

*The Congregational  
Church of Salisbury*  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**29 November 2020 • 10:00AM**  
**First Sunday of Advent**



**WELCOME!**

Welcome to the Congregational Church of Salisbury, UCC! While we refrain from meeting in person during the COVID-19 crisis, we continue to share in worship together, virtually. This bulletin will guide you through the process of joining us in worship.

**HOW WE WILL WORSHIP TOGETHER**

Today's service will be held over Zoom, which is videoconferencing technology available free of charge online. Zoom allows us to see one another throughout the service. To prevent background noise, you will be put on 'mute' for the majority of the service. Even when we can't hear you, you are invited and encouraged to speak your part in the responsive readings, sing boldly, and participate fully.

**PREPARE FOR OUR ONLINE WORSHIP**

1. Visit [zoom.us/download](https://zoom.us/download) to find the Zoom app for desktop, laptop, or smartphone
2. For desktop computer users, make sure your webcam is plugged in
3. To practice, join a test meeting: visit [zoom.us/test](https://zoom.us/test) and click "join."

If you are not able to use a smartphone or computer, you can also call in via any regular phone (see below).

**JOIN WORSHIP ONLINE**

Link to join: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/954580657>

Or join Worship by Phone:

Call (646) 876-9923. When prompted, enter this meeting ID: 954 580 657

You may also view the worship on YouTube, has slightly better audio quality (though we'll miss visiting with you in the Zoom meeting!):

[www.youtube.com/channel/UCBLRqeZ9Gxj7828rN9sp7og/](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBLRqeZ9Gxj7828rN9sp7og/)

## REFLECTING AS WE GATHER

“Hope is a state of mind, not of the world. It is an orientation of the spirit and orientation of the heart; it transcends the world that is immediately experienced and is anchored somewhere beyond its horizons.

... It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out.”

*Václav Havel, Long Distance Interrogation (1985-86)*

“Hope” is the thing with feathers —  
That perches in the soul —  
And sings the tune without the words -  
And never stops — at all —

*#314, Emily Dickinson*

## WE GATHER AS THE CHURCH

### PRELUDE

“Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme”  
“Jesu, meine Freude”  
Jenn Oberto, *soprano*

*J.S. Bach*

### GREETING

### ADVENT CANDLELIGHTING

Candle lighter: Let us follow the footsteps of our ancestors as we journey to Bethlehem.

**People: We begin our journey, grateful for those who have gone this way before us.**

Let us remember those who have found joy on their journey.

**We remember how Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem.**

Though the journey was difficult and the labor pains began too soon,

**They continued to hope and continued to trust.**

As we journey through Advent, to Bethlehem,

**Let us carry hope in our hearts.**

*[The first Advent candle, the candle of Hope, is lit.]*

### INTROIT *(sung by all)*

### “Light One Candle”

TIF IN VELDELE



I. Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si-ah: let the light ban-ish dark-ness.



Mes-si-ah shall bring sal-va-tion to Is-ra-el, God ful-fills the prom-ise.

### CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: In every season of life,

**ALL: God is always with us, even when we believe otherwise.**

In this season of waiting,

**Jesus reminds us that Bethlehem is the beginning of our discipleship, not the end of the journey.**

In this season of Advent anticipation and hope,

**the Spirit opens our ears to the songs of the angels.**

**HYMN #352**

“My Lord, What a Morning”  
verses 1 & 3

BURLEIGH

### **CALL TO RECONCILIATION**

In this season of hope, joy and peace - how often do people receive these gifts from us? As we begin our journey through Advent, let us put down those failures and foolish behaviors which keep us from getting very far. Join me as we pray, saying,

### **RESPONSIVE PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

ONE: Holy God of Advent, you come near to us, yet we continue to seal our hearts with indifference to a suffering world.

**ALL: Tear open our hearts,  
and make us more compassionate.**

You approach us with bundles of mercy to kindle our hope, but we continue to build our lives with the bricks of bitterness.

**Tear open our anger, so we might become more forgiving.**

You draw near, longing to embrace us, but we fold our arms, closing ourselves off from those all around us.

