

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

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

November 30, 2025

First Sunday of Advent

10:00am

GATHERING

PRELUDE

Maria vanKalken, *organ*

WELCOME AND CONCERNS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Daniel 2:20-23

Rev. Lindsay Popperson

One: Blessed is God's Name from age to age,
for to God belongs wisdom and power!

**All: God changes the seasons and the times;
God deposes one ruler and sets up another;**

One: God gives wisdom to the wise,
and knowledge to those who have discernment.

All: God reveals all mysteries!

One: God knows the things that dwell in the shadows;
light has its dwelling with God.

**All: God of my ancestors, to you I give thanks and praise,
for you have given me wisdom and power!**

* HYMN

Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

#115

CENTERING

LIGHTING THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE OF HOPE

The Monk Family

Andrew and Lauren, Max and Lucy

We light our Advent wreath each week with these words from the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 61:1-3).

Jesus claimed these words as a guide for his ministry, and we can claim them, too.

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;

**All: to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor
and the day of vindication of our God;**

One: to comfort all who mourn;
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—

**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.**
One: We light this candle as a sign of our waiting
and hope for the coming Christ.

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

All: Loving God, you see our hearts: what we hope to do and be, and who we actually are. You see our best efforts, you see our falling short. You see the complicated world in which we live, and all that vies for our attention and allegiance. Come quickly to us, Jesus: bring mercy and peace, bring hope for a better world and the courage we need to follow your call. Forgive our rushing and our impatience, our distraction and our sharpness. Forgive even our cruelty.

One: In the midst of a noisy world, we pause in silence, to confess our sins to God, and to open ourselves to God's mercy.

SILENT PRAYER

**One: O Holy Child of Bethlehem,
All: descend to us, we pray.
Cast out our sin and enter in;
be born in us today.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

**One: We proclaim together this good news:
All: No ear may hear His coming,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive Him still,
the dear Christ enters in.**

*** 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.**

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

Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones

11

LISTENING

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Daniel 3:1, 8-30

Read by Leah Waldo

King Nebuchadnezzar made a golden statue whose height was sixty cubits and whose width was six cubits; he set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.

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Accordingly, at this time certain Chaldeans came forward and denounced the Jews. They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “O king, live forever! You, O king, have made a decree, that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, drum, and entire musical ensemble, shall fall down and worship the golden statue, and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire. There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men pay no heed to you, O king. They do not serve your gods, and they do not worship the golden statue that you have set up.”

Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought in, so they brought those men before the king.

Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods and you do not worship the golden statue that I have set up? Now if you are ready, when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, drum, and entire musical ensemble, you should fall down and worship the statue that I have made. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire, and who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?”

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to present a defense to you in this matter. If our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire and out of your hand, O king, let him deliver us. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods and we will not worship the golden statue that you have set up.”

Then Nebuchadnezzar was so filled with rage against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that his face was distorted. He ordered the furnace heated up seven times more than was customary and ordered some of the strongest guards in his

army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and to throw them into the furnace of blazing fire. So the men were bound, still wearing their tunics, their trousers, their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the furnace of blazing fire. Because the king's command was urgent and the furnace was so overheated, the raging flames killed the men who lifted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. But the three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down, bound, into the furnace of blazing fire.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up quickly. He said to his counselors, "Was it not three men that we threw bound into the fire?" They answered the king, "True, O king." He replied, "But I see four men unbound, walking in the middle of the fire, and they are not hurt, and the fourth has the appearance of a god." Nebuchadnezzar then approached the door of the furnace of blazing fire and said, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!" So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king's counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men; the hair of their heads was not singed, their tunics were not scorched, and not even the smell of fire came from them. Nebuchadnezzar said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him. They disobeyed the king's command and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that utters blasphemy against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way." Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

ANTHEM *Laudamus Te (From Gloria in D)* Antonio Vivaldi
Anne Burgett, *soprano*; Holly Cameron; *soprano*

SERMON How to Survive the Apocalypse Rev. Lindsay Popperson

PASTORAL PRAYER

RESPONDING

OFFERTORY

INVITATION

PRESENTATION OF OFFERINGS

Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending arr. Kevin Hildebrande
Senior Choir

* DOXOLOGY #47
All praise, eternal Christ, to thee
Whose advent sets thy people free;
Once more upon thy people shine
And fill the world with love divine. Amen.

* PRAYER OF DEDICATION

* CHORAL RESPONSE

SENDING

* HYMN *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* #114

* BENEDICTION

* CHORAL RESPONSE: (please join in singing) #121 verse 1
Come, thou long expected Jesus, Born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us; Let us find our rest in thee. Amen.

POSTLUDE Maria VanKalken, *organ*