FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
Church of Hamilton

Rejoicing in God · Growing in the Gospel · Pointing people to Jesus

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NOVEMBER 29, 2026
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

PREPARING OUR HEARTS

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements Pastor Oli van Ruth

Preparing Our Hearts

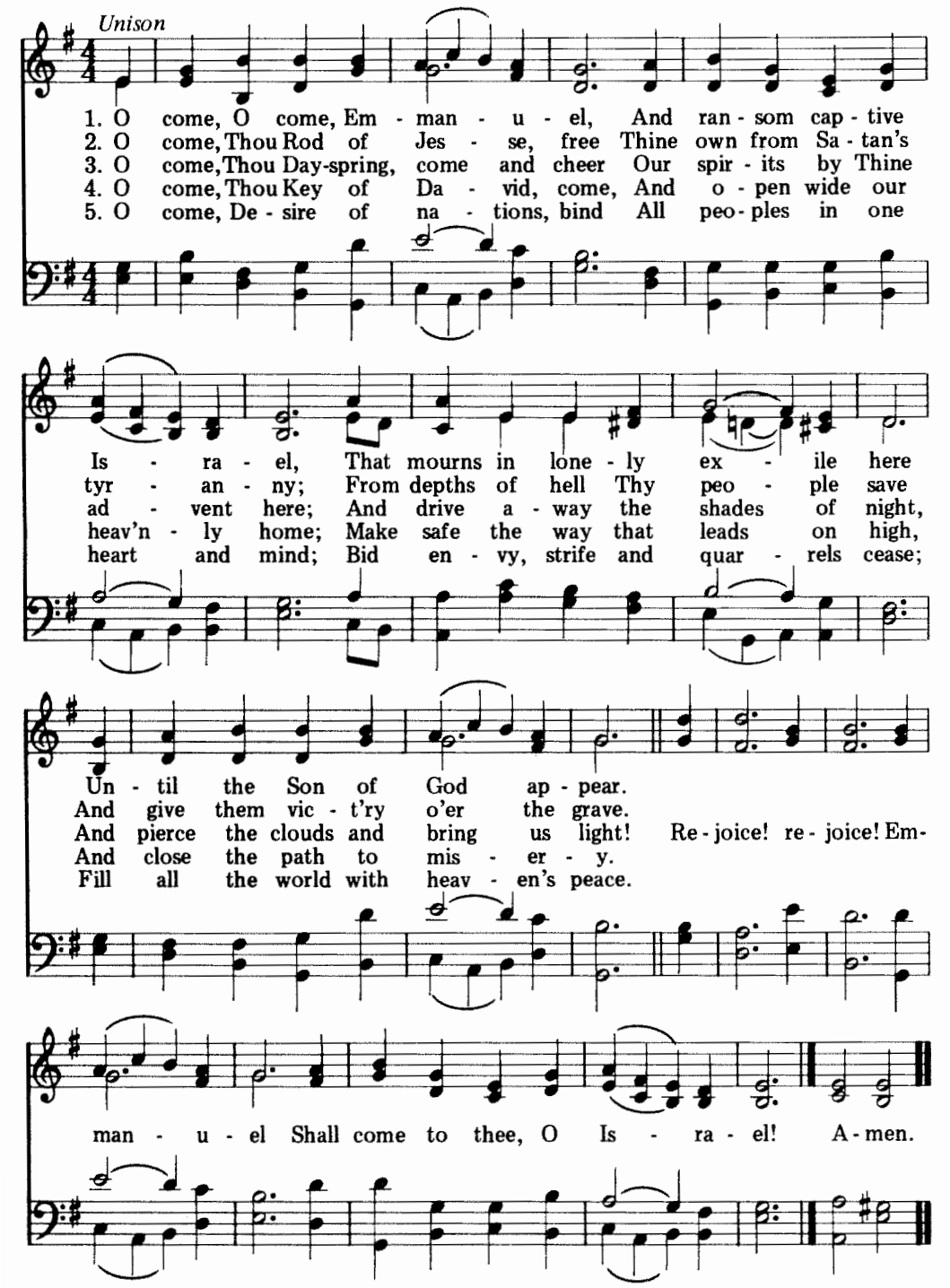
"If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you." - James 1:5

