The Congregational Church of Salisbury

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



PRELUDE

Wachet auf ruft uns die Stimme

J.S. Bach

WELCOME

₩ HYMN #94 "Now the Heavens Start to Whisper" JEFFERSON
(№ The congregation may rise, in body or in spirit.)

ANNOUNCEMENTS | JOYS AND CONCERNS | SILENT PRAYER

THE ADVENT WREATH: THE CANDLES OF HOPE AND PEACE

The Green Team

READER I: In days when God's people longed for peace, Isaiah declared,

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins." (Isaiah 40:1)

READER 2: We who gather today also seek comfort and peace, yet we are unsatisfied with ideas of peace that tell us to keep quiet and go with the flow. We long for real peace, true peace, just peace, which restores dignity to every person.

ALL: We wait as people who yearn for peace that bears the fruit of community, equity, and flourishing for all.

READER 3: We light these candles as signs of God's shocking hope and just peace. May they be beacons calling us to repent and to live the good news of Jesus Christ—as we wait and watch and labor for the day when all "swords are hammered into plowshares," and all God's people may live in wholeness and harmony. Amen.



TEXT: The Iona Community 1987 MUSIC: The Iona Community 1987

Music copyright © 1987 WGRG, The Iona Community (Glasgow, Scotland), G.I.A. Publications, Inc., Chicago, IL, exclusive agent. All rights reserved. Reprinted & streamed under OneLicense.net A-725033.

CALL TO RECONCILIATION

God comes! Let us prepare the way. God comes to forgive us! Let us prepare our hearts as we confess our sins, saying,

Unison Prayer for Forgiveness

We have heard that our penalty has been paid, God of Comfort — yet we still insist on earning our way into your heart.

We confess that you are patient with us,

but wish you would act quickly against those who hurt us.

We confess your Word will stand forever,

but it is our words of pain and anger that cause harm to others.

Your Messenger has come, Approaching God, crying out to us of your forgiveness and hope. Through Jesus Christ, our Teacher and Savior, you speak to us: not of punishment, but of peace;

not of judgment, but of justice; not of a sentence, but salvation.

(We pray in silence

Assurance of Pardon

Hear the Good News that God speaks to you: I love you; forgive you; I restore you to new life.

We proclaim the truth that God comes: not to condemn, but to comfort us; not to scold, but to speak tenderly to us of hope, of peace, of love, of joy. Thanks be to God! Amen.

RESPONSE IN SONG

"Kindle a Flame"

RESPONSIVE PSALTER: Psalm 85: 1-2, 8-13

One: You visited Your people with blessing, O Creator;

ALL: You restored the inheritance of our ancestors.

You released Your people from their guilt;

You pardoned all they had done in violation of Your way.

Let me hear what God Most High will speak,

For the Redeemer promises peace and well-being to the people, To the faithful.

To those whose hearts turn to the Almighty, And not to foolishness.

Surely God's help is very near

for those who put their trust in the Eternal One,

Then will the glorious presence of the Author of Life dwell in our land.

Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;

Justice and peace will kiss each other.

Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,

And justice will look down from the sky.

The Merciful One will indeed give what is good,

And our land will yield its harvest.

Justice goes forth before the Holy One,

Making a pathway of hope and compassion.

A THOUGHT FOR YOUNG MINDS

THE LORD'S PRAYER (debts/debtors)

Hymnal, p. 35

★ HYMN (insert)

"Isaiah the Prophet Has Written of Old"

All attending Sunday School may leave as we sing the hymn.

JUDAS AND MARY

OFFERTORY

ONE: God is doing a new thing. Before we ever looked for relief, or a second chance, or a way through the mess and muddle of life, God was already reaching out

to us. Every time we give, we also open ourselves to the wonder-filled mystery of God's arriving. Open yourselves wide with giving, and let God in.

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

Maria Walks Amid the Thorn

arr. David von Kampen

Maria walks amid the thorn,

Kyrie eleison.

What 'neath her heart does Mary bear? Kyrie eleison.

Which seven years no leaf has borne, She walks amid the wood of thorn. Iesu and Maria. A little child does Mary bear, Beneath her heart He nestles there. Iesu and Maria.

And as the two are passing near,

Kyrie eleison,

Lo! roses on the thorns appear, Lo! roses on the thorns appear.

Jesu and Maria.

