

# 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 1: 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.

## RESPONSE IN SONG

## “Kindle a Flame”

The image shows a musical score for the song "Kindle a Flame". It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/8. The melody is written in the treble staff, and the bass line is in the bass staff. The lyrics are written below the treble staff: "Kin-dle a flame to light - en the dark and take all fear a - way." The music ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

TEXT: The Iona Community 1987

MUSIC: The Iona Community 1987

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## 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”

JUDAS AND MARY

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

## 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.  
Jesu and Maria.

A little child does Mary bear,  
Beneath her heart He nestles there.  
Jesu 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 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

**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  
Isaiah 40:1-11

*Testament, p. 42  
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



## 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).**

# 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

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.

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.

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## Isaiah the Prophet Has Written of Old



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.

WORDS: *Joy Patterson*

MUSIC: JUDAS AND MARY, *Sydney Carter, 1964*

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# 109      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.

TEXT: Michael Perry, 1973, alt.

MUSIC: Hal H. Hopson, 1983

Text © 1973 The Jubilate Group (admin. Hope Publishing Company)

Music © 1983 Hope Publishing Company

MERLE'S TUNE

7.6.7.6.D

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## 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 92<sup>nd</sup> 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*;

Janet Offensend, *treasurer*; Jennifer 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.)

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#### 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

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.

#### Continuing concerns:

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

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.

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**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

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### SUNDAY, 10 DECEMBER

10AM Worship  
*followed by fellowship & refreshments  
in the Parish Hall*

2:30PM Youth Group

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### MONDAY, 11 DECEMBER

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

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### TUESDAY, 12 DECEMBER

5:15PM Handbell Choir rehearsal

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### WEDNESDAY, 13 DECEMBER

8PM Souper Supper prep  
12:30PM Staff Meeting  
4PM Women's Bible Study  
5:30PM Choir Rehearsal

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### THURSDAY, 14 DECEMBER

11:30AM Duplicate Bridge Club  
AFTERNOON "Feel the Warmth" dinner  
@ nOURish BRIDGEPORT

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### 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*

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