* **Call to Worship:** John 1:1-5 Jonathan Heppner (8:30), Sean McDonough (11:00)

Leader: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
People: He was with God in the beginning.
Leader: Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.
People: In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.
Unison: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

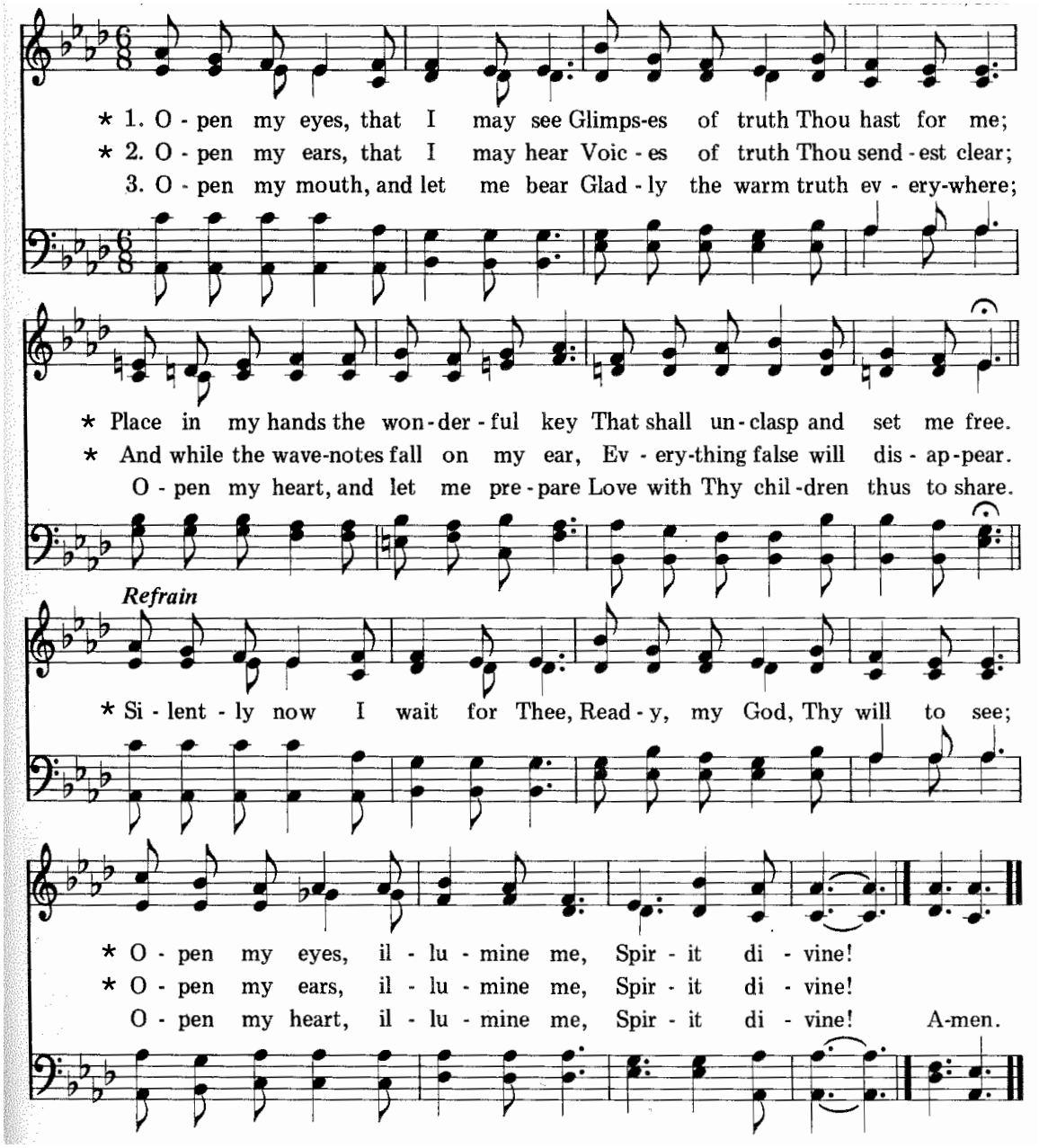
COMING WITH PRAISE

* **Hymn:** O Come, O Come, Emmanuel



Invocation, Confession of Sin, and Assurance of Pardon Pastor Matt Schuberth

* **Hymn #350:** Open My Eyes, That I May See (verses 1and 2)



Lighting of the Advent Candle: Hope (8:30) Jeff and Liz Arthurs with Pete and Shelley Hansen
(11:00) George Lee and Kate Kan

Leader: On this first Sunday of Advent, let us consider hope and the experience of Mary, as she carries Jesus in her womb. Like others in her community, Mary anticipated the coming of the Messiah. She likely heard the prophetic scriptures about a child born of a virgin and that He would be Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace.

Can you imagine her surprise when she learned her role in this history-changing event? That realization compelled her to sing, "My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior…the Mighty One has done great things for me, holy is his name. His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation." Mary is full of hope, confident in the knowledge that her Savior—OUR Savior—has come into the world.

Lighting of the First Candle

Leader: What do we hope for? Hope is not a "maybe" or a wish or desire. It is the confident expectation of a life with Jesus. Advent is called the season of hope, not because all our wishes come true, but because Jesus, God made flesh, has come to earth, sent as our Savior, our living and breathing hope.

The prophet Jeremiah says: "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." - Jeremiah 29:11

Leader: Let us pray.

Unison: Dear God, thank you for the words and stories of the people and prophets of old that help us see the birth of the Christ Child through the true lens of your plan. Thank you for the intricacy of your care and your design for our lives. You alone give us the sure hope that you hold the world in your hands and will ultimately triumph in glory. Amen.

Children's Message (8:30) Lauren Sager

Please accompany children forward for the message, then take the elevator to the lower-level classroom to check into Little People's Church (ages 4 to grade 1).

* **Congregational Greeting:** *Take a moment to greet those around you.*

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 9:1-7 Jonathan Heppner (8:30 am), Sean McDonough (11:00 am)

Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder. For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor. Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

DRAWING NEAR FOR PRAYER

Pastoral Prayer Pastor Oli van Ruth

Offertory: *Rejoice Greatly, O Daughter of Zion (Soprano air/aria)* Elena Schonewald
from Messiah, HWV 56 (George Frideric Handel)

