways to be involved and if you'd like to know more about our many activities, please speak to a greeter or the pastor.

We ask that you wear a name tag to help us know each other.

Blank name tags are available by the door for anyone in need.

Please be sure to sign the Pew Register which you will find on the center aisle.

As an act of prayer, you are encouraged to light a candle on the table at the front of the sanctuary—for yourself, for a loved one, for peace, for the world.

GATHERING TO PRAISE GOD

Prelude

Behold, a Branch is Growing

—Miles

Welcome

Call to Worship

Beverly Roche

One: God's children ask for signs of God's presence.

All: (whispered) Emmanuel! God with us!

One: From ancient times, they have called upon God for salvation.

All: (a little louder) Emmanuel! God with us!

One: "Shine your face upon us," they cry.

All: (louder still) Emmanuel! God with us!

One: And an angel said to Joseph:

All: (full throttle) Emmanuel! God with us!

One: Come, let us worship God!

*Opening Song

"Awake, Awake and Greet the New Morn"

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The Advent Candles—The Candle of Love

The Roberts Family

One: We have lit three candles—for hope, for peace, and for joy.

Today we light the fourth candle—the candle of love.

** Please rise in body or spirit as you are able*

Two: With this flame we signify the love of God that surrounds and fills us at all times, but that we recognize in a special way in the Christmas story.

One: There is no greater power than love. It is stronger than rulers and empires, stronger than grief or despair, stronger even than death.

Two: We love, because God loves us.
(Four candles are lit.)

Two: Loving God, we open ourselves to you this Christmas season.

**All: As these candles are lit, light our lives with your imagination.
 Show us the creative power of hope.
 Teach us the peace that comes from justice.
 Fill us with the kind of joy that cannot be contained, but must be shared. Magnify your love within us.
 Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you,
 That we may walk in the light of Christ. Amen.**

Sung Response

One Candle Is Lit

tune: Cradle Song

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

Come quickly, shalom, teach us how to prepare
 for a gift that compels us with justice to care.
 Our spirits are restless till sin and war cease.
 One candle is lit for the reign of God's peace.

Come festively sing while awaiting the birth,
 Join angels in dancing from heaven to earth.
 Wave banners of good news, lift high thank-ful praise.
 One candle is lit for the joy of these days.

Come wander where lion and lamb gently play,
 where evil is banished and faith takes the day,
 a babe in a manger to fool the world's eyes.
 One candle is lit for God's loving surprise.

Sharing Ourselves with God

Prayer of Confession

***The Good News of God's Grace and Presence**

***Passing of the Peace**

One: May the peace of Christ be with you all. **All: And also with you.**

***Carol**

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary, And gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep, Their watch of wondering love
O morning stars together, Proclaim the holy birth
And praises sing to God the King, And Peace to all on earth

Time with Young Christians

Carol (Remain Seated)

"Away in a Manger"

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Children may go to Sunday School at this time

Church Life and Mission

Prayers of the People and Pastoral Prayer

One: God in your mercy

All: Hear our prayer

From the Bible

Isaiah 7:10-16

Beverly Roche

** Please rise in body or spirit as you are able*

Carol (remain seated) “It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”

It came upon the midnight clear, That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth, To touch their harps of gold;
"Peace on the earth, good will to men, From Heaven's all gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay, To hear the angels sing.

For lo! the days are hastening on, By prophet-bards foretold,
When with the ever circling years Comes round the age of gold;
When peace shall over all the earth Its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world send back the song Which now the angels sing.

From the Bible Matthew 1:18—25 Beverly Roche

Choral Anthem “*Calypso Lullaby*” —arr. Rainey
West Indies Carol

Sermon NOT YOUR AVERAGE JOE Rev. Wendy Miller Olapade

Carol (remain seated) “Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming” # 137

Offering

Invitation to Joyful Stewardship

Offertory *Coventry Carol* —16th Century England
Charlotte Wilensky and Robin Baker

*Procession of Gifts

*Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Christ all creatures here below;
Praise Holy Spirit, comforter; One God, triune, whom we adore. Amen

*Prayer of Dedication

*Carol	“On Christmas Night, All Christians Sing”	# 143
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*Commission and Blessing

Postlude *Noel* — Bourgeois
(From Heaven Above)



Everyone is encouraged to join in a time of community building as we share some goodies immediately after worship in Barnes Chapel—exit the Sanctuary through the door to the left of the pulpit.

WORSHIP AT THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WEST MEDFORD

*Nursery Care is provided during the worship 'hour'.
Sunday School is offered today for school aged children..*

Today, December 22, Advent IV—The Candle of Love

Worship Service (Sanctuary) 10:00 am
Goodland Church Worship (in Korean) (Sanctuary) 12:30 pm
Longest Night/Blue Christmas Service (Sanctuary) 7:00 pm

The Liturgist today is Beverly Roche.

Deacon of the Month for December is Joy Harris.

*Leadership for Fellowship Hour and Ushers for December is the Building and Grounds
and Stewardship Committees.*

We celebrate the gift and perpetual beauty of the flowers on the altar.

