

**Congregational Church  
of Westminster West  
A United Church of Christ**

*January 5, 2025  
Epiphany*

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude "If I Needed You"

*Townes van Zandt*

\*Call to Worship *(based on Isaiah 60: 1-6)*

Leader: The prophet speaks: "Arise, shine! For your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you."

**People: Even when shadows shall cover the earth, still God's light shines. We will come to the brightness of God's dawn. We will come and fear no more.**

L: Lift up your eyes and look around; we gather in the light of God's power and love. See, and be radiant! Thrill and rejoice at the dawning of God's new day.

**P: We gather in praise of the newborn King, the bringer of light to a weary world.**

L: Come, let us worship God together.

\*Hymn No. 164

*"Arise, Your Light is Come"*

*Arise, your light is come! The Spirit's call obey;  
show forth the glory of your God which shines on you today!*

*Arise, your light is come! Fling wide the prison door;  
proclaim the captive's liberty, good tidings to the poor.*

*Arise, your light is come! All you in sorrow born,  
bind up the broken-hearted ones and comfort those who mourn.*

*Arise, your light is come! The mountains burst in song!  
Rise up like eagles on the wing; God's power will make us strong.*

Litany of Confession *(seated)*

*Iona Abbey Worship Book*

L: Holy God, Maker of all

**All: Have mercy on us.**

L: Jesus Christ, Servant of the poor,

**A: Have mercy on us.**

L: Holy Spirit, Breath of life,

**A: Have mercy on us.**

L: Let us in silence confess our faults and admit our frailty.

*...silence...*

L: Before God, and with the people of God, I confess to my brokenness: to the ways I wound my life, the lives of others, and the life of the world.

**A: May God forgive you, Christ renew you, and the Spirit enable you to grow in love.**

L: Amen

**A: Before God, with the people of God, we confess to our brokenness: to the ways we wound our lives, the lives of others, and the life of the world.**

L: May God forgive you, Christ renew you, and the Spirit enable you to grow in love.

**A: Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

L: Brothers and sisters, I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Hear the good news: we are forgiven!

**P: Thanks be to God**

\*Gloria No. 756

*Gloria, gloria in excelsis Deo!  
Gloria, gloria, alleluia, alleluia!*

Reflection

*“Lessons from Wise Ones”  
based on Isaiah 60: 1-9 & Matthew 2: 1-12*

\*Hymn No. 156:

*“Brightest and Best”  
Brightest and best of the stars of the morning,  
dawn on our midnight and lend us your aid.  
Star of the East the horizon adorning,  
guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.*

*Gold on the cradle the dewdrops are shining,  
God's holy Child with the beasts of the stall;  
angels adore while this baby lies sleeping,  
Maker and Monarch and Savior of all.*

*Shall we not offer our costly devotion,  
fragrance of Edom and offerings divine,  
gems of the mountain and pearls of the ocean,  
myrrh from the forest or gold from the mine?*

*Vainly we offer each ample offering,  
vainly with gifts would we favor secure;  
richer by far is the heart's adoration;  
dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.*

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## **Liturgy of Farewell**

*Adapted from the UCC Book of Worship*

### **Greeting**

*Deacon:* Our church community is constantly changing. People come and go. Babies are born. Children grow up. People commit themselves to one another. Loved ones and friends among us come to the end of their lives. Individuals move into our community and church life. Others leave us, growing toward new places, new experiences, new opportunities. It is important and right that we recognize and honor these times of passage, of endings and beginnings. Today we share a farewell with our pastor, Susie and her family, Tristan, Owen and Malcolm.

### **Recognition of Closure**

*Rev. Paul Sangree, VT Conference Rep.:* On September 22nd, 2002, this congregation called Susie Webster-Toleno to serve as Pastor to the Congregational Church of Westminster West.

*Susie:* I thank this Church, its members and friends, for the love, kindness and support shown me these last 22 years. I ask forgiveness for the mistakes I have made. I am grateful for the ways my leadership has been

encouraged and accepted. As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned here.

