



United Church of Christ, First Congregational
Norwich, New York



**THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
Norwich, New York 13815**



An Open and Affirming Church

January 2, 2022

10:00 a.m.

PREPARING TO WORSHIP GOD

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

PRELUDE *Bethlehem Star*

Steven Scott

WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: Arise, shine; for your light has come.

ALL: The glory of the Lord has risen upon us.

ONE: Come, worship the Lord of glory.

ALL: Proclaim God's praise among the nations.

INVOCATION

OPENING HYMN

Holy Child of Bethlehem Words by Lloyd Larson and Phillips Brooks
from *The Road to Bethlehem* Arr.with new music by Lloyd Larson.
Tune: FOREST GREEN

TIME OF SHARING

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

PASTORAL BLESSING OF PEACE (Pastor John)

ONE: May the Peace of Jesus Christ be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

Large Print Bulletins are available from the ushers.

Permission to reprint, podcast, and / or stream the music in this service obtained from ONE LICENSE with license #735996-A. All rights reserved.

Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from *Feasting on the Word® Worship Companion*. Copyright 2012

OFFERTORY PLEDGE

ONE: We love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

ALL: We pledge our whole selves to God.

ONE: We love our neighbors as ourselves.

ALL: We pledge to do justice as Christ's ambassadors of reconciliation.

ONE: We love one another as Jesus loves us.

ALL: We pledge to be and become Christ's Beloved Community in our life together.

ONE: We make disciples by teaching and modeling how to follow Jesus' Way of Love.

ALL: We pledge to be Jesus' disciples sharing Jesus' Way of Love in the way we live our lives and practice our faith.

We will not be passing the offering plates. Instead, they are located at both doors for your convenience as you enter or exit the Nave.

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE READING - Ephesians 3:1-12

This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—² for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you,³ and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words,⁴ a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ.⁵ In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit:⁶ that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

⁷ Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power.⁸ Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ,⁹ and to make everyone see¹⁰ what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.¹¹ This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord,¹² in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

SCRIPTURE READING - Matthew 2:1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ² asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." ³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶ 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸ Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." ⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

SPECIAL MUSIC

The Journey

from *The Road to Bethlehem*

Words by Carol M. Hodge

Based on Matt 2:1-12, 2 Cor 4:6

Music by Lloyd Larson

Quoting KINGS OF ORIENT by John H. Hopkins

SERMON

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

INTERLUDE *Melody*

Flor Peters

AFFIRMING OUR FAITH

United Church of Christ Statement of Faith in the form of a doxology

ONE: We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit,

ALL: **God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to your deeds we testify:**

ONE: You call the worlds into being,

ALL: **create persons in your own image, and set before each one the ways of life and death.**

ONE: You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

ALL: You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.

ONE: In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot,

ALL: conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself.

ONE: You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit,

ALL: creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

ONE: You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants in the service of others,

ALL: to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.

ONE: You promise to all who trust you forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace,

ALL: courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end.

ONE: Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you.

ALL: Amen.

SHARING OF JOYS/CONCERNS (Pastor John)
(Joys and prayers requests should be written on the prayer slips as you enter the Nave prior to the start of worship.)

PASTORAL PRAYER

COMMISSION AND BLESSING

CLOSING HYMN *As With Gladness Those of Old* (#159)
 Ericka and Leona Tyler, soloists William C. Dix, 1861
 Tune: DIX by Konrad Kocher, 1838
 adapted by William H. Monk, 1861

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

For the Beauty of the Earth John Purifoy
 Tune: DIX by Conrad Kocher

Please remain seated until the usher dismisses you.

Watch a live stream of our service Sundays at 10:00 a.m. at
www.uccnorwichny.org/live-stream-2

Past worship services can be viewed at
www.uccnorwichny.org/sermons

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MASKS ARE REQUIRED THROUGHOUT THE WORSHIP SERVICES.

In order to reduce the risk of spreading infection, it is important that everyone wear a mask while in the church building, unless speaking from a microphone, singing a solo during worship, or receiving communion.

SHARING OF JOYS/CONCERNS - Please fill out the prayer request form in the hallway as you enter the Nave prior to the service.

CHENANGO COUNTY COVID-19 NUMBERS

	This week (12/29)	Last week (12/23)
Active Cases	227	301
Quarantines	431	521
Hospitalizations	12	13
Deaths	92	92

CHENANGO CO. VACCINATION RATE (people 18+)
as of 12/29/21 – 73.6% with at least one dose

SIGN UP- If you would like to offer the altar flowers, or be an usher, greeter, or liturgist please sign up on the bulletin board in the hallway, or contact Linda Oehme or the church office. Thank you.

WE SUPPORT MUSIC EDUCATION – If you need help affording music lessons, consider applying for a Music Scholarship. Applications are available from the church office. For more information, talk with Meena Conant, Music Committee Chair.

