

The Congregational Church of Salisbury

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



PRELUDE

Overture from Oratorio de Noel

Camille Saint-Saëns

WELCOME

✠ HYMN #87

“Comfort, Comfort Now My People”

GENEVAN 42

(✠ *The congregation may rise, in body or in spirit.*)

ANNOUNCEMENTS | JOYS AND CONCERNS | SILENT PRAYER

THE ADVENT WREATH

“Stand as a Signal”

Jennifer Weigel and Gene Chin

“They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea. On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious” (Isaiah 11:9-10).

We are the followers of that “root of Jesse”, of whom Isaiah spoke. We are the ones now called to stand as a signal to the world, to all of creation, that peace is the will of the One who created us. Peace is the knowledge of God that we proclaim, from sea to shining sea.

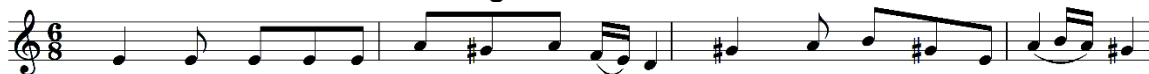
“In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea proclaiming, “Repent for the realm of heaven has come near.” And, “bear fruit worthy of repentance” (Matthew 3:1,2, 8).

We light these candles, the candle of joyful hope and the candle of proclaimed peace, in part to remind ourselves that we are a people rising toward God’s promise. We also light them as a sign to the world, an announcement there are some who witness to

hope and there are some who embody the ways of peace. We light the candles as a sign that Emmanuel, God-With-Us, is still our fervent prayer.

RESPONSE IN SONG

“Light the Candles”



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.



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.

*TEXT: Wayne L. Wold, 1984, adapt. MUSIC: Yiddish folk song, arr. Wayne L. Wold, 1984.
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A PRAYER OF RECONCILIATION

ONE: Holy God, Maker of all

ALL: Have mercy on us.

Jesus Christ, Servant of the poor

Have mercy on us.

Holy Spirit, Breath of life

Have mercy on us.

Let us in silence confess our faults and admit our frailty.

(Prayer in silence)

Before God, with the people of God, I confess to my brokenness:

to the ways I wound my life, the lives of others, and the life of the world.

**May God forgive you, Christ renew you,
and the Spirit enable you to grow in love.**

Amen.

Before God, with the people of God,

we confess to our brokenness:

to the ways we wound our lives,

the lives of others, and the life of the world.

May God forgive you, Christ renew you, and the Spirit enable you to grow in love.

Amen.

ASSURANCE OF GRACE

With the whole church,

**We remember that we are forgiven by God,
befriended by Christ, empowered by the Spirit.**

With people everywhere,

**We affirm God's goodness at the heart of humanity,
planted more deeply than all that is wrong.**

With all creation,

**We celebrate the miracle and wonder of life: the unfolding
purposes of God, forever at work in ourselves and the world.
Thanks be to God! Amen.**

The Sacrament of Communion

INVITATION

THANKSGIVING PRAYER

ONE: God be with you!

MANY: And also with you.

Lift up your hearts:

We lift them to God.

Let us give thanks to the Holy One.

It is right to give our thanks and praise

We give you thanks, God of peace and promise.

Through the words of your prophets and the faith of your followers
you prepare the way of our redemption and bring hope to birth.

And though we often grow weary of waiting, your signs call us
to keep watch for that day when all things shall be made new.

In assurance of this hope, we join with all the company of heaven and earth
to give you praise:

**Holy, holy, holy God of life and light,
heaven and earth are full of your glory!**

Hosanna in the highest!

**Blessed is the One for whom we wait,
who bears the name Emmanuel.**

Hosanna in the highest!

REMEMBERING JESUS AT TABLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER (*debts/debtors*)

Hymnal, p. 35

PRAYER OF SELF-GIVING

God of majesty,

with reverent hearts we name you also God of self-giving love.

We give thanks, blessing above blessing,

for Jesus Christ, son of Mary, Word of life.

The bread we now break and the cup we take are a sharing in the life of Christ.