♣ 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

While we are waiting in this Advent season, may our gifts be used to proclaim good news to those who need it most, so that justice may come into the places of oppression, so righteousness might kiss the wounds of the most vulnerable, so hope and peace might meet in all the broken places of our world and begin to build new communities of reconciliation. Hear our prayer, O God: Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Mark 1:1-8

Testament, p. 42

Isaiah 40:1-11 New Testament, p. 816

SERMON "Course Correction"

Pastor John A. Nelson

PASTORAL PRAYER

₩ HYMN #109

"Blessed Be the God of Israel"

MERLE'S TUNE

BENEDICTION and **SUNG AMEN**

POSTLUDE

Quand le sauveur Jesus Christ, ou bon Joseph écoutez moi

Jean Francois Dandrieu



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.

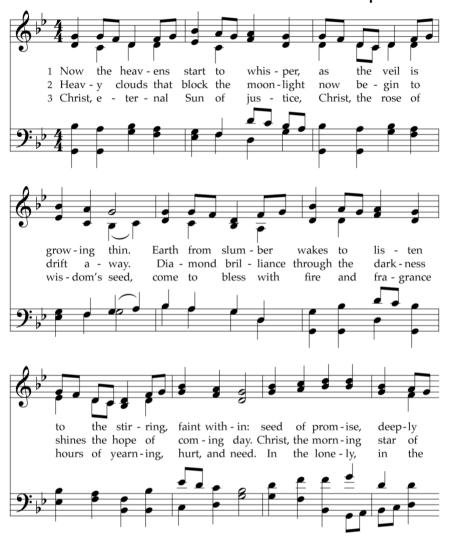
As an **Open and Affirming** Congregation, we commit to work toward ending ignorance, fear, hatred, prejudice, and discrimination against any person.

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

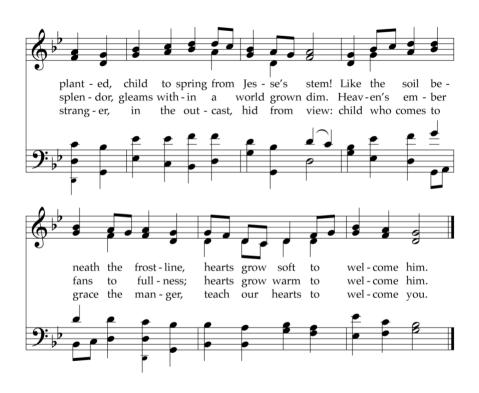
If you are visiting us, Welcome! Please sign our guest book and introduce yourself to our Pastor or to one of the Deacons. Fill out a welcome card in the pew to join our email list. Assistive Listening Devices are available; please ask an usher for assistance.

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

94 Now the Heavens Start to Whisper

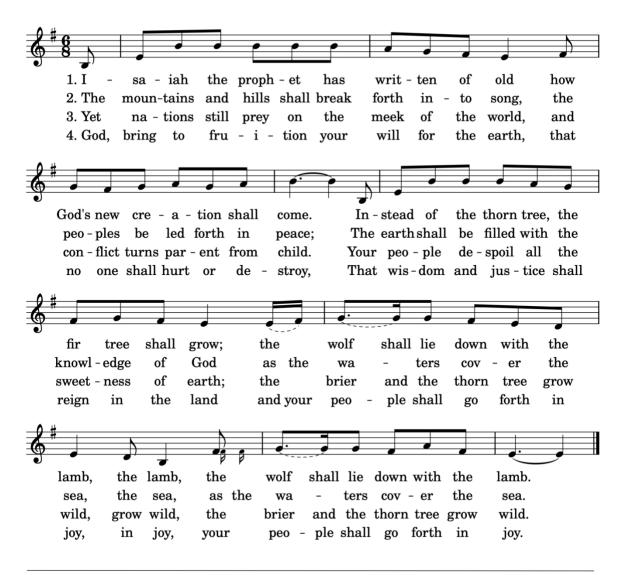


This Advent text artfully interweaves what is hidden and what is revealed, primarily in the coming of the long-awaited Messiah. But Christ himself taught us about another hidden truth, his presence in the "least of these" (Matthew 25:40, 45), whom we are also called to welcome.



All rights reserved. Reprinted & under streamed OneLicense.net A-725033.

