

Rejoice!





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



An Open and Affirming Church

December 24, 2021

5:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve

A TIME OF GATHERING

PRELUDE

Away in a Manger

Mark Hayes

Tunes: Mueller by William J. Kirkpatrick
and Cradle Song by James R. Murray

Jason Handy, piano

God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

Traditional English Carol
arr. Katrina Wreede

Destinie Smith, Viola

We Three Kings of Orient Are

John Hopkins Jr.
arr. Kevin Costley

O Holy Night

music by Adolphe Charles Adam
arr. Mark Hayes

Jason Handy, piano

Christmastide

Gail Leven Pollock

(Good Christian Friends Rejoice -
I Saw Three Ships - Here We Come A-Caroling)
Bob Oehme, organ; Jason Handy, piano

*Standing is not required.

Large Print Bulletins are available from the ushers.

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CHIMING OF THE HOUR

ANTHEM *Joyful and Triumphant* arranged by Douglas E. Wagner
Hand Bell Choir based on the hymn tunes ADESTE FIDELIS,
IL EST NE, and JUNGST

WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WE PRAISE GOD

CALL TO WORSHIP - The Lighting of the Christ Candle

CANTICLE-

Bob and Linda Oehme, soloists
Rejoice our Savior is born! Rejoice our Savior is born!
God's gift of love to all people; Emmanuel with us.
Rejoice our Savior is born! Rejoice our Savior is born!
God's gift of love; Emmanuel

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

UNISON PRAYER

Generous God, you have given us a time of preparation to receive again your gift of love and joy and hope and healing. In the birth of the child, Jesus, you have given new life to each of us. May we experience the presence of Emmanuel, God with us, this day, and always. Amen.

CANTICLE

Bob and Linda Oehme, soloists

INVOCATION

***HYMN** *Joy to The World* (#132) Isaac Watts, 1719
Tune: ANTIOCH Lowell Mason, 1836

CALL FOR OFFERING

OFFERTORY

ONE: Holy God, heaven and earth are met this day in the newborn Child, Savior of the world. We celebrate his birth; for in him you come to be close to us, that we might be close to you.

ALL: **God of all mercy, as you have come in Jesus Christ to be our guest, inspire our hearts to a hospitality that welcomes all your children in his name.**

ONE: All things come from you, O God, and with praise and thanksgiving we return to you what is yours.

ALL: You created all that is, and with love formed us in your image.

ONE: When our love failed, your love remained steadfast. You came to us as Emmanuel, God with us.

ALL: You came to us as Love Incarnate, our Savior, Jesus the Christ.

ONE: All that we are, and all that we have, is a gift of love from you.

ALL: And so, in gratitude we offer ourselves, and all that we have, in union with your love offering through Jesus Christ.

ONE: By your Holy Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ALL: Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC *Good King Wenceslas* arranged by Richard McKee
Hand Bell Choir

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.)

COMMUNION MUSIC

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

Mark Hayes

Tune: Picardy, 17th. C. French Carol

UNISON PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

ONE: Please join with me in the unison prayer of Thanksgiving.

ALL: **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.**

A TIME OF PRAYER AND DEDICATION

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Silent Prayer

Pastoral Prayer

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE - Isaiah 9:2-7

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness
on them light has shined.
³You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.
⁴For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.
⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
⁶For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
⁷His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

SPECIAL MUSIC *He Is Born*

Jason Handy, piano

Mark Hayes

Tune: Il Est Né, 18th c. French carol

SCRIPTURE - Luke 2:1-14

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in

the inn.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

ANTHEM

Shepherds in the Field

from *The Road To Bethlehem*

Words and music by Lloyd Larson

Based upon I SAW THREE SHIPS
and SUSSEX CAROL

SCRIPTURE - Luke 2:15-20

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

SPECIAL MUSIC *What Child is This*
Jason Handy, organ

Arranged by James Kasen

SERMON

BRINGING CHRIST'S LIGHT INTO THE WORLD

SCRIPTURE - John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹ The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹² But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

LIGHTING THE CHRISTMAS CANDLES

(Note: To avoid dripping wax, the unlit candle should be tilted toward the lit candle.)

***HYMN** *Silent Night* (#134)

Leona Tyler, solo

Ericka Tyler, Mary Williams,

Pete Williams, Brooke Bonney,

Destinie Smith, viola

Joseph Mohr, 1818

transl. John F. Young 1863

Tune: STILLE NACHT

by Franz Gruber, 1818

NOTE: Due to the pandemic, congregational singing is not advised at this time. The congregation is invited to hum along on the second and third verses.

***SCRIPTURE** - Genesis 1:1-3

(Please remain standing for this reading, adapted from the Jewish Publication Society translation of the Tanakh, translated by by Everett Fox.)

^[1] At the beginning of God's creating of the heaven and the earth ^[2] when the earth was unformed and void, wild and waste, filled with chaos and emptiness, as night reigned over the surface of the deep, a wind from God, the rushing Spirit of God swept over the face of the waters.

^[3] And God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

COMMISSION AND BENEDICTION

BRINGING CHRIST'S PEACE INTO THE WORLD

ONE: May the peace of Christ whose birth we celebrate be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

BENEDICTION

"The Work of Christmas"

by Howard Thurman

from *The Mood of Christmas and Other Celebrations*

When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,
the work of Christmas begins:

to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among the people,
to make music in the heart.