**As we take this cup of blessing, and as we share this bread of life, we
proclaim his resurrection with wonder and celebrate his life with joy.**

Glory to you, O God!

SHARING THE MEAL

We celebrate an open communion, and welcome every person to the table. We share the bread and the cup in Jesus' name as a reenactment of an ancient vision of God's feast for all people. We don't require you to belong to this church, or any church, to participate with us in this feast of grace: all that is needed is that you desire God's nurture. Today we will receive communion seated in the pews: please serve your neighbor, and allow yourself to be served. We will hold the bread until all have been served and eat together, signifying our unity in Christ. (The bread is gluten-free, as we strive to welcome all to the table.) We will drink the cup as we receive it, signifying our personal relationship with Christ.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God of new beginnings,

you draw near to us in word and sacrament

to strengthen and renew us.

Kindle in us the fire of your Spirit.

May your light so shine through us

that all may know we are living in the light of your promise.

**We ask this in the name of the long-expected Jesus,
our hope and our home: Amen.**

✕ **HYMN**

“Isaiah the Prophet Has Written of Old”
All attending Church School may leave as we sing the hymn.

JUDAS AND MARY



1. I - sa - iah the proph - et has writ - ten of old how
 2. The moun - tains and hills shall break forth in - to song, the
 3. Yet na - tions still prey on the meek of the world, and
 4. God, bring to fru - i - tion your will for the earth, that



God's new cre - a - tion shall come. In - stead of the thorn tree the
 peo - ples be led forth in peace; The earth shall be filled with the
 con - flict turns par - ent from child. Your peo - ple de - spoil all the
 no one shall hurt or de - stroy, That wis - dom and jus - tice shall



fir tree shall grow; the wolf shall lie down with the
 knowl - edge of God as the wa - ters cov - er the
 sweet - ness of earth; the brier and the thorn tree grow
 reign in the land and your peo - ple shall go forth in



lamb, the lamb, the wolf shall lie down with the lamb.
 sea, the sea, as the wa - ters cov - er the sea.
 wild, grow wild, the brier and the thorn tree grow wild.
 joy, in joy, your peo - ple shall go forth in joy.

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OFFERTORY

ONE: The prophet Isaiah paints a picture of something we can hardly imagine: peace on earth and healing for all, no more hurt or destruction on God's holy mountain. John the Baptist sees what no one else has recognized: our world is about to be turned upside down by the new arrival of God's own self. Hallelujah! We prepare for God's presence in our praying, our waiting, and our generosity.

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

RECEIVING OUR OFFERINGS

Our church welcomes every size gift, and thanks you for your generosity.

MUSICAL OFFERING

*Magnificat anima Mea
from Magnificat*

John Rutter

✠ 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

God of Hope, we pray that these offerings may be touched by your grace. We pray that through them, we may participate in bearing the light of hope to those who dwell with pain or sorrow. Use us, God, and use our gifts to brighten those who are troubled, to enlighten those seeking wisdom, to energize those building *shalom*. We ask it in Jesus' name: Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Isaiah 11:1-10
Matthew 3:1-12

*Old Testament, p. 784
New Testament, p. 3*

SERMON

“What’s the Alternative?”

Pastor John A. Nelson

PASTORAL PRAYER

✠ HYMN #94

“Now the Heavens Start to Whisper”

JEFFERSON

BENEDICTION and SUNG AMEN

POSTLUDE

*Quand le Sauveur Jesus Christ,
ou bon Joseph écoutez moi*

Jean Francois Dandrieu

Welcome to Church!

Gathered in 1744, the Congregational Church of Salisbury is an Open and Affirming member of the United Church of Christ. It is also a welcoming home to people from a

great variety of church backgrounds and life experiences. Your presence is a gift to us! We hope you will feel God's Spirit here today through our worship and fellowship.

*We seek to love God with all our hearts, souls, and minds and love our neighbors as ourselves. This Church is **Open** to all for participation, membership, leadership and employment regardless of race, ancestry, class, gender identity, physical and mental ability or sexual orientation. We **Affirm** each individual as a child of God, celebrating the total identity of each person.*

*As an **Open and Affirming** Congregation, we commit to work toward ending ignorance, fear, hatred, prejudice, and discrimination against any person.*

Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!

