

See what no eye can see, go where no foot can go, choose that which is no choice -- then you may hear what makes no sound -- God's voice. *Angelus Silsius, German priest, mystic, 17th c.*

It is the basic principal of spiritual life that we learn the deepest things in unknown territory. Often it is when we feel most confused inwardly and are in the midst of our greatest difficulties that something new will open. We awaken most easily to the mystery of life through our weakest side. The areas of our greatest strength, where we are most competent and clearest, tend to keep us away from the mystery. *Jack Kornfield, Vipassana Meditation Teacher, 21st c.*

Perhaps it has never struck you how consistently the great religious teachers and founders leave home, go on pilgrimage to far-off places, do a major turnabout, choose downward mobility; and how often it is . . .the established religion at the time, spiritual authorities, and often civil authorities who fight against them . . .this pattern is rather universal. *Richard Rohr, Falling Upwards, 21st c.*

. . . We returned to our places . . . but no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation, with an alien people clutching their gods . . . *T.S. Eliot, Journey of the Magi, 20th c.*

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?  
Or who shall stand in his holy place?

There is no one but us.

There is no one to send, nor a clean hand,  
nor a pure heart on the face of the earth,  
nor in the earth, but only us,

a generation comforting ourselves with the notion

that we have come at an awkward time,

that our innocent fathers are all dead -- as if innocence had ever been . . .

But there is no one but us.

There never has been.

*Annie Dillard, American author, An Annie Dillard Reader, 21st c.*

Prayer Candles: Is there a person or relationship that needs a prayer?

Please come forward and light an individual prayer candle before our worship begins.

### Greeting One Another in Peace and Friendship Welcome and Announcements

**The Prelude** *On This Day Earth Shall Ring*

Personet Hodie, arr. Anna Laura Page

Bodwell Hand Bell Choir; Rachel Dobbs, *Director*

**The Centering Silence**

**The Introit** *Come Thou Almighty King*

Felice De Giardini, arr. Martha Lynn Thompson

Bodwell Hand Bell Choir; Rachel Dobbs, *Director*

\* **The Gathering Hymn** *We Three Kings* # 172

\* **The Call to Worship** *P. Andrews, Singapore, 1976*

*L: There is dignity here. We will exalt it.*

**P: There is courage here. We will support it.**

*L: There is humanity here. We will enjoy it.*

**P: There is a universe in every child. We will share it.**

*L: There is a voice calling through the chaos of our times.*

**P: There is a spirit moving across the waters of our world.**

*L: There is movement:*

**P: a light, a promise of hope.**

*L: Let them that have eyes to see, see.*

**P: Let them that have ears to hear, hear.**

*L: But, look not for Armageddon, nor listen for a trumpet.*

**P: For behold, we bring you good tidings of great joy.**

**God is with us. Amen and amen.**

**Gathering Prayer** (*unison*)

**We thought we knew where to find you; we hardly needed a star to guide the way, just perseverance and common sense. Why do you hide yourself away from the powerful and join the refugees and outcasts, calling us to follow you there? Wise God, give us wisdom.**

**We thought we had laid you safe in the manger; we wrapped you in the thickest sentiment we could find, and stressed how long ago you came to us. Why do you break upon us in our daily life with messages of peace and goodwill, demanding that we do something about it? Just and righteous God, give us justice and righteousness.**

**So where else would we expect to find you but in the ordinary place with the faithful people, turning the world to your purpose through them. Bring us to that manger, to that true rejoicing, which will make wisdom, justice, and righteousness alive in us. Amen.**

**The Anthem**

*Christmas Lullaby*

John Rutter

Senior Choir; Molly Webster, *Director*

**A Time for the Child in Each of Us**

**Sing Our Children to Sunday School** (*seated*) *Go Now In Peace* # 437(*twice*)

Go now in peace, go now in peace, may the love of God surround you

everywhere, everywhere you may go.

**The Prayer Hymn** (*seated*)

*What Child Is This*

# 162

**The Silent Prayer and The Pastoral Prayer**

**The Lord's Prayer** (*unison*)

Barbara Turner, *CUF*

**O God, within and all around us,**

**May your many names be revered throughout the universe.**

**May all creation work with you to establish your dream of justice, peace and compassion everywhere.**

**May we all have what we need for today.**

**May we be forgiven for missing the mark, and may we forgive our fellow human beings for being fallible.**

**Give us strength for times of trial and temptation and free us from what is evil in our lives,**

**for you are all-encompassing wonder, light, and glory. Amen.**

**The Congregational Response** (*sing twice*) *Confitemini Domino* Taize

**Come and fill our hearts with your peace. You alone, O God, are holy.**

**Come and fill our hearts with your peace, allelu-u-u-u-ia!**

**Come and fill our hearts with your peace. You alone, O God, are holy.**

**Come and fill our hearts with your peace, allelu-u-u-u-ia!**

**The Offering Prayer of Dedication** (*unison*)

**How then shall we respond to the Mystery that is come among us?**

**With willingness for change. With patience in long waiting.**

**With silence and with singing.**

**With the ability to see the Mystery in the least likely of our brothers and sisters. With the joy of sharing. Amen.**

**The Offering and The Offertory**

*Carol of the Birds*

arr. Wilson

Dr. Laura Artesani, *organ*

\* **The Doxology**

# 715

**All praise and thanks to God our Father and our Mother, to Christ and to the One who binds us to each other, the one eternal God, whom earth and heaven adore, for thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore.**

## Today's Plate Offering

### unmarked gifts

**OPEN DOORS:** CUF's mission to and for our community is to keep the church doors open to promote community-building activities and encourage positive relationships. Many local, **non-profit** groups use our beautiful facility--Orono Health Association, Euphony, Women of the World, Still Water Sangha, Operation Breaking Stereotypes--to name just a few! Relationships are formed, plans are made, lessons are learned, and community is built and nourished with love and laughter. CUF considers the cost of our open doors (heat, lights, cleaning) a benevolence gift to the greater Orono/Old Town community.

### marked gifts (check or envelope)

#### PLEDGE

#### Orono Community Garden

Time to peruse the seed catalogs! Dr. John Jemison launched the *Orono Community Garden* in 2004 while teaching a class in sustainability at the University of Maine. As part of their 24-hour service requirement, students could help with the garden Jemison created that year. Enormous community support has helped to keep the Community Garden project going, with particular generosity in recent years from our own Church of Universal Fellowship.

The most unique aspect of the Orono Community Garden is the multi-layered benefits it achieves in health and education. Students and volunteers learn about sustainable and organic gardening techniques while they work with Jemison in the 50 or so garden beds throughout the growing season. The over 50 low-income seniors who are the recipients of the garden's produce have the ability to eat more healthfully, but they also benefit from the personal connection of the weekly home delivery.

#### Manna Ministries

Manna Ministries has gone through some reorganization and the move to a new building at 100 Center Street in Bangor. Manna's facilities still host a Soup Kitchen, Food Pantry, Food Bank and Clothing Bank. The Soup Kitchen provides an evening meal Mondays through Fridays. The Food Pantry provides bags of groceries, that last three to four days, to people who require assistance. Let's help get Manna Ministries back on its feet. The Greater Bangor Area needs them!

**Please make checks payable to:  
The Church of Universal Fellowship.**

**Memo your check or mark your envelope:**

**Pledge or Manna Ministries or**

**Orono Community Garden**

**unmarked gifts will support Open Doors**

*Worship Attendance December 31st: 61*