**Tear open our souls, so we might become children of Advent.**

God, shaper-of-our-lives:

**have mercy;**

Jesus, Word-which-does-not-pass-away:

**fill us with your grace;**

Holy Spirit, Giver-of-the-Light-of-peace:

**Shine through our lives.**

*(We pray in silence)*

### **ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Even now, God approaches us, mercy transcending anger, hope overcoming despair, life triumphing over death. This is good news, my friends; this is news of great joy for each of us.

**Enriched in every grace, blessed with joy and hope, transformed by love, we will live as people of Advent. Thanks be to God. Amen.**

### **RESPONSIVE PSALTER: Psalm 80: 1-7, 17-19**

ONE: Give ear, O Shepherd of the people,

**ALL: You Who lead the divided people like a single flock!**

You Who are enthroned above all creation,  
**Shine forth,**  
**before the scattered tribes.**  
Awaken Your might, and come to save us!  
**Restore us, O God, to Your goodwill;**  
let Your face shine upon us,  
**that we may live.**  
O Holy One, God Almighty,  
how long will You fume  
against Your people's prayers?  
**You have fed them with the bread of sorrow,**  
**and given them bitter tears to drink.**  
You make us a source of discord to our neighbors;  
**our enemies deride us.**  
**Restore us, O God Almighty;**  
Let Your face shine upon us,  
**that we may live.**  
Let Your hand rest upon the one at Your side,  
the one You nurtured for Yourself.  
**We will never turn back from You;**  
revive us that we may continue to appeal to You,  
in Your constancy.  
**Restore us, O God Almighty;**  
let Your face shine upon us,  
**that we may live.**

## **WE PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL IN WORD**

### **A THOUGHT FOR YOUNG MINDS**

#### **MODERN TESTIMONY**

“For the New Year, 1981”

*Denise Levertov*

I have a small grain of hope—  
one small crystal that gleams  
clear colors out of transparency.  
I need more.  
I break off a fragment  
to send you.  
Please take  
this grain of a grain of hope  
so that mine won't shrink.  
Please share your fragment  
so that yours will grow.  
Only so, by division,  
will hope increase,

like a clump of irises, which will cease to flower  
unless you distribute  
the clustered roots, unlikely source—  
clumsy and earth-covered—  
of grace.

**ANCIENT TESTIMONY:** Mark 13:24-37

**SERMON** “Lost in the Stars” John A. Nelson

## **WE RESPOND IN PRAYER AND FAITH**

### **PASTORAL PRAYER | SILENT PRAYER**

#### **OFFERTORY**

One: Like the visions of long ago, we see our hope for God’s new day in the ministry of faithful communities — where God’s children can come to learn to walk in the paths of mercy, forgiveness, service. We give our gifts this week with thanksgiving for the wisdom of prophets and with hope in God’s promises, coming true even now.

**ALL: Let us offer our gifts with grateful praise,  
and commit them to God’s purposes.**

#### **RECEIVING OUR OFFERINGS**

**MUSICAL OFFERING** “Jesu, meine Freude” *J.S. Bach*

✘ **DOXOLOGY** OLD 100<sup>TH</sup>

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
praise Christ, all people here below;  
praise Holy Spirit ever more;  
One God of grace, whom we adore! Amen.**

#### ✘ **UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**Everything we have belongs to you, God of hope; we are your caretakers.  
We bring before you our tithes and offerings, knowing that they are never  
enough to do the great things required for your vision. Yet when blessed by  
you, our gifts can actually shine forth Advent light and dispel gloom. So bless  
these and bless us, to carry your hope wherever we go. Amen.**

**HYMN #105** “People Look East” BESANÇON

### **BENEDICTION and SUNG AMEN**

**POSTLUDE** “Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme” *J.S. Bach*



### **Participants in Today's Celebration**

Members and Friends of the Congregational Church of Salisbury, UCC	<i>Worshippers</i>
Jennifer Oberto	<i>Cantor</i>
Theresa Carroll	<i>Reader</i>
Salisbury UCC Choir	
Dr. Samuel Lord Kalcheim	<i>Music Director</i>
The Rev. Dr. John A. Nelson	<i>Preacher</i>