If you are visiting us, Welcome! Please sign our guest book and introduce yourself to our Pastor or to one of the Deacons. Fill out a welcome card in the pew to join our email list. Assistive Listening Devices are available; please ask an usher for assistance.

Kindly set phones to silent (unless you're expecting a call from Jesus).

Today's Worship Leaders

Ushers: Janet Kaufman, Joanne Taber

Reader: Theresa Carroll • *Deacon:* Sue Morrill

Fellowship hour refreshments: Eileen Epperson & Beverly Kimmel.

Today's liturgy is adapted and reprinted from Lectionary Liturgies by the Rev. Thom Shuman © 2022 (lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com); used by permission.

Our Ministry Team

Ministers: All Participants in the Life of the Congregation

Worship & Music

Music Director: David Baranowski
Bell Choir Director: Mary Davidson
Cantor: Jennifer Oberto

Faith Formation

Sunday School Coordinator:
Holly Tierney
Sunday School Assistant:
Jennifer Kronholm-Clark

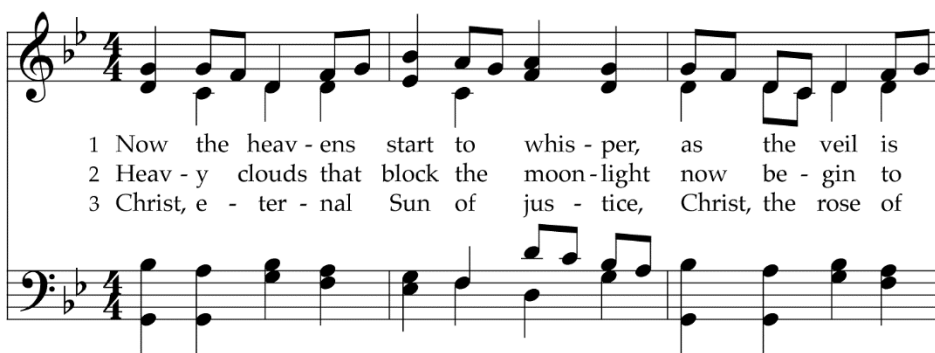
Holding the Parts Together

Administrative Assistant: Loriann Chevremont
Sexton: Richard Tietjen

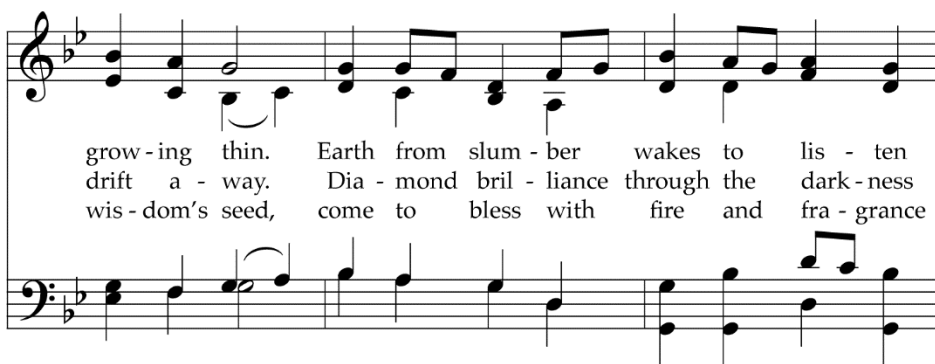
Church Officers: Betsy Beck, *moderator*;
Jennifer Weigel, *treasurer*;
Jennifer Oberto, *clerk*

