

Christ Is Born!



**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, 2023

5:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve

PREPARING TO WORSHIP GOD

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

GATHERING MUSIC

Variations on 'Lo, How a Rose'

by Murray C. Bradshaw

Come, O Come, Emmanuel
Handbell Choir

Arranged by Lloyd Larson
based on the hymn tunes
VENI EMMANUEL,
PERSONENT HODIE, HYFRYDOL

WELCOME

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

*Please stand in body or in spirit.

Large Print Bulletins are available from the ushers.

Call to Worship by Tim Graves

Prayer of Invocation by Anne Heppenstall-West

Communion Liturgy by Carol Holbrook Prickett

Advent Candle Liturgy by Susan Blain, United Church of Christ, and Alydia Smith,
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Prayer for Generosity by Joanna Harader

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GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: We waited.

ALL: And imagined a savior.

ONE: We imagined power.

ALL: One like the world but stronger and on our side.

ONE: We imagined a king on a white horse wielding a sword.

ALL: We got a baby born in a stable among the livestock.

ONE: We imagined the work done for us through the destruction of our enemies.

ALL: We receive a baby who will teach us our calling to seek reconciliation and to love expansively.

ONE: Praise be to God for the unexpected babe of Bethlehem.

ALL: Praise to the wisdom of love. Amen!

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

*OPENING HYMN

Angels We Have Heard on High
(Tune: GLORIA)

#125

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

Ericka Tyler and Josiah Tyler

UNISON SUNG PRAYER

(Tune: VENI EMMANUEL)

Praise to the God who came to bring
The Savior from whom love and peace shall spring
Praise to the Christ-child born tonight
Bringing Creation into the light
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel has come to us
And all things shall be well

TIME OF SHARING

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

CHOIR ANTHEM

Carry Me To Bethlehem

quoting Calypso Carol
words and music by Michael Perry
arranged by Joel Raney

PASTORAL BLESSING OF PEACE

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

ALL: And also with you.

SUNG RESPONSE *Peace*

by Judy A. Rose

Peace be the song that we will sing.

Peace be the joy, our spirits ring.

Peace be the love that sets us free,
peace for all, peace for you and me.

Peace, peace, peace, peace. Peace be to you in all you do.

Peace, peace, peace, peace. Peace be to you in all you do.

CHRISTMAS PRAYER ON DISCIPLESHIP AND GENEROSITY

ONE: More than all the gifts we offer,

ALL: More than the time we give.

ONE: More than the talent we share,

ALL: More than the gift of peace.

ONE: More than the most moving music,

ALL: More than the work for justice.

ONE: More than the happiest reunion,

**ALL: More than the hope of good health is God's gift of a
little child at Christmas. Thank you, Loving God. Amen**

*Envelopes for The Christmas Fund offering are in the bulletin.
Offering plates are located at both Nave doors
for your convenience.*

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

BREAKING BREAD AND POURING WINE

CHRISTMAS EVE COMMUNION PRAYER (UNISON)

Holy Spirit, presence of Christ in and among us, we praise you with our own Alleluias. Rest yourself in these gifts of bread and cup that they may be sure signs of God's love for us, forgiveness, and life abundant. Unite us with all the saints in every time and place, all those who loved you and all those you loved. Remind us that at this table are those we miss so dearly tonight those who are missing from our holiday tables but ever present at your heavenly banquet. And most of all, unite us with Christ, the child of Bethlehem, that we might love as he loved, so greatly that it changed the whole world. Alleluia, we sing tonight. Alleluia, Lord most high!

THE LORD'S PRAYER (UNISON)

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

Bread of heaven, let us not be unchanged by tonight. Let us not pass by the table in silence; let us not leave the table empty. Dwell in our hearts, and shine in our lives, that we might know your deep, deep peace, and share it with the world. Fill us with your love, that we might walk hand in hand with you all our days. We pray in the holy name of the Christ-child, born for us this night. Amen.

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD IN THE CHRISTMAS STORY

THE CHRISTMAS STORY FORETOLD IN SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 9:2-7

Pew Bible OT p. 706

HYMN *O Little Town of Bethlehem* #133
(Tune: ST. LOUIS)

THE CHRISTMAS STORY IN SCRIPTURE

Luke 2:1-20

Pew Bible NT p. 59

HYMN *Away in a Manger* #124
(Tune: AWAY IN A MANGER)

(Luke 2:8-14)

HYMN *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* #144
(Tune: MENDELSSOHN)

(Luke 2:15-20)

HYMN *O Come All You Faithful* #134 (v. 1, 3, 4)
(Tune: ADESTE FIDELES)

PASTORAL PRAYER FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

BRINGING CHRIST'S LIGHT INTO THE WORLD

WELCOMING THE LIGHT

John 1:1-14

Pew Bible NT p. 94

LIGHTING THE CHRISTMAS CANDLES

Note: To avoid dripping wax, the unlit candle should be tilted toward the lit candle. The words to Silent Night will be on the screen for you.

HYMN *Silent Night*
(Tune: STILLE NACHT)

#134

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.

GOING FORTH IN JOY!

BENEDICTION

* **SUNG POSTLUDE** *Joy To the World!*
(Tune: ANTIOCH C.M.)

#132

Joy to the world! The Lord is come:
let earth its praises bring;
Let every heart prepare Christ room,
and heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks hills, and plains

repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

Christ rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
The glories of God's righteousness
and wonders of God's love,
And wonders of God's love,
and wonders, wonders of God's love.

Poinsettias

In memory of **Virginia Chaplin** from Pat Sternberg

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

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

In memory of **Roslyn and Frank McAleish** from Karen Mallozzi

In memory of **Amanda B. Sternberg** from Pat Sternberg

In memory of **Paul J. Sternberg** from Pat Sternberg

In memory of **Ruth Lena Tucker**, wife of 50 years,
from Ed Tucker.

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

***Those who have purchased a poinsettia or staff members -
please remember to take your poinsettia after the service.***

TODAY'S PARTICIPANTS:

Pastor and Teacher: Rev. Jason Boyd

Liturgist: Ericka Tyler

Advent Wreath: Ericka Tyler, Josiah Tyler

Candle Lighting: Rose Laughlin, Jane Prime

Director of Music Ministries: Mary Williams

Organist: David Burch

Live Stream: Chris McSweeney, Jennifer Strough, Liam Hunter

Sunday Sexton: Mya Yantz

Nursery: Fiora Breese

Choir: Pat Burke, Donna Moren, Michael Moren, Bob Oehme,
Amy Rogers, Destinie Smith, Brenda Thall, Ericka Tyler,
Pete Williams

Handbell Choir: Lilit Danielyan, Hannah DeBates, Maxine Gage,
John Kolb, Michael Moren, Bob Oehme, Amy Rogers,
Destinie (DJ) Smith, Ericka Tyler, Josiah Tyler, Pete Williams.
Mary Williams-Director

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

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MINISTERS: All the People

PASTOR AND TEACHER: Rev. Jason Boyd

MODERATOR: Pete Williams

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRIES: Mary Williams

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRIES: Ericka Tyler

PARISH COORDINATOR: Cheri Oakley

FINANCIAL ASSISTANT: Jennifer Mallozzi

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Temporarily by appointment only.

