The Congregational Church of Salisbury

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



PRELUDE In Dulci Jubilo J.S. Bach

WELCOME

₩ HYMN #107 "Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn" REJOICE, REJOICE (₩ The congregation may rise, in body or in spirit.)

ANNOUNCEMENTS | JOYS AND CONCERNS | SILENT PRAYER

THE ADVENT WREATH: THE CANDLES OF HOPE, PEACE, JOY, AND LOVE

READER I: When the angel Gabriel visited Mary, announcing God's plan for her to conceive and give birth to the Messiah, Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" (Luke 1:34) And yet, only a few months later, Mary sings to Elizabeth, My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in my Savior, for God has been mindful of the humble state of this servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me — holy is God's name. (Luke 1:46-49)

READER 2: We, like Mary, hear God's call to be part of making God's dream for our salvation and flourishing a reality, and we question, "How can this be? I am only..."

Yet, like Mary, the "onlys" that make us hesitate are gifts God can and will use as God's love transforms us into bearers of good news.

ALL: We wait as people who have encountered divine Love that disrupts the status quo and ushers us into abundant life. We wait in resolute, joyful confidence of the peace and wonder that flow from the flourishing of all people.

READER I: We light these candles as signs of our shocking hope, our just peace, our fierce joy, and the love that transforms us. May such Love grow within, transforming us into bold witnesses of God's salvation with our voices and our lives. Amen.

SUNG RESPONSE #752 "Dona Nobis Pacem"

CALL TO RECONCILIATION

One: If we are to welcome the Child into our hearts, we must speak of all the ways we have hardened ourselves against the good news he brings. Let us confess our sins, as we pray together, saying,

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

How can this be, Holy One of Advent?

We tend to put the powerful on pedestals,
but you send the lowly to remind us
of our call to be servants.

We stock our pantries for family and guests, but you send our friends to our door, collecting for those who hunger and thirst for hope.

We would listen to seasonal sounds of sales, but you send the angels to carol to us of promises made to all which cannot be purchased, but only received.

Forgive us, Hope of the world.

As we watch for your coming,

may we see also the need around us;

as we prepare to celebrate your birth,

may we live hearts open to our neighbors;

as we long for healing and hope,

may we discover it in the Babe of Bethlehem,

Jesus the Christ, sent for us.

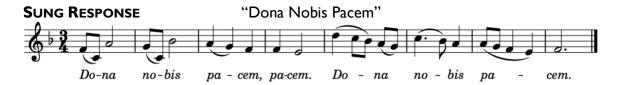
(Silence is kept)

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

One: The good news is not just announced to all people, it is indeed, for all people. For the proud, as well as the humble; for the rich, and for the poor; for those who

have found faith, and those who long for it. Hear it! — and know that in Christ, we are forgiven and freed into God's realm.

All: Our hearts rejoice in the promises, and our souls rejoice in the One who comes to us, bringing hope, peace, joy, and love into our lives. Thanks be to God! Amen.



RESPONSIVE PSALTER: Psalm 89:1-4. 19-26

ONE: I will sing forever of the Holy One's steadfast love;

ALL: With my mouth I will proclaim Your faithfulness to all generations.

I declare that Your love stands firm forever,

That You established Your faithfulness in heaven itself.

You said to Your people,

"I have made a covenant with My chosen one,

I have sworn to My servant:

'I will bring into being your offspring forever,

And confirm your authority for all generations."

Then You spoke in a vision to Your faithful one, and said,

"I have set the crown on one who is mighty,

I have raised up one chosen from the people.

I have found My servant,

Whom I have anointed with My holy oil.

Here shall My hand always remain;

My arm also shall bring you strength.

No enemy shall oppress you,

Nor shall the malicious bring affliction.

Your foes will crumble and those who oppose you will topple.

My faithfulness and steadfast love shall be with you;

And through My authority your strength shall be increased.

I will set your grasp on the sea and your dominion on the rivers.

You shall say of Me,

'You are my Creator, my God, and the Rock of my deliverance!"

A THOUGHT FOR YOUNG MINDS

THE LORD'S PRAYER (debts/debtors)

Hymnal, p. 35

₩ Hymn #98

"To a Maid Whose Name Was Mary" All attending Sunday School may leave as we sing the hymn.

