



**United Church of Christ
Norwich, New York**



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



An Open and Affirming Church

December 24, 2022

5:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve

PREPARING TO WORSHIP GOD

GATHERING MUSIC

Christmas Selections offered by Jason Handy, piano

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

Carol of the Bells
Handbell Choir

Traditional Ukrainian Carol
by Mykolo Leontovich
arranged by Douglas E. Wagner

WELCOME

(Please sign the attendance pad found in the pew.)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

CANTICLE

adapted from *Prepare!* from "Seekers of the Light"
Music by Lloyd Larson

Rejoice, rejoice, for Emmanuel is come:
Christ is born, hear the angels sing!
Glory be to God in the highest
and peace to all people bring.

*Please stand if you are able.

Large Print Bulletins are available from the ushers.

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

UNISON PRAYER

Here we are, Lord. We are not many, nor are we very wise or powerful, nor rich by the standards of the world. But we do come singing your praises on this special day, because of what you have done.

On this day, we remember your promises that you will never leave us, nor forsake us; that you would show your love for us in a very special way, that you would always let us know that you love us, despite all our fears.

On this day we joyfully remember you creeping in very quietly and very vulnerably among us, in Jesus Christ, born of Mary. Born to be with us. Born to love us. Born to save us. Born to free us.

Help us to come to you now. Help us to let you enter our lives. Speak your words of power and peace in our hearts. And change us, once again. Amen.

CANTICLE

adapted from *Prepare!* from "Seekers of the Light"
Music by Lloyd Larson

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

***OPENING HYMN** *Joy To the World!* #132
(Tune: ANTIOCH C.M.)

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.

BLESSING OF CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING

ONE: God intends the world to be overwhelmed with joy.

ALL: And yet, too many find themselves struggling. We are called to answer the need of the world without being overwhelmed by it.

ONE: Remember, God intends the world to be overwhelmed with nothing but joy.

ALL: In that joy, we give. In that joy, we share. In that joy, we celebrate the holiness of this night.

ONE: Let us all pray together:

ALL: Holy God, we are grateful — for this journey to the manger, for this community gathered around candles of light, and for Christ born to us this night. We pray that you carry our prayers, talents and money where there is greatest need, transforming them into joy for the world. Surprise us with what our ministry together can do. Amen.

Offering plates are located at both Nave doors for your convenience.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

ONE: God be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

ONE: Lift up your hearts.

ALL: We lift them up to God.

ONE: Let us give thanks to God.

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

ONE: God of all times and places, we gather at your table of grace to recall your vision of hope for all people and for your world.

ALL: Through Abraham and Sarah, you revealed your promise in the surprise of a child.

ONE: Through your prophets, you called your people to make way for peace and justice. In Jesus, you revealed your way of forgiveness and love.

ALL: Through the ever-circling year, your Word discloses to us—again and anew—your promise for the restoration of all creation.

ONE: As we gather to share this sign of hope and fulfillment, we remember Jesus, the child born into obscurity, amid fear and uncertainty. We remember

the fragility of that revelation, as well as the hope he stirred and imagination he inspired.

HYMN *In the Bleak Midwinter* #128 (v. 1)
(Tune: CRANHAM)

ONE: We remember Jesus, the One who blazed a new and risky path of extravagant generosity and of passionate concern: temple-shaker, world-maker, rule-breaker, risk-taker; the author and finisher of our faith.

ALL: **We remember Jesus' self-giving love and the offer of himself for others, even those who gave him over to death.**

HYMN *In the Bleak Midwinter* #128 (v. 2)
(Tune: CRANHAM)

BREAKING BREAD AND POURING WINE

HYMN *In the Bleak Midwinter* #128 (v. 3)
(Tune: CRANHAM)

ONE: Come to us, life-giving Spirit of God. Bless us, these gifts, and what we do here, so that we might sing your song of love for your people and for your world.

ALL: **God of All, we pray for your people.**

ONE: For those who are afraid and oppressed, may you give courage.