*We thank God as our sanctuary and property are adorned for the season with natural wreaths
and poinsettia—gifted by many as listed on the insert.*

Today we light the candle of love and move even closer to Bethlehem.
Interspersed with carols of the season, Rev. Wendy will consider the improbable story of
A not-so-average-Joe.

The Longest Night~Blue Christmas Worship

Sunday, Dec 22, 7:00 pm

The holiday season can be difficult for those of us who are grieving the loss of loved ones, who have difficult family relationships, who struggle with addictions, physical and mental illness, depression or stress, and who feel deeply the pain of those in our world who suffer the effects of war, poverty, and disease. So we gather together as a community to express and acknowledge these conflicting emotions, as we remember that it was into such a world as this that God's love took on flesh in Jesus, our Redeemer.

Holy Family Sunday Worship

Anniversary of the Wounded Knee Massacre

Sunday, Dec. 29, 10:00 am

As we take a breath on this quiet Sunday in the space-in-between, we will look back on the season and ask the question, "How Does Christmas Work?" Turning away from consumption and spending, we turn toward a foreign land to see the way Christmas really works. We will honor the anniversary of the Massacre of Wounded Knee and our worship service will include a call to action—taking Christmas out of the sanctuary and into the work of Christmas.



Christmas
at the
Congregational Church of West Medford
United Church of Christ
www.medfordchurch.org

Christmas Sunday Worship
Advent IV: Sunday, Dec. 22, 10:00 am

We light the candle of love and say "yes" to the presence of God in Jesus and in the world—Emmanuel, God is with us.

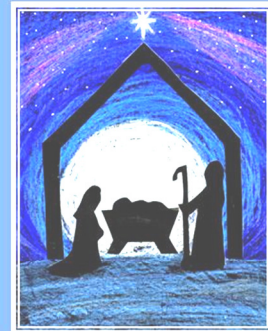


Blue Christmas/Longest Night Worship
Sunday, Dec. 22, 7:00 pm

Providing space and time away from the hype of Christmas and an opportunity to experience a sacred presence amidst our sometimes awkward, uncomfortable, and messy lives. Designed especially for those dealing with loss or having a difficult time.

Family Christmas Eve Worship
Tuesday, Dec. 24, 5:00 pm

Join in the telling and living of the greatest story every told—a joyful and holy un-rehearsed Christmas Pageant for all ages. Bring the kids, bring a costume and take your place in the manger. Costumes will also be provided and your favorite carols will be sung. Communion for all. No experience required!



Candlelight Christmas Eve Worship
Tuesday, Dec. 24, 11:00 pm

A classic, contemplative Christmas Eve worship service with lessons, carols, Holy Communion and a sense of the sacred. Come for an "Oh, Holy Night."



CHRISTMAS WEEK AT YOUR CHURCH **December 22-28. 2013**

December 22, 2013 Christmas Sunday Worship

Advent IV: Sunday Worship Service (Sanctuary) 10:00 am
Goodland Church Worship (in Korean) (Sanctuary) 12:30 pm
Blue Christmas/Longest Night Worship 7:00 pm

December 24, 2013 Family Christmas Eve Worship

Family Christmas Eve Worship (Sanctuary) 5:00 pm
Candlelight Christmas Eve Worship (Sanctuary) 11:00 pm

Monday

(3) Boot Camp Sessions: 5:45 am--6:15 am;
8:15 am--9:00 am; 5:30 pm--6:15 pm (FH)
Yoga— 6:30 pm (FH)

Tuesday

Gamblers Anonymous 7:30 pm (BC)
Gam-Anon—7:30 pm (YR)

Wednesday

(Alcoholics Anonymous— 8:00 pm (YR)

Thursday

Food Addicts—6:00 pm (YR)

Friday

(3) Boot Camp Sessions: 5:45 am--6:15 am;
8:15 am-- 9:00 am (FH)
Strategic Planning— 9:30 am (LR)

Saturday

Alanon - 9:00 am (YR)
Yoga—9:00 am (FH)
Boot Camp—12:15 pm (FH)

December 29, 2013 First Sunday after Christmas

Outdoor Church Sandwich Making (Kitchen) 9:00 am
Sunday Worship Service (Sanctuary) 10:00 am
Goodland Church Worship (in Korean) (Sanctuary) 12:30 pm

Weekdays

(M—F) **Bright Stars Afterschool Enrichment Program**, www.BrightStarsKids.org

((M—F) **Gentle Dragon Co-op Preschool**, www.GentleDragonPreschool.org

(M—F) **English at Large** (ESOL/ESL Programs), www.englishatlarge.org

Room Legend: (FH) Fellowship Hall; (BC) Barnes Chapel; (YR) Youth Room; (LR) Living Room

The Congregational Church of West Medford, United Church of Christ

Ministers: All of us!

Organist and Choir Director: Dr. Herman Weiss

Moderator: Paul Roberts

Treasurer: Beverly Roche

Pastor and Teacher: Reverend Wendy Miller Olapade

Church Administrator: Diane Petrelis

Deacon of the Month: Joy Harris

Clerk: TBD

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