

Peace





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



An Open and Affirming Church

December 5, 2021

10:00 a.m.

**Second Sunday in Advent – Peace
Communion**

PREPARING TO WORSHIP GOD

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

PRELUDE *Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming*

Mark Hayes

WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING

**CALL TO WORSHIP - LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE
First Sunday of Advent – Peace**

CANTICLE

The Road To Bethlehem

by Lloyd Larson

Mary and Pete Williams, soloists

Prepare the way of the Lord, prepare the way of the Lord.
Make straight in the desert a highway, a highway for our God.
Prepare the way of the Lord, prepare the way of the Lord.
Make straight a highway for the coming King.

DREAMING OF PEACE

The candles are lit.

UNISON PRAYER

Loving God, give us the desire, the willingness, and the courage to be part of your dream for a world made new. We pray in the name of Jesus, your dream incarnate. Amen.

Large Print Bulletins are available from the ushers.

INVOCATION

OPENING HYMN

O Come O Come Emmanuel (#116 v.1,4,6,7)

based on ancient antiphons from Advent Vespers

Tune: VENI EMMANUEL

Arranged by Thomas Helmore, 1854

TIME OF SHARING

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

PASTORAL BLESSING OF PEACE

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

ALL: And also with you.

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.*

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

ONE: This table is open to all who call Jesus the Christ, all who wish to share in the community of God's people.

ALL: It is therefore also true that the forgiveness of God is available to all, and we rest, assured of this forgiveness, through Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

ONE: God be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

ONE: Be free with your hearts.

ALL: We give them freely to God.

ONE: Let us give thanks to God.

ALL: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

ONE: We now join our voices with all those who proclaim, worship, and glorify You, O God Most Holy.

SONG OF PRAISE

ALL: Holy, Holy, Holy God of love and majesty, the whole universe speaks of Your glory, O God Most High. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of our God! Hosanna in the highest!

ONE: Holy God, we praise You for Your creation, and remember Your covenant made with Your people, shown to us in fullness with the birth of Your child, Jesus, and completed in the resurrection of the Christ. We remember, too, that on the night of betrayal, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to the disciples saying: This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way, Jesus took the cup, saying: This is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.

Consecrate, therefore, by Your Holy Spirit, O God, these gifts, and bless us that, as we receive them, we may be united with Christ and one another, and continue to be faithful in all things. Amen.

ONE: Let us proclaim with these ancient words what we believe.

ALL: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

BREAKING BREAD AND POURING WINE

(Please lift up your elements as we break bread and pour wine)

SHARING OF THE ELEMENTS

(Open and partake of the elements at this time.)

UNISON PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

We thank You God, for inviting us to this table where we have known the presence of Christ and have received all Christ's gifts. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and let us show forth Your presence in our lives: We pray these things in the name of Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE READING - Malachi 3:1-4

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. ² But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; ³ he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness, ⁴ Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

SCRIPTURE READING - Luke 3:1-6

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, ² during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³ He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴ as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.

⁵ Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth;

⁶ and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

ANTHEM *A Highway for Our God*
(from *The Road To Bethlehem*)

words and music by Lloyd Larson

SERMON (Pastor John)

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

INTERLUDE *Heavenly Life*

James Southbridge

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

(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 *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear* (#131) Edmund H. Sears, 1849

Tune: CAROL, by Richard Willis, 1850

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Wake, Awake! For Night is Flying!* Denis Eliot
(based on a melody by Philipp Nicolai)

Please remain seated until the usher dismisses you.

Questions for Reflection

The prophet Malachi says that God is “like a refiner’s fire and like fuller’s soap” (Mal. 3:2).

Reflect on events of the past year. How has God been working to refine and purify your life or your community of faith?

Paul writes to the church at Philippi: “I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now” (Phil. 1:3–5).

Think about people in your life for whom you give thanks, who have been in your prayers, and who have brought good news and joy to you this year. Consider writing them a letter or card to express your gratitude.