* **Doxology**

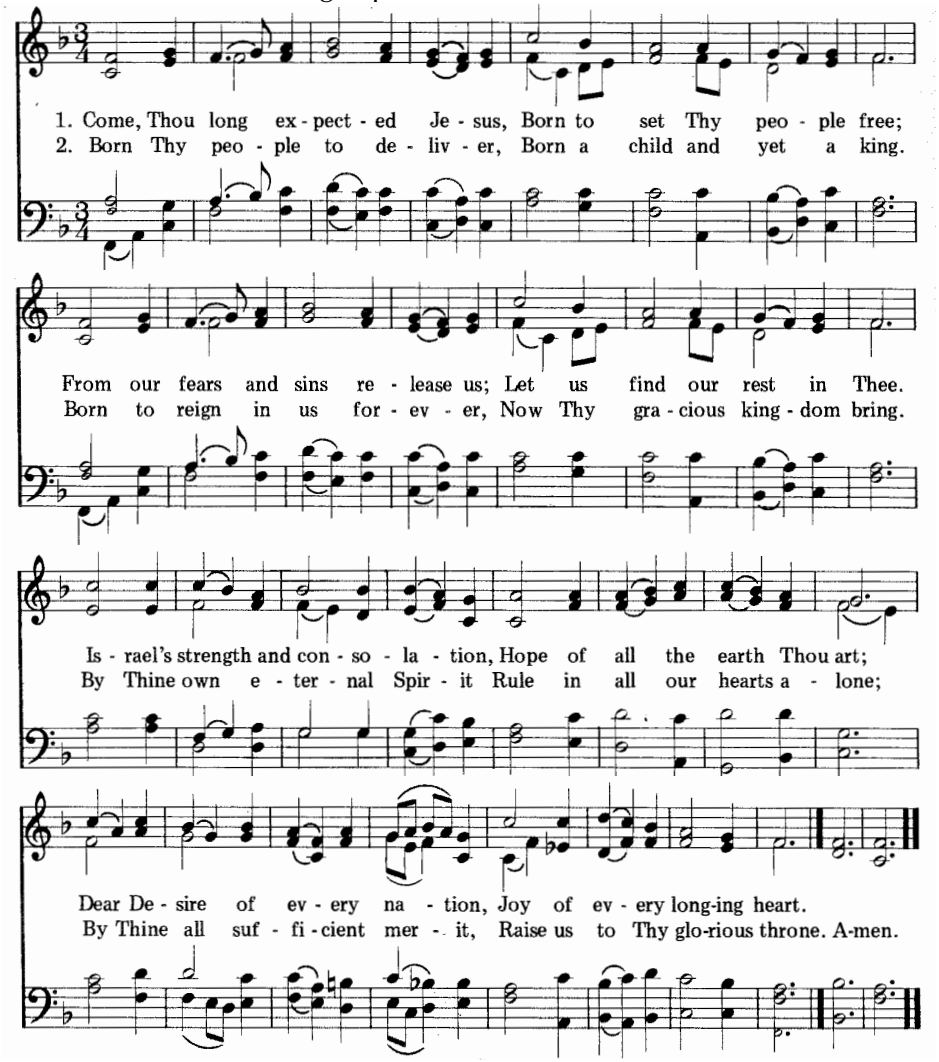
Praise God from Whom all blessings flow
Praise Him all creatures here below
Praise Him above ye heavenly host
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost
Amen

PROCLAIMING GOD'S WORD

Sermon: *"He Will Be Called…Wonderful Counselor"* Pastor Kevin Baird
Isaiah 9:6

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

* **Hymn #102:** Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus



* **Call to Prayer and Benediction** Pastor Kevin Baird

Postlude

Our Ministry Leaders will be available at the front for prayer after the service:
Jonathan Heppner (8:30) and Sean McDonough (11:00), Elders
Kathie Sweeney (8:30) and Kornilios Lazaridis (11:00), Deacons