ALL: **For those suffering conflict and fear, may you bring peace.**

ONE: For those who long for food and water, may they be filled.

ALL: **For those who long for justice, may it be fulfilled.**

ONE: We pray also for ourselves and our community.

ALL: **That those in hospital and in care feel your strength. That those who are alone and anxious feel you near. That those who are ill in body and in spirit be comforted. That our friends and family and all your Creation be blessed by healing and love.**

ONE: Hear our prayers, O God,

ALL: And in your mercy, answer.

ONE: We pray these things, trusting in God's faithfulness revealed:

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. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

SHARING OF THE FEAST

UNISON PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

God of shepherds and Magi, of all time and all space, you gather us by the light of the star of promise. You lead us not only to hope for the future, but to trust in your presence and renewal of life in every time and place. Guide us this night, by the light of that same star. Lead us to the mangers of this world, where uncertainty is met with that renewal of life, and the transformation of this world is most deeply felt in love, one with another. Be with us on this most wondrous of nights, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

HYMN *In the Bleak Midwinter*
(Tune: CRANHAM)

#128 (v. 4)

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

THE CHRISTMAS STORY FORETOLD IN SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 9:2-7

Pew Bible OT p. 706

THE CHRISTMAS STORY IN SCRIPTURE

Luke 2:1-20

Pew Bible NT p. 59

CHOIR ANTHEM *“Hurry To Bethlehem”*

from *Seekers of the Light*

Words and music by Lloyd Larson

Words adapted from Luke 2:8-18

SERMON *The Christmas (Eve) Story*

RESPONDING TO GOD’S WORD

INTERLUDE *What Child is This?*

PASTORAL PRAYER FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

BRINGING CHRIST’S LIGHT INTO THE WORLD

WELCOMING THE LIGHT - (Pastor)

John 1:1-14

LIGHTING THE CHRISTMAS CANDLES

Note: To avoid dripping wax, the unlit candle should be tilted toward the lit candle. Pastor will light his candle from the Christ Candle and bring it forward to the ushers.

HYMN *Silent Night* #134 (join on 2 and 3)
(Tune: STILLE NACHT)

(A soloist will sing in German, the choir will sing verse 1, and the congregation will join in on verses 2 and 3.)

German:

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!
Alles schläft, einsam wacht
nur das traute, hochheilige Paar.
Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,
schlaf in himmlischer Ruh,
schlaf in himmlischer Ruh!

Silent night, holy night,
all is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night,
shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing Alleluia;
Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born.

Silent night, holy night,
Child of God, love's pure light,
Radiant beams from your holy face
bring the dawn of redeeming grace;
Jesus Christ at your birth,
Jesus Christ at your birth.

COMMISSION AND BLESSING

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Jason D. Payne
Tune: ADESTE FIDELES
by John F. Wade

Bulletin Notes:

Call to worship candle lighting liturgy by Rev. Eliza Buchakjian-Tweedy

Unison Prayer by John Harvey, Church of Scotland

Prayer of Invocation by Rev. Eliza Buchakjian-Tweedy

Communion from "This Most Wondrous of Nights: A Christmas Eve Communion Service," by Rev. Andrew O'Neil, St. Paul's United Church, Riverview, New Brunswick, Canada

Offering by UCC Pension Boards

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Poinsettias

In memory of
Stacy Gage, Warren and Helene Granz and Amy Gage
from Maxine, Sam and Alex Gage

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

In memory of
John Wassenaar, Bill Johnson and Catherine Johnson
from Janet and Jeff Johnson

In memory of **Linda Oehme** and **Marsha Posner**
from Jessica and Justin Posner

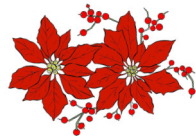
In memory of all our **loved ones**
from Allan and Elissa Sawyer

In memory of **Paul J. Sternberg** and **Amanda Butler Sternberg**
from Pat Sternberg.