LOVE GOD, LOVE NEIGHBOR - Join us on Mondays to show our support, love and affirmation of those in the LGBTQ+ community by posting a rainbow selfie on your social media account with #rainbowmondays.

IF YOU NEED HELP with something, please reach out to the church office, a Deacon or Pastor John. We're here to help each other.

CALENDAR

The Chenango Muslim Community meets upstairs daily at 9:30 p.m. and Fridays at 1:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 2

9:00 a.m. Sunday School, on Zoom
10:00 a.m. Worship, Nave

MONDAY JANUARY 3

Church office holiday

10:00 a.m. Prayer Circle on Zoom
1:30 p.m. K. Given Tutoring, kitchen
2:00 p.m. E. Fischer Lessons, upstairs
3:00 p.m. Tai Chi, Founders' Rm.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 4

Deadline for January Newsletter Articles

9:00 a.m. AARP Tax Training, Founders' Room
1:00 p.m. Quilting Circle, Kitchen

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 5

10:00 a.m. Prayer Circle on Zoom
3:30 p.m. J. Handy Lessons, upstairs
7:00 p.m. Zoom Choir Rehearsal

THURSDAY, JANUARY 6

7:00 p.m. Executive Council Meeting, on Zoom

FRIDAY, JANUARY 7

10:00 a.m. Prayer Circle, on Zoom
3:30 p.m. J. Handy, Lessons

SUNDAY, JANUARY 9

9:00 a.m. Sunday School, on Zoom
10:00 a.m. Worship, Nave

TODAY'S PARTICIPANTS IN MINISTRY OF SERVICE:

Interim Pastor: **Rev. John Steitz**
Director of Music Ministries: **Mary Williams**
Organist: **Jason Handy**
Director of Children's/Youth Ministries: **Linda Oehme**
Sunday Sexton: **Shea Breese**
Live Stream: **Jennifer Mallozzi, Chris McSweeney**
Usher: **Linda Oehme**
Greeter: **Bob Oehme**
Liturgist: **Ericka Tyler**

MINISTERS: All the People

INTERIM PASTOR: Rev. John Steitz, 215-820-1650 (cell)

MODERATOR: John Kolb

CHAIR OF DEACONS: Mary Williams

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRIES: Mary Williams

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S/YOUTH MINISTRIES: Linda Oehme

PARISH COORDINATOR: Cheri Oakley

FINANCIAL ASSISTANT: Jennifer Mallozzi

FAMILY COUNSELING MINISTRY: Joanne Ferguson

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS - By appointment only.

CONTACT:

Address: 11 West Main St., Norwich NY 13815

Telephone: 607-334-3434

E-mail: office@uccnorwichny.org

Web site: www.uccnorwichny.org

facebook

January 2, 2022

Covid-19 Safety Protocols (September 2021)

- Face coverings will be required upon entry and exit to the building. (Masks will be available.) **As of 12/5/21** - masks are required throughout the service, unless speaking from a microphone, singing a solo during worship, or receiving communion.
- Social distancing of 6 feet (minimum) will be observed at all times.
- Physical contact with those outside of your household should be avoided.
- Everyone will be required to check in for attendance with the usher upon arrival.
- Please consider coming early to allow time for signing and for a slower entry into the Nave due to social distancing.
- At this time we are not able to accommodate childcare for children of any age. Children will remain in the Sanctuary and are asked to stay seated with their family/household.
- Seating in the Nave will look very different. Our ushers may assist in seating you. Please keep in mind that you may not be able to sit in the pew you are accustomed to and that your seat may change from week to week.
- The bulletins will contain everything you will need to follow along with the service (scripture, hymns, readings etc). They will be located in the pews and will be an indication as to where you can sit upon entry into the Nave.
- Currently, due to State and Conference guidelines, we will be unable to sing along with the hymns, but we do encourage you to hum along with them.
- Passing of the peace will be suspended at this time.
- Hearing assistive devices will be available for those that need them. You will receive the headset in a bag. Please write your name on the bag and store the headset in the same bag for use during future services.
- Offerings will be collected by placing your envelope in an offering plate upon entering or exiting the Nave.
- Once the service is over, we will leave the building in an orderly manner to allow for social distancing. The ushers will dismiss the congregation row by row.
- Coffee Hour and other such gatherings will remain suspended until further notice.
- One person at a time will be allowed in the restrooms (unless family group).
- Hand sanitizing stations are located near the Nave entrance hall and in each pew. Please wash your hands or use sanitizing stations frequently.
- We ask that if you are not feeling well and /or may be exhibiting cold or flu-like symptoms, that you refrain from attending until you feel better.
- Prayer requests can be emailed to the church office by Friday. On Sunday morning, we will utilize the prayer basket for prayer requests.
- Disinfection Plan: our Custodian will disinfect all high touch surfaces, including rest rooms and seating areas, before and/or after weekly services.