Household Prayer: Morning (Luke 1:68, 78–79)

Blessed are you, Lord God:
by your tender mercy
the dawn breaks upon us.
Guide our feet this day
in paths of peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening (Luke 1:68, 79)

Blessed are you, Lord God:
for you have smiled on us this day and redeemed us from our sin.
Give light to all who wait in darkness until we rest with you in perfect peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DUE TO RECENT COVID ACTIVITY MASKS WILL BE 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM CHENANGO COUNTY HEALTH

DEPARTMENT (Week of 11/22) -Chenango County again find ourselves in a surge of COVID-19 cases. Today's active case report is equal to the highest number of cases we have reported, equaling our active cases from January of this year. The current surge can be attributed to several factors from vaccination rates to reduced safeguards. As we approach the holiday season, we implore everyone in our community to be safe and be smart. Individuals and families must understand their own risk factors and strive to keep each other safe. Please follow good hygiene practices, limit large gatherings, and get vaccinated/ get a booster. Perhaps most important of all, if you don't feel well stay home and get tested. So many of the exposures we continue to see are associated with individuals who continued their regular routine while symptomatic.

CHENANGO COUNTY COVID-19 NUMBERS

	This week (11/30)	Last week (11/22)
Active Cases	171	232
Quarantines	400	566
Hospitalizations	3	4
Deaths	91	87

CHENANGO CO. VACCINATION RATE (people 18+)
as of 11/30/21 – 71.6% with at least one dose

**CALL TO THE ANNUAL MEETING TO VOTE ON THE BUDGET -
Sunday, December 12th following the worship service.**

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.

**HOSPICE LIGHT UP A LIFE CEREMONY on Tuesday December 9,
7:00 p.m. (inclement weather date- December 16) at the Hospice
Office , 33-39 Court Street, Norwich. Join Hospice of Chenango for a
memorial tree lighting service to honor the lives of loved ones that have
passed. Memorial ornaments are available for purchase. Call (607)334-
3556 for more information.**

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

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.

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.

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.

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Children's Moment from *Young Children and Worship* by Sonja M. Stewart and Jerome W. Berryman © 1989.

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

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

CALENDAR

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5 - 2nd SUNDAY IN ADVENT - PEACE

- 9:00 a.m. Sunday School, on Zoom
- 10:00 a.m. Worship, Nave
- 11:30 a.m. Bell Choir, Chapel
- 3:00 p.m. Cantata Rehearsal, Zoom

MONDAY, DECEMBER 6

- 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.
- 7:00 p.m. Search Team Meeting on Zoom

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7

- 1:00 p.m. Quilting Circle, Kitchen
- 7:00 p.m. Deacons Meeting on Zoom
- 7:00 p.m. Trustees Meeting on Zoom

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8

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

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9

- 4:30 p.m. Piecemakers, Founders' Rm.
- 7:00 p.m. Hospice Light Up a Life Ceremony. See announcements

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10

- 10:00 a.m. Prayer Circle, on Zoom
- 3:30 p.m. J. Handy Students Dress Rehearsal, Nave

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11

- 3:00 p.m. J. Handy Students Recital, Nave

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12 - 2nd SUNDAY IN ADVENT- PEACE

- 9:00 a.m. Sunday School, on Zoom
- 10:00 a.m. Worship, Nave
- 11:30 a.m. Bell Choir, Chapel
- 3:00 p.m. Cantata Rehearsal, Zoom

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

TODAY'S PARTICIPANTS IN MINISTRY OF SERVICE:

Usher: **Brad Morrison**
Greeter: **Bob Oehme**
Interim Pastor: **Rev. John Steitz**
Liturgist: **Linda Oehme**
Advent Candle Lighting: **Terry Yantz, Mya Yantz,
Luci Yantz**
Director of Music Ministries: **Mary Williams**
Organist: **Jason Handy**
Soloists: **Mary and Pete Williams**
Director of Children's/Youth Ministries:
Linda Oehme
Sunday Sexton: **Shea Breese**
Live Stream Committee: **Jen Mallozzi, Chris McSweeney**

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, 244-0896

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

December 5, 2021

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** - due to recent Covid activity, masks will be 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.