SERMON TEXT & NOTES

Isaiah 9:6

Announcements

Signup for events

- **Pilgrim's Pint**: In an age that prizes individual autonomy and struggles to reconcile unity with diversity, the Christian doctrine of the Trinity offers a radically different vision of reality. Join us as Dr. Adonis Vidu (Gordon-Conwell) explores the Trinity as the very foundation of who God is and how God relates to the world, on Monday, December 7, at 7:00 pm at the Post (16 Bay Road, S. Hamilton). Sign up using the QR code.
- **Hamilton-Wenham Tree Lighting:** Join us in the community for the Hamilton-Wenham tree lighting on December 3 at 6:30 pm at the Community House at 284 Bay Road. FCCH is participating by giving away wrist bells and candy canes.
- **Women's Winter Workshop:** Join us for our annual Winter Workshop on Saturday, December 5, from 9:00 am to noon in the Ministry Center. Register today in Fellowship Foyer before and after the services. Or register online using the QR code above.
- **Christmas Drop & Shop:** Parents can enjoy some Christmas shopping time without the kids on Saturday, December 12, from 3:00 to 6:00 pm. Drop off your preschool–5th grade children for an afternoon of Christmas fun in Heritage Hall. Register using the QR code above by Friday, December 4.
- **Children's Choir!** FCCH is having a Christmas Carol Sing on Sunday, December 13, at 4:30 pm in the Meetinghouse sanctuary. Children from 1st to 5th grade are invited to be part of our special choir. Learn more by using the QR code above.
- **Christmas Carol Sing:** Join us for a joyful evening of Christmas carols, Scripture readings, and worship, led by our choir and worship band, as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. All ages are welcome! Sunday, December 13, at 4:30 pm in the Meetinghouse sanctuary.
- **Life After Fifty (LAF):** The LAF group will hold their annual Christmas party on Sunday, December 13, at the home of Linda Coonrod, 47 Lincoln Avenue, Hamilton, from 1:30 to 4:00 pm. Beverages will be provided. Please bring an appetizer or dessert to share. Contact John Clark with questions at 978-375-6329. Register using the QR code above.
- **Whiteout! Winter Retreat:** All youth ministry students and their friends are invited to Camp Spofford, NH, for our winter retreat. Middle school students will go from January 29 to 31, and high school students will go from February 5 to 7, 2027. Register using the QR code above, by December 7. Scholarships are available.
- **Jingle Mingle:** Fall Sunday School classes for adults, children, and youth come to a close on December 13. All are welcome to attend our Jingle Mingle in Fellowship Foyer at 9:45 am on the following Sunday, December 20. Coffee and Christmas treats will be served.
- **Christmas Eve Services:** Join us on Christmas Eve for our candlelight services. Invite your friends and neighbors to the 4:00 pm or 6:00 pm worship service. The following Sunday, December 27, we will have one worship service at 10:00 am.

New to Our Church?

Welcome! We're glad you could join us this morning! If you have questions, please ask an usher or visit our Welcome Desk downstairs.

For families, we provide children's church. During our 8:30 am service, our supervised Nursery serves infants through age 3 (until their 4th birthday), and our Little People's Church (LPC) program serves children ages 4 through grade 1. LPC meets following the Children's Message in the lower level of this building. During the 11:00 am service, the Nursery room is staffed as a combined space for infants and toddlers.

Family Room in the first-floor classroom (downstairs, across from the restrooms) for families with young children to enjoy the worship service together.

Sermon Notes for children are available downstairs at the Welcome Desk.

Sunday School for all ages is at 9:45 am. Classes are found throughout our campus in this building (the Meetinghouse/MH), the Ministry Center (MC), and the Barn. The Barn and Ministry Center are located across the parking lot.

- Infants, preschool, and kindergarten-age children gather in the Meetinghouse downstairs.
- Elementary ages meet in the lower level of the Ministry Center.
- Middle schoolers meet in the Ministry Center Room 11.
- High schoolers meet in the Barn.
- Adults
  - *Economics and the Bible* with Dr. Sean McDonough, Dr. Glenn Butner, Dr. Robert Gough, Jr., Chapel (behind the sanctuary)
  - *The Church, the Spirit, and Union with Christ* with Dr. Jack Davis, MC Room 22
  - *Forgiveness* with Dr. Eckhard Schnabel, MC Room 21
  - *Exploring Your Marriage* with Priscilla Masterson, NP; Pastor Kevin Baird, Dr. David Horn, MC Room 23/24

For large-print Bibles, please see an usher.

If you need prayer after the service, an elder and a deacon are available to pray with you at the front.

Join us for coffee and tea after both services in Fellowship Foyer.

Scan to let us know you visited!

Kevin Baird, *Lead Pastor of Care & Outreach*
Oliver van Ruth, *Lead Pastor of Preaching & Teaching*
Matthew Schuberth, *Pastor of Youth & Young Adults*
Chrysa Bliati, *Children's Ministry Director*
Lisa Clay, *Women's Ministry Director*
Cece Gough, *Executive Director*

Hana Lee, *Music Director*
John Bigus, *Audio-Visual Manager*
Jill VanderWoude, *Administrative Assistant*
Phil Best, *Facilities Manager*
The People of God, *Ministers to the World*

630 Bay Road, South Hamilton, MA 01982
P.O. Box 213 Hamilton, MA 01936
978-468-1940 info@fcchamilton.org
fcchamilton.org