Pastor and Teacher: The Rev. Dr. John A. Nelson

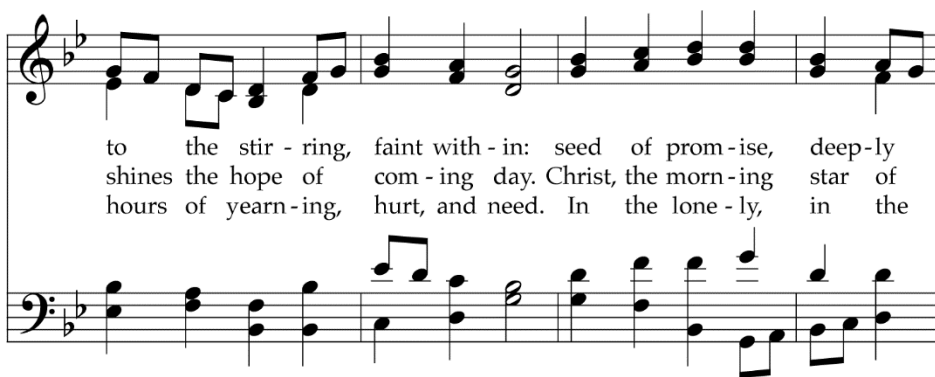
94 Now the Heavens Start to Whisper



1 Now the heav - ens start to whis - per, as the veil is
2 Heav - y clouds that block the moon - light now be - gin to
3 Christ, e - ter - nal Sun of jus - tice, Christ, the rose of



grow - ing thin. Earth from slum - ber wakes to lis - ten
drift a - way. Dia - mond bril - liance through the dark - ness
wis - dom's seed, come to bless with fire and fra - grance



to the stir - ring, faint with - in: seed of prom - ise, deep - ly
shines the hope of com - ing day. Christ, the morn - ing star of
hours of yearn - ing, hurt, and need. In the lone - ly, in the

plant - ed, child to spring from Jes - se's stem! Like the soil be -
splen - dor, gleams with - in a world grown dim. Heav - en's em - ber
strang - er, in the out - cast, hid from view: child who comes to

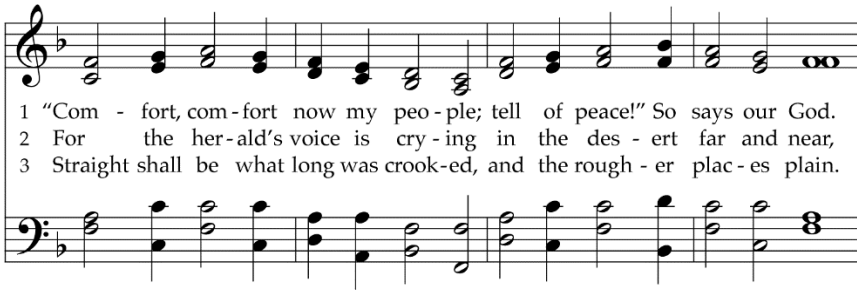
neath the frost - line, hearts grow soft to wel - come him.
fans to full - ness; hearts grow warm to wel - come him.
grace the man - ger, teach our hearts to wel - come you.

This Advent text artfully interweaves what is hidden and what is revealed, primarily in the coming of the long-awaited Messiah. But Christ himself taught us about another hidden truth, his presence in the “least of these” (Matthew 25:40, 45), whom we are also called to welcome.

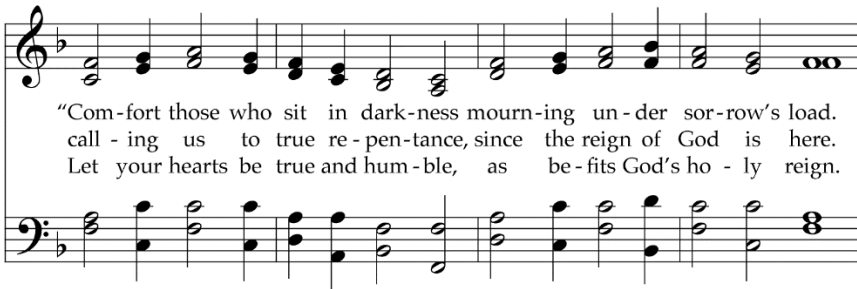
TEXT: Mary Louise Bringle, 2005
MUSIC: Alexander Johnson's *Tennessee Harmony*, 1818; harm. *Lutheran Book of Worship*, 1978
Text © 2006 GIA Publications, Inc.
Music Harm. © 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship (admin. Augsburg Fortress)

