

*The Congregational
Church of Salisbury*
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**13 December 2020 • 10:00AM
Third 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 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 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, which has better audio quality (though we'll miss visiting with you in the Zoom meeting!):

www.youtube.com/channel/UCBLRqeZ9Gxj7828rN9sp7og/

REFLECTING AS WE GATHER

"And maybe that was how it was supposed to be, how life unfolded when you lived it long enough. Joy and sadness were part of the package; the trick, perhaps was to let yourself feel all of it, but to hold on to the joy just a little more tightly...."

from Winter Garden by Kristin Hannah

"Joy is hidden in compassion. The word compassion literally means 'to suffer with.' It seems quite unlikely that suffering with another person would bring joy. Yet being with a person in pain, offering simple presence to someone in despair, sharing with a friend times of confusion and uncertainty ... such experiences can bring us deep joy. Not happiness, not excitement, not great satisfaction, but the quiet joy of being there for someone else and living in deep solidarity with our brothers and sisters in this human family."

Fr. Henri Nouwen

WE GATHER AS THE CHURCH

PRELUDE

Nun Komm, der Heiden Heiland

J.S. Bach

GREETING

THE ADVENT CANDLE OF JOY

ONE: The Christmas season is filled with activities — choosing gifts, arranging celebrations — added to our normal flow of things. How can we find time to entertain the Christ child? So often we go with what clamors the loudest, and we miss the gentle “tap tap” at the door.

ALL: Family and travelers choke the house requiring their lodging, food, entertainment. And here stand a pair of poor, weary souls asking you to do even more. How can one be hospitable in such a time, to such as these?

“I’m sorry, but I am full. But I see you, too, have need. Perhaps we can work something out. There is warm a stable here....” And another candle joins those flickering two.

ALL: O holy child of Bethlehem, we open our hearts to you. And we seek to offer your hospitality to others in need in this holy season. Amen.

INTROIT (sung by all)

“Light the Candles”

TIF IN VELDELE



1. Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark-ness.
2. Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark-ness.
3. Light three can-dles 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.
Mes - si - ah shall feed the flock like a shep - herd, gent - ly lead them home - ward.
Lift up your heads and lift high the gate - way for the ruler of glo - ry.

CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: Here, in this company,
we discover the great things God has done.

**MANY: In story and song and silence,
we remember that God's relationship with us lasts forever.**

Here, with these companions, we find our true home.

**where we can run home laughing,
our wilderness transformed by grace.**

Here, during this holy season,
we hear again those promises made so long ago.

**Of the One who repairs all our mistakes,
of the One who reshapes our brokenness.**

HYMN #83

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

STUTTGART

CALL TO RECONCILIATION

Hope, joy, forgiveness, life — these are the gifts God offers to us in this season of preparation and anticipation. But too often, we busy ourselves with demands and expectations of work and family, or with seasonal busyness in place of searching for union with God. Let us confess the lives we lead, praying,

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O Holy God, our very waiting in Advent is itself a confession:

If we are waiting for Emmanuel, we are not yet with you;

if we are waiting for Jesus, we need a Savior;

**if we are waiting for a Messiah, the proud are still powerful, the mighty are
still exalted, the hungry stand unheard at the door;**

**if we are waiting for your incarnation in human form,
we confess that we have not known you in our sister,
we have not loved you in our brother,
we have not served you in our neighbor.**

**In this time of great meaning, in the stillness of Advent love and light,
hear our deepest confession. Heal us and make us new,
through the good tidings of your presence in our lives. Amen.**

(We pray in silence)

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

ONE: This is the good news in Jesus Christ: we can stand before God — not through our own goodness, but through God's delight in us. Rejoice and be glad, for God forgives us our waywardness and comes to enfold us in grace.

MANY: Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Amen.

RESPONSE IN SONG

We will walk in the light, beau - ti - ful light.
Come where the dew-drops of mer-cy shine bright. O, shine all a -
- round us by day and by night. Je-sus, the light of the world.

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RESPONSIVE PSALTER: Psalm 126¹

ONE: When the Almighty restored the well-being of our people,

MANY: We were like those who wake with their dreams fulfilled.

Then our mouths were filled with laughter,

And our tongues with songs of joy;

Then it was said among the nations,

"The Holy One has done great things for them."

The Holy One has done great things for us,

And we have rejoiced.

Restore our well-being now, O God Most High,

As You restore the streams in the desert.

May those who sow in tears

Reap with songs of joy.

Let those who go out weeping,

Bearing the seed for sowing,

Come home with songs of joy,

Carrying their sheaves of grain.

WE PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL IN WORD

A THOUGHT FOR YOUNG MINDS

THE LORD'S PRAYER (*debts*)

MODERN TESTIMONY

"On Joy"

Henri Nouwen

At first sight, joy seems to be connected with being different. When you receive a compliment or win an award, you experience the joy of not being the same as others. You are faster, smarter, more beautiful, and it is that difference that

¹ Mary Susan Gast, *Redemption Songs, A 21st Century Descant on the Psalms*, © 2002.

brings you joy. But such joy is very temporary. True joy is hidden where we are the same as other people: fragile and mortal. It is the joy of belonging to the human race. It is the joy of being with others as a friend, a companion, a fellow traveler.

This is the joy of Jesus, who is Emmanuel: God-with-us.

ANCIENT TESTIMONY: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

SERMON "Living in Joy" John A. Nelson

WE RESPOND IN PRAYER AND FAITH

PASTORAL PRAYER | SILENT PRAYER

OFFERTORY

ONE: The sources of joy keep increasing. From the gift of this morning's first breath, to the sunshine that pushed back the darkness, to the gathering of companions in faith, to the vision of the prophets, to the flickering addition of third Advent candle — we witness blessing upon blessing: each a testimony to God's goodness, ordinary and miraculous. We make our offering as an expression of thanks, daring to believe in God's promise of life transformed by joy.

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

RECEIVING OUR OFFERINGS

MUSICAL OFFERING "Savior of the Nations Come"

✠ **DOXOLOGY**

OLD 100TH

**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**

May the gifts we offer in these moments be light for those in the shadows of society, be food for those who hunger, refreshment for those parched by life, and hope for all who cry out to you, O God. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

HYMN #107 "Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn"
(w. 1, 3, 4) REJOICE, REJOICE

BENEDICTION and SUNG AMEN

POSTLUDE "Nun Komm, der Heiden Heiland" *J. Pachelbel*



Participants in Today's Celebration

worshippers Members and Friends of the
Congregational Church of Salisbury, UCC

cantor and reader Jennifer Oberto

Advent candle lighting

Salisbury UCC Choir

music director Dr. Samuel Lord Kalcheim

preacher The Rev. Dr. John A. Nelson