In memory of **Ruth Tucker**
from Rose Laughlin

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

In memory of **Miriam H. Weiseman**



***If you purchased a poinsettia to take home,
please remember to take it with you after the service.***

TODAY'S PARTICIPANTS:

Pastor and Teacher: Rev. Jason Boyd

Liturgist: Gary Gray

Candle Lighting: Ericka Tyler and Family

Director of Music Ministries: Mary Williams

Organist: Jason Handy

Live Stream: Jennifer Mallozzi, Chris McSweeney

Sunday Sexton: Leona Tyler

Nursery: Fiora Breese

Usher: Rose Laughlin

Bell Ringers:

Brianne Brunick

Hannah DeBates

Maxine Gage

Amy Rogers

Dan Thompson

Ericka Tyler

Josiah Tyler

Leona Tyler

Destinie Smith

Pete Williams

Mary Williams-Director

Choir:

Sopranos

Pat Burke

Judy Smith

Ericka Tyler

Leona Tyler

Altos

Brianne Brunick

Julie Gonzalez

Amy Rogers

Destinie Smith

Tenor

Pete Williams

Bass

Dan Thompson

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THERE IS NO WORSHIP SERVICE ON CHRISTMAS DAY. We will come together again on New Year's Day at 10:00 a.m. for worship in the Nave.

THE CHURCH OFFICE will be closed Monday and Tuesday, December 25 and 26.

CHRISTMAS IS NEARLY HERE, and as we look forward to all the joy, we know also that it quickly as it comes, it goes. Sometimes that is a bit of a let down for us. But fear not, Norwich UCC, we have something more coming, something new that will be born in our midst in the new year.

Mark you calendars for Sunday, February 19, 2023, when we will have our first ever Mardi Gras service. Break out your beads and your most garish festive outfits, because we are going to swing – the jazz kind of swing, we mean – out of Epiphany and into Lent. Pastor Jason, Mary Williams, and Jason Handy have already started planning the service, and even Scarlett has Mardi Gras beads.

We are even hoping to have a special meal after worship that day. Perhaps a New Orleans-themed potluck? Perhaps a big pancake breakfast? We shall see! But we need folks who can step up and organize. If you are willing to do so, please let Pastor Jason know, so that the planning can continue. Laissez les bons temps roulez!

SEEKERS OF THE LIGHT IS AVAILABLE TO WATCH ONLINE. If you weren't able to attend, you can still enjoy this beautiful Cantata at www.uccnorwichny.org/live-stream-2

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

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

December 24, 2022

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

11 West Main St., Norwich NY 13815

607-334-3434 - office@uccnorwichny.org - www.uccnorwichny.org

MINISTERS: All the People

PASTOR AND TEACHER: Rev. Jason Boyd

MODERATOR: John Kolb

CHAIR OF DEACONS: Mary Williams

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRIES: Mary Williams

INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES: Jessica Posner

PARISH COORDINATOR: Cheri Oakley

FINANCIAL ASSISTANT: Jennifer Mallozzi

facebook



CHURCH OFFICE OPEN

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday

8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

UCC Norwich Reopening Guidelines

Revised 03/31/22

COVID Protocols that have been modified:

- Face coverings in the church building will be optional
- Social distancing of 6 feet is still recommended.
- Childcare will be available again beginning in September 2022
- Parishioners may choose their own seating in the Nave. Distancing between non-family groups is still recommended.
- Hymnals, Pew Bibles will be in the pew racks and may be used.
- Congregational singing is now permitted.
- Prayer requests may be spoken during the worship service or may be submitted in the prayer basket. (Usher will bring microphone around to congregation. Microphone cover will be supplied)
- Coffee Hour will resume April 24, 2022 and will be hosted and coordinated by the Deacons.
- Passing of the peace will continue to be suspended at this time.
- Offerings will be collected by placing your envelope in a basket upon entering or exiting the Nave.
- Communion will be offered in the pews using individually portioned elements.
- 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.
- 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.
- Disinfection Plan: our Custodian will disinfect all high touch surfaces, including rest rooms and seating areas, before and/or after weekly services.