ANNUNCIATION

OFFERTORY

ONE: We remember the love that is God's gift to us, and we respond with gifts of our own. We cannot hope to pay for what we have received: it is wonderful beyond price. Instead, here we rededicate ourselves to generously serve the God who forms us with love — and who sends us to re-form our world by that same love.

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

"

№ Doxology

OLD I00TH

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's steadfast love is established forever — like the moon, a silent witness in the skies. God's faithfulness is as firm as the heavens — like stars that never grow dim. May God bless this offering, that Christ's light will shine for all whom it touches. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Luke 1:26-38

New Testament, p. 69

Luke 1:47-55

SERMON "Mary Sings" Pastor John A. Nelson

PASTORAL PRAYER

★ HYMN #100 "Canticle of the Turning" STAR OF THE COUNTY DOWN

BENEDICTION and **SUNG AMEN**

POSTLUDE Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella arr. Keith Chapman



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).

107 Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn



- 1 A wake! A wake, and greet the new morn, for an gels 2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em - man - u -3 In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, when all the
- 3 In dark est night his com ing shall be, when all the 4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night. Though dark the



her - ald its dawn-ing. el comes a - sing - ing; world is de - spair - ing, win - ter and cheer - less, Sing out your joy, for soon he is his hum - ble song is qui - et and as morn - ing light so qui - et and the ris - ing sun shall crown you with



born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing. Come as a ba - by near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing; mu - sic to heal the free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing. Then shall the mute break light; be strong and lov - ing and fear - less. Love be our song and



weak and poor, to bring all hearts to - geth - er, he o - pens bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing - kind - ness. The thun - der forth in song, the lame shall leap in won - der, the weak be love our prayer and love our end - less sto - ry; may God fill



wide the heaven-ly door and lives now in-side us for - ev - er. of his an-thems rolls to shat-ter all ha-tred and vio-lence. raised a - bove the strong, and weap-ons be bro-ken a - sun-der. ev - ery day we share and bring us at last in - to glo-ry.

After attending a carol concert, the author and composer of this hymn was moved to create a contemporary, accessible carol that drew on the familiar images in a new way. There are echoes here of passages such as Isaiah 9:6, Isaiah 7:14/Matthew 1:23, Isaiah 35:5–6, Isaiah 2:4.

Sim shalom

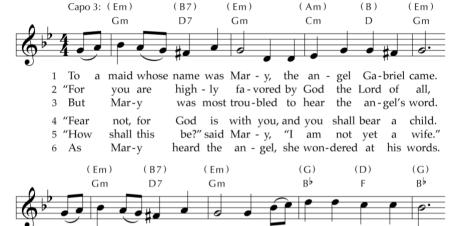
Rabbu habna salamann tamman



*May be sung as a canon.

Whether sung in Latin, Hebrew, Arabic, or any other language, there is no common human prayer deeper than the longing for peace: peace among people and peace in our hearts. The style of this familiar musical setting suggests that it dates from the late 18th or early 19th century.

98 To a Maid Whose Name Was Mary



"Fear not," the an - gel told her. bring good news; who e - ven now with you. You are on earth most blest; is What was the an - gel say - ing? It trou-bled her hear,

His name shall be called Je - sus, God's off-spring from on high. The an - gel an-swered quick - ly, "The power of the Most High "Be - hold, I am your hand-maid," she said un - to her God.



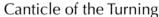
good news I come to tell you, good news, I say, good news."
you are most blest, most bless - ed; God chose you, you are blest!"
to hear the an - gel's mes - sage, it trou-bled her to hear.