JEFFERSON
8.7.8.7.D

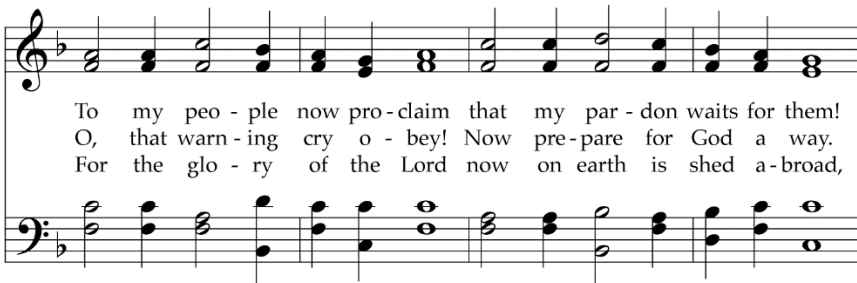
Comfort, Comfort Now My People 87



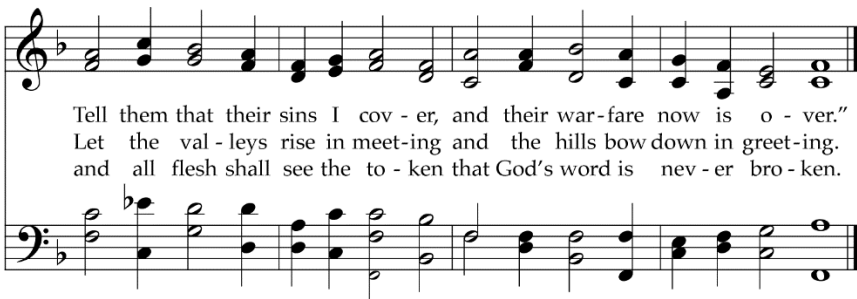
1 "Com - fort, com - fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!" So says our God.
2 For the her - ald's voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,
3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er plac - es plain.



"Com - fort those who sit in dark - ness mourn - ing un - der sor - row's load.
call - ing us to true re - pen - tance, since the reign of God is here.
Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be - fits God's ho - ly reign.



To my peo - ple now pro - claim that my par - don waits for them!
O, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way.
For the glo - ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a - broad,



Tell them that their sins I cov - er, and their war - fare now is o - ver."
Let the val - leys rise in meet - ing and the hills bow down in greet - ing,
and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

This 17th-century German paraphrase of Isaiah 40:1-5 was one of the texts translated as part of the 19th-century British interest in German religious poetry. It is set here to one of the most popular Genevan Psalter tunes, probably derived from an earlier French folksong.

IN OUR PRAYERS:

We gladly list joys and concerns, and typically print them for four weeks after they are offered in worship. (Prayer requests may be renewed at any time.)

New additions:

Ben Salamone, recovering from surgery

Weekly prayer from UCC Global Ministries: for Mission Co-worker Phyllis Byrd, serving with the Organization of Africa Instituted Churches (OAIC) in Kenya.

Continuing concerns:

Survivors of the mass shooting in Colorado Springs, first responders and caregivers, those who are bereaved, those who are traumatized by yet another act of senseless gun violence •

John Lomanto, recovering from surgery • Margaret Haubrich, in memory care • The people of Ukraine and all striving to end war • All those serving or living in war or conflict zones around the world.

For those in treatment for cancer — Jenny, Frank Swaye, David Douyea, MingMing, Deborah Merwin, Keith Blanton and others — prayers for healing and strength.

Family & Friends who have passed away

Marian Ferguson • Leslie Tapscott • families and friends of more than 38,256 beloveds who have died due to Covid-19 disease in the last four weeks, including 8,618 in the US.

We thank God for the gift of life, and pray for the Spirit's strong presence with family and friends who grieve.

Thanksgiving

The Rev. Ryan Gackenheimer, called as Pastor and Teacher of First Congregational Church of Bethel (CT) UCC.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE A PASTORAL VISIT, please call the church office (860-435-2442) or email Pastor John (jnelson@salisburyucc.org). Sometimes we don't find out about an injury or illness or other need until long after — so please call!



Please Recycle this Bulletin!



The Congregational Church of Salisbury

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey: you are welcome here.

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Office Hours: 8:30am – 1:30pm, Monday-Friday