**Congregation: We receive your thankfulness, offer forgiveness, and accept that your time with us is ending. We express our gratitude for your ministry among us. We ask your forgiveness for our mistakes. Your influence on our faith and faithfulness will not leave us at your departure.**

*Susie:* I forgive you and accept your gratitude, trusting that our time together and our parting are pleasing to God.

### ***Vows of Release***

*Paul:* Do, you, the members and friends of The Congregational Church of Westminster West, release the Rev. Susie Webster-Toleno from the duties of Pastor?

**Congregation: We do, with the help of God.**

*Paul:* Do you offer Susie your encouragement as her life and ministry unfold in new ways?

**Congregation: We do, with the help of God.**

*Paul:* Do you, Susie, release The Congregational Church of Westminster West from turning to you in times of need and depending on your guidance and spiritual support?

*Susie:* I do, with the help of God.

*Paul:* Do you offer your encouragement for the continuing ministry of this church in the community and on the relationship with another who will come to serve?

*Susie:* I do, with the help of God.

*Paul:* On behalf of the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ, I witness to the words spoken: words of thankfulness, forgiveness and release. The member churches of our association and conference hold each of you in prayer. We pledge our support in the transitions signified in this service.

### ***Prayer***

*Deacon:* Let us pray:

**All: O God, we give thanks for remembered times, when we, together, have shared this life of faith. We thank You for the moments we have shared with Susie in worship, in prayer, in fun and in presence. We pray that Susie will always be aware of Your Spirit's guidance in her life and ministry. Help each of us**

**to trust the future which rests in Your care. Guide us as we hold these cherished memories but move in new directions, until that time to come when we are completely one with You and with each other. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.**

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Choir Anthem

Prayers of the People

One: May the Lord be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

One: Let us pray.

Joys and Concerns of the Community

Silence

Pastoral prayer

The Lord's prayer (*unison*)

*Our (Father/Mother/Creator), 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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. 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.*

Offertory "Das alte Jahr vergangen ist"

*J. S. Bach*

\*Doxology      *Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below.  
Praise God for all that Love has done,  
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.*

\*Dedicatory Prayer

Celebration of Holy Communion

*We celebrate an open table. When the moment to receive communion comes, all are welcome to come forward and share in the meal. If you are unable to walk forward but would like to participate, it will be brought to*

*you. If you prefer not to receive communion, you are welcome to remain seated in quiet meditation.*

\*Hymn No. 391

“Be Thou My Vision”

*Pilgrim*

*Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;  
nought be thou else to me save that thou art.  
Thou my best thought, by day or by night;  
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.*

*Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word;  
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;  
thou my great Father, I thy true son;  
thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.*

*Riches I heed not, nor man’s empty praise,  
thou mine inheritance, now and always;  
thou and thou only, first in my heart,  
High King of heaven, my treasure thou art.*

*High King of heaven, my victory won,  
may I reach heaven’s joys, O bright heaven’s Sun!  
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,  
still be my vision, O Ruler of all! Amen.*

\*Benediction

Postlude

“The Summons”

*KELVINGROVE /John Bell*

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### Church and Community Notes

⌘ During the time after Rev. Susie has departed and before we have a settled pastor, the Deacons are helping to support the basic pastoral needs of the congregation. In circumstances that are more of an emergency, they are working with an area pastor to provide further support. Please ask a Deacon for support if you need it: Charlotte Gifford,

David Mulholland, Karen Blanchard, Sue Venman-Payne, or Adrienne Major.



Worship Participants:

Musician: Fred Gray

Deacons: *all of them!*

Trustees: Guy Payne, chair

Vermont Conference Representative: Rev. Paul Sangree

Minister to the Congregation: Rev. Susie Webster-Toleno

Ministers to the World: The Congregation

*\* indicates that all who are able shall stand*

*Please join us for fellowship and refreshments downstairs  
following the worship service*