POSTLUDE *Joy to the World*

Anna Laura Page

Tune: Antioch by Lowell Mason

Please wait for the usher to dismiss you.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PLEASE REMEMBER to take your poinsettia after the service, unless you requested the Deacons to donate it.

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.

THERE IS NO WORSHIP SERVICE OR SUNDAY SCHOOL ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26TH. On January 2nd we will return to our normal schedule - Zoom Sunday School at 9:00 a.m. and worship at 10:00 a.m.

THE CHURCH OFFICE will be closed Monday and Tuesday, December 27 and 28th for the holiday.

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.

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, DECEMBER 26

No Worship Service. No Sunday School.

MONDAY DECEMBER 27

Church Staff Holiday - office closed.

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, DECEMBER 28

Church Staff Holiday - office closed.

1:00 p.m. Quilting Circle, Kitchen

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 29

10:00 a.m. Prayer Circle on Zoom

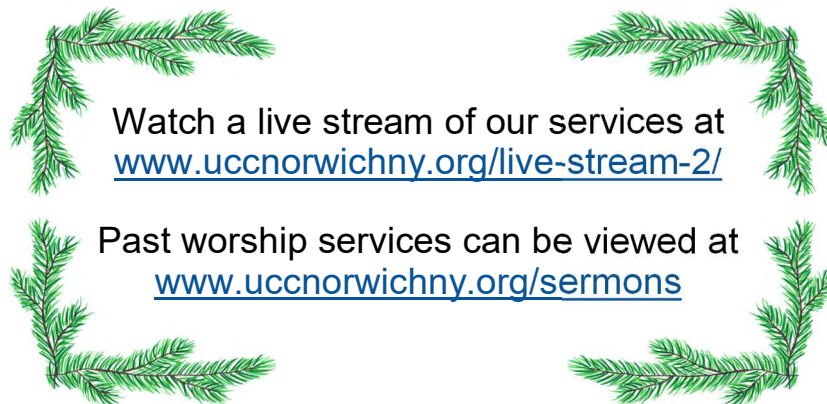
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31 - New Year's Eve

10:00 a.m. Prayer Circle, on Zoom

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1 - New Year's Day

SUNDAY, JANUARY 2

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



Watch a live stream of our services at
www.uccnorwichny.org/live-stream-2/

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

TODAY'S PARTICIPANTS IN MINISTRY OF SERVICE:

Usher: Bob Oehme
Greeter: Pete Williams
Interim Pastor: Rev. John Steitz
Director of Music Ministries: Mary Williams
Organist: Jason Handy
Director of Children's/Youth Ministries: Linda Oehme
Liturgists: Brad Morrison, Linda Oehme
Sunday Sexton: Shea Breese
Live Stream: Jen Mallozzi, Chris McSweeney
Soloists: Brooke Bonney, Jason Handy, Bob Oehme, Linda Oehme, Destinie Smith, Leona Tyler, Ericka Tyler, Pete Williams, Mary Williams
Handbell Choir: Mary Williams, Director
Lilit Danielyan, Maxine Gage, Elspeth Hunter, Liam Hunter, John Kolb, Bob Oehme, Linda Oehme, Amy Rogers, Ericka Tyler, Leona Tyler, Pete Williams
Choir: Brooke Bonney, Mikaela Brown, Pat Burke, Megan Carpenter, Meena Conant, Bonnie Connolly, Jason Handy, Jessica Hoople, Elspeth Hunter, Miranda Hunter, Kaitlyn Jackson, Craig Lawson, Joyce Lawson, Jennifer Mallozzi, Donna Moren, Mike Moren, Brad Morrison, Bob Oehme, Linda Oehme, Jessica Posner, Shannon Richards, Deb Sanderson, Kacie Turnbull, Ericka Tyler, Leona Tyler, Mary Williams, Pete Williams

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:

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Web site: www.uccnorwichny.org

facebook

December 24, 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** - 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.

Poinsettias

In memory of **Rita and Bruce Barber** and **Rebecca Franco**
from Elizabeth Barber-Breese.

In memory of **J. Peter Chaplin**
from Virginia J.T. Chaplin.

In honor of grandchildren **Mira, Saul, Zane, Landers and LeDain**
from Virginia J.T. Chaplin.

In memory of parents **Paul and Eleanor Currie**,
formerly of Mohawk, NY
from Paul E. Currie, Jr.

In memory of parents **Carroll and Shirley Edwards**
from Francis, Mark, Janet and Arlene.

In memory of **Stacy Gage** and **Amy Gage**
from Maxine Gage.

In memory of **John Wassenaar, Bill and Catherine Johnson**
from the Johnson Family.

In memory of **Roslyn and Frank M^cAleish**
from Karen Mallozzi.

In memory of **William R. and Doris G. Noel** and
Gary N. Gray, Sr. and Elizabeth Gray
from Gary and Vicki Gray.

In memory of parents **Stew and Carla Chase**
from Jerrilynn and Alan Ingraham.

In memory of **Robert K. Oehme, Jr.**
from the Oehme Family.

In memory of **Cleave Yeahl** and **Werner and Mona Oehme**
from the Oehme family.

In memory of **Mary Piacquadio**
from Antoinette Piacquadio.

In loving memory of **our parents**
from Allan and Elissa Sawyer.

In Memory of our **departed loved ones**
from Betty Yeahl.