Isaiah the Prophet Has Written of Old



WORDS: Joy Patterson

MUSIC: JUDAS AND MARY, Sydney Carter, 1964

Words © 1982 The Hymn Society

All rights reserved. Reprinted & streamed under OneLicense.net A-725033.

Blest Be the God of Israel

Song of Zechariah



- 1 Blest be the God of Is rael, who comes to set us free;
- 2 God from the house of Da vid a child of grace has given;
- 3 On those who sit in dark ness the sun be gins to rise,



who vis - its and re - deems us, who grants us lib - er - ty.

a Sav - ior comes a - mong us to raise us up to heaven.

the dawn-ing of for - give - ness up - on the sin-ner's eyes.



The proph-ets spoke of mer - cy, of free-dom and re - lease; Be - fore him goes the her - ald, fore-run-ner in the way, God guides the feet of pil - grims a - long the paths of peace.



God shall ful - fill that prom - ise and bring the peo-ple peace. the proph-et of sal - va - tion, the har - bin - ger of day.

O bless our God and Sav - ior with songs that nev - er cease!

This 20th-century British paraphrase of the Song of Zechariah (Luke 1:68–79) broadens the implications of what John the Baptist's father says in order to affirm that God's work is ongoing. The tune is named for the composer's oldest sister, who was his first piano teacher.

Today's Worship Leaders

Ushers: Deborah Moore & Joanne Taber Reader: Joanne Hayhurst • Deacons: John Estabrook & Don Mayland Fellowship time hosts: Karin and Charlie Noyes

Flowers have been placed in the Meeting House in memory of Angelo Lomanto, whose 92nd birthday would have been tomorrow.

Today's liturgy is adapted and reprinted from *Lectionary Liturgies* by the Rev. Thom Shuman © 2023 (lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com); used by permission.

Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy by Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries of the United Methodist Church. Psalm adapted from *The Psalms in Worship*, Mary Susan Gast, © 2002; 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 **Youth Group Leader**: Sarah Lesch **Youth Group Assistant**: Dan Baker

Holding the Parts Together

Administrative Assistant: Loriann Chevremont

Sexton: Richard Tietjen

Stewardship & Database Mgr: Kelly Rybczyk

Church Officers:

Betsy Beck, moderator; |anet Offensend, treasurer; |ennifer Oberto, clerk

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

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 concerns:

Weekly prayer from UCC Global Ministries, for mission partners in the Dominican Republic: Educational Project Caminante • Social Services of Dominican Churches • AIFALIT Dominicano • Christian Center of Family Counseling• Evangelical Church of the Dominican Republic

Continuing concerns:

Peace in Israel/Palestine, Armenia/Azerbaijan, Sudan, Ukraine

Bob Hubby, recovering from surgery •
Margaret Haubrich, in memory care • Neighbors around the world recovering from catastrophic wildfires, floods, and hurricanes • all affected by gun violence, especially survivors, those tending to the traumatized, and those advocating for safety • neighbors who serve or live in war or in conflict zones around the world • for peacemakers.

For those in treatment for cancer — Peter (and Janet) • Deborah Lifton, Peter Kiernan, Jenny, Frank Swaye, David Douyea, Deborah Merwin, Keith Blanton — prayers for healing and strength.

Family & Friends who have passed away

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

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!

This Week at Salisbury UCC

SUNDAY, 10 DECEMBER

10AM Worship

followed by fellowship & refreshments

in the Parish Hall

2:30PM Youth Group

MONDAY, I I DECEMBER

9:15AM Centering Prayer (via Zoom)
11:30AM Duplicate Bridge Club

TUESDAY, 12 DECEMBER

5:15PM Handbell Choir rehearsal

WEDNESDAY, 13 DECEMBER

8PM Souper Supper prep

12:30PM Staff Meeting

4PM Women's Bible Study 5:30PM Choir Rehearsal

THURSDAY, 14 DECEMBER

11:30AM Duplicate Bridge Club

AFTERNOON "Feel the Warmth" dinner

@ nOURish BRIDGEPORT

FRIDAY, 15 DECEMBER

8:45AM Men's Bible Study

3PM Souper Supper distribution



Please Recycle this Bulletin!





The Congregational Church of Salisbury UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Meeting in Grace • Transformed by Love • Serving with Joy

30 Main Street | P.O. Box 392 | Salisbury, CT 06068 • 860-435-2442 email: welcome@salisburyucc.org • web: salisburyucc.org

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