

***The First Church of Christ in Marblehead  
Old North Church, United Church of Christ  
An Open and Affirming Congregation***

**THE ORDER OF WORSHIP**

**December 28, 2025**

**First Sunday After Christmas**

**10:00am**

**GATHERING**

PRELUDE

Maria vanKalken

WELCOME AND CONCERNS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Rev. Lindsay Popperson

“The Work of Christmas” by Howard Thurman

One: When the song of the angels is stilled,

**All: When the star in the sky is gone,**

One: When the kings and princes are home,

**All: When the shepherds are back with their flock,**

One: The work of Christmas begins:

**All: To find the lost,**

One: To heal the broken,

**All: To feed the hungry,**

One: To release the prisoner,

**All: To rebuild the nations,**

One: To bring peace among others,

**All: To make music in the heart.**

\* HYMN

*O Little Town of Bethlehem*

#151

**CENTERING**

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

The Mygrant Family

One: The spirit of the Lord God is upon me,  
because the Lord has anointed me;

**All: God has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,**  
*[Pause to light the first candle]*

One: to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives  
and release to the prisoners;  
*[Pause to light the second candle]*

**All:** to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor  
and the day of vindication of our God;  
*[Pause to light the third candle]*

**One:** to comfort all who mourn;  
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—  
*[Pause to light the fourth candle]*

**All:** to give them a garland instead of ashes,  
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.  
They will be called oaks of righteousness,  
the planting of the Lord, to display God's glory.  
*[Pause to light the fifth candle]*

**One:** We light these candles as a sign of the presence  
of Emmanuel, God with us.

## **SILENT PRAYER**

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER (Unison)**

**Our Father, 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.**

### **PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Unison)**

Rev. Lindsay Popperson

**All:** In this season of joy, we confess our forgetfulness: this season commenced dark and quiet in a land of tyranny and fear. We confess our distraction from the best gifts of all: your presence and love, God, these lives we have, the ground under our feet and the love in our lives. We hold silence to consider how we've missed the mark this week.

Silence

**All:** Holy one, whose light shines in the darkness and illuminates our path: meet us here, with your forgiveness, your mercy, and your love. Amen.

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

One: God's presence moves through the darkest of corners.

**All: God's love and forgiveness are with always.**

One: We start anew with the Grace of the one who loved us too much to stay away. We live into God's love, today and always.

**All: Thanks be to God!**

### \* CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (please join in singing)

**Glory to the Creator, and to the Christ, and to the Spirit One,  
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,  
World without end, Amen, Amen.**

## MOMENTS WITH CHILDREN

Rev. Lindsay Popperson

**May you know that you belong here and can always come home.  
May you grow, learn, and question.  
May you feel the love of God wherever you go.**

*We invite any children interested to now join their teachers in leaving the sanctuary for Sunday School. Their families can meet them in the classroom when the service is over.*

### \* HYMN

*I Wonder as I Wander*

#156

## LISTENING

### SCRIPTURE LESSON

John 1:19-34

Read by Mark Adams

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but he confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,  
'Make straight the way of the Lord,' "

as the prophet Isaiah said.

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why, then, are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, “Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.’ I myself did not know him, but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel.” And John testified, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Chosen One.”

SERMON “The Way of the Lord” Rev. Lindsay Popperson  
PASTORAL PRAYER

## RESPONDING

OFFERTORY

INVITATION

PRESENTATION OF OFFERINGS

*In the Bleak Midwinter* (please join in singing) #154

\* DOXOLOGY: sung to the tune of *Greensleeves*

So bring him incense, gold and myrrh, come, rich, and poor, to own him;  
the King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone him.  
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing:  
Haste, haste to bring him praise, the babe, the son of Mary. Amen.

\* PRAYER OF DEDICATION

## SENDING

\* HYMN *Good Christians, All, Rejoice* #158

\* BENEDICTION

\* RESPONSE (please join in singing) Refrain from, *The First Nowell* #141

**Nowell, Nowell, Nowell. Nowell,  
Born is the King of Israel. Amen.**

POSTLUDE Maria vanKalken