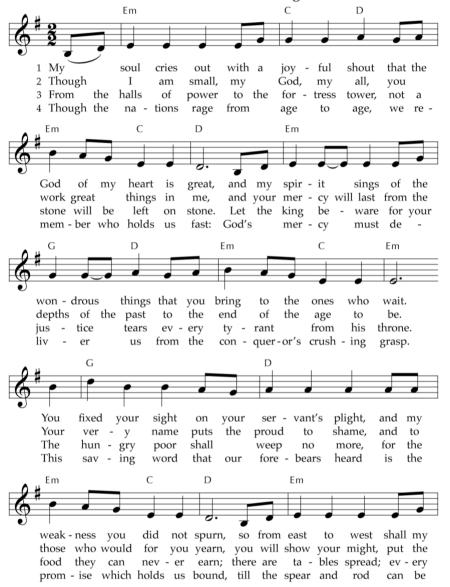
And he shall reign for - ev - er, for - ev - er reign on high." will come up - on you short - ly, your child shall be God's child." "So be it; I am read - v ac - cord - ing to your word."

Guitar chords do not correspond with keyboard harmony.

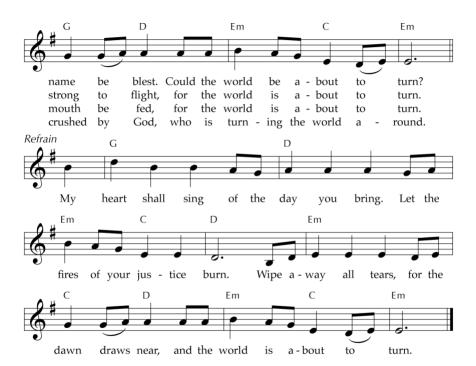
This 20th-century ballad-like retelling of the Annunciation (Luke 1:26–38) displays many characteristics of a folksong style, especially repetition in both text and tune and short quotations included in the narrative. Such features help to make a song both memorable and singable.

100 My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout





By employing an energetic Irish folk song for its melody, this ballad-like paraphrase of the *Magnificat*, Mary's song at her meeting with her relative Elizabeth (Luke 1:46–55), recaptures both the wonder and the faith of the young woman who first recognized what God was doing.



Christmas Poinsettias have been given by:

Elizabeth Dobrwado, in honor of family

Janet Accardo, in memory of Sal Accardo

Doug Roorbach, in honor of Madeline, Olivia, John, & Florin

Karin and Charlie Noyes, in memory of Sally Noyes Dowling; and

in gratitude for friends and family

Lorna and Dan Edmundson, in memory of our parents Anna & Loran Duphiney

and Laura & William Edmundson

Elizabeth D'Amico, in memory of loved ones

Upscale Movers

Janet and David Offensend, in memory of our parents

Patty Clark, in gratitude for Pat McNulty, Joe McNulty,

& Lisa Clark

Patricia and Robert Palmer, in memory of our parents

Louise and Malcolm Brown, in prayer for those suffering in Ukraine and Gaza

Betsy Beck and family, in memory of Don & Betty Fuchs, Dorrie Fuchs

The Davidson Family, in loving memory of Graham Davidson

Sarah and Tom Morrison, in loving memory of our families

Kerry Noble, in memory of my parents Mabel and Robert Noble

Jeff and Robbin Livingston, in loving memory of Sylvia D'Arcy Livingston

Pastor John Nelson in gratitude for the leaders and staff

of Salisbury UCC

Today's Worship Leaders

Ushers: Allison Gray & Janet Kaufman
Reader: Karin Noyes • Deacon: John Estabrook & Don Mayland
Fellowship time host: Emily Elliot

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

Occasions for Prayer

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 Greece: Evangelical Church of Greece •. Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East • Social Work Foundation.

Continuing concerns:

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

Donna Haubrich, recovering from broken pelvis, and husband Sam • 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, David Douyea, Deborah Merwin — prayers for healing and strength.

Thanksgivings

Frank Swaye and Keith Blanton, in remission from cancer.

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, 24 DECEMBER

10AM Worship

followed by fellowship & refreshments

in the Parish Hall

2:30PM Youth Group

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

5:30PM Hand Bell Choir Prelude
6PM Service of Lessons and Carols

DECEMBER 25TH & 26TH

Church offices closed for Christmas

WEDNESDAY, 27 DECEMBER

12:30PM Staff Meeting

4PM Women's Bible Study

THURSDAY, 28 DECEMBER

5:30_{PM} Choir Rehearsal

FRIDAY, 29 DECEMBER

8:45AM Men's Bible Study





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