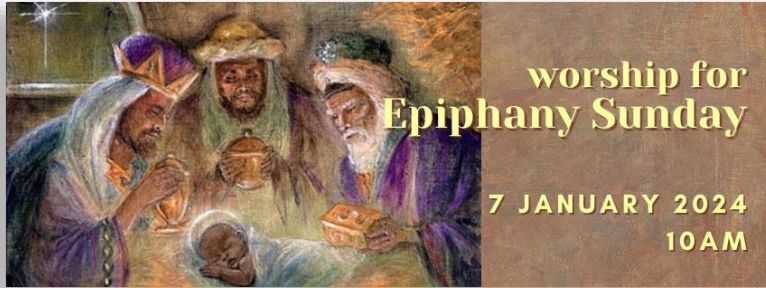


The Congregational Church of Salisbury

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



PRELUDE

“Andante” from *Sonata 15 in D Major*

Beethoven

WELCOME

✘ **HYMN #138** “Who Would Think That What Was Needed”

WHITE ROSETTES

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS | JOYS AND CONCERNS | SILENT PRAYER

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather wondering, ‘Where will we find the Babe born in Bethlehem?’

We will find the Babe
in the laughter of children,
in the wisdom of grandparents.

We gather asking, ‘where will we find the Child of Christmas?’

We will find the Child
where the needy are gifted with hope,
where the oppressed are set free.

We gather wanting to know, ‘where will we find the Christ who has come for us?’

We will find our Hope
where fear is overwhelmed by grace,
where hatred is overwhelmed by love,
where all people are overwhelmed by joy.

**Glorious now, Creation arise!
 Love has heard our yearning cries!
 Alleluia, Alleluia, sounds through the Earth and skies!
 O star of wonder, star of light, star with holy beauty bright,
 Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light!**

GIFTS FOR PONDERING

⌘ **HYMN #145**

“What Child Is This”

GREENSLEEVES

OFFERTORY

ONE: From the prophets and teachers of our faith we hear a life-changing story: God appears among us. God makes a home with humanity! What can we do, when God comes so near? We bring our own treasure; we sing our own joy; we offer our own wonder. Let us give, richly and boldly.

**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

In the Bleak Midwinter

Harold Darke

⌘ **EPIPHANY BLESSING**

GREENSLEEVES

**Bring gifts of wonder, awe, and praise;
come join in jubilation;
The Holy Child, by love and grace,
has come with God’s salvation.**

**Raise, raise a song on high,
the mother sings her lullaby.**

**Joy, joy for Christ is born,
the babe, the child of Mary.**

⌘ **UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

God of every good gift: we do not have frankincense or myrrh, and nothing like pure gold to offer. Yet we do give our tangible gifts — praying that the lives of the poor might be eased, that refugees like the Holy Family might be welcomed everywhere, and that those

searching might find a community of care. We ask in the name of the Christ child: Amen.

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 2:1-12

New Testament, p. 2

MODERN TESTIMONY

“A Sign”

by Pastor Steve Garnaas-Holmes

SERMON

“The Secret of the Gifts”

The Rev. Paul Flucke
Pastor John A. Nelson

We Feast at God’s Table

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

ONE: We have come asking for the child –

**ALL: Wondering where that love might be born,
Seeking that joy that might satisfy our thirst,
Wandering through the darkness of so many mistakes.**

We have come to this place where sages from the east and shepherds from the hills and animal witnesses met around a young mother and her newborn. We have come to this place called Bethlehem –

**to this place where our hearts rise like yeast;
to this place where we meet our newborn hope;
to this place where we taste our deepest joy.**

In Bethlehem, where we assumed the worst,
imagining that no good can come,
we somehow missed its name. Bethlehem:
Beth meaning house; *lehem* meaning bread.

**There is something here that will satisfy our hunger.
No matter how long we have wandered,
here our hearts arise. Our light has come.**

In this bread and in this cup, we celebrate something we can’t quite understand.

**Because God has made a house at this table.
Because God satisfies our hunger in the most unlikely places.
Because God comes to be with us, now and always.**

It is with this expectation that we come to the table
to taste and see that God is here.

REMEMBERING JESUS AT THE TABLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER (*debt*)

Hymnal, p. 35

PRAYER AT THE TABLE

Holy Spirit, come into this bread and this cup.

**Transform these ordinary objects as you change our hearts
to shape and form your world with the joy you promise.**

Pour your grace upon us, so we overflow with your love.

**Help us to remember how a newborn baby might grow into
a child who would one day turn to his hope-filled friends in
an upper room, and open to them a new union with God.**

SHARING THE MEAL

We celebrate an open communion, and welcome every person to the table. We understand the sharing of the bread and the cup in Jesus' name to be a reenactment of an ancient vision of God's feast for all people. We don't require you to be a member of our church, or any church, to participate with us in this feast of grace: all that is needed is that you desire the nurture God is offering. As communion is served we hold the bread until all have received, to signify our unity in Christ. We drink the cup as we are served, to signify our personal relationship with Christ.

(We use gluten-free bread and unfermented grape juice, to extend a wider welcome.)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

ONE: Eternal and gracious One, though we live in a world of need,

**ALL: here we have tasted your goodness
and hungered for a world more just.**

Though afflicted by brokenness and division,

here we have heard your call to be a people of healing community.

Though daily we touch our limits,

here we have received the fullness of your grace.

You have filled us, O God:

inspire us to live in love and to share your *shalom*! Amen.

PASTORAL PRAYER

✠ **HYMN** (*insert*)

"Brightest and Best"

MORNING STAR

BENEDICTION and SUNG AMEN

POSTLUDE

Noël

Claude Daquin



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).

138 Who Would Think That What Was Needed

1 Who would think that what was need - ed to trans -
 2 Shep - herds watch and wise men won - der; mon - archs
 3 Cen - tu - ries of skill and sci - ence span the

form and save the earth might not be a
 scorn and an - gels sing; such a place as
 past from which we move, yet ex - pe - rience

plan or ar - my, proud in pur - pose, proved in
 none would reck - on hosts a ho - ly help - less
 ques - tions wheth - er, with such prog - ress, we im -

worth? Who would think, de - spite de - ri - sion, that a
 thing. Sta - ble beasts and by - passed stran - gers watch a
 prove. While the hu - man lot we pon - der, lest our

Hindsight is nearly always clearer than foresight, and with gentle good humor this Christmas hymn points out how great was the gap between human expectation and God's actual way of providing a means of salvation for us. God's ways continually exceed our claims to comprehend them.

TEXT: John L. Bell and Graham Maule, 1987

MUSIC: John L. Bell, 2005

Text and Music © 1987, 2005 WGRG, Iona Community (admin. GIA Publications, Inc.)

WHITE ROSETTES

8.7.8.7.D

child should lead the way?
ba - by laid in hay; God sur - pris - es earth with
hopes and hu - mor fray,

heav - en, com - ing here on Christ - mas Day.

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What Child Is This



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar-y's lap is sleep-ing?
 2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?
 3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, one and all, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet while shep - herds watch are keep - ing?
 Good Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.
 The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en - throne him.



This, this is Christ the King, whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing;
 Nails, spear, shall pierce him through; the cross be borne for me, for you.
 Raise, raise the song on high. The vir - gin sings her lul - la - by.



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
 Hail, hail, the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
 Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!



This Victorian text gains scope and power by having the original second halves of stanzas two and three restored. They give a stark forward glimpse of what lies ahead for this "babe, the son of Mary!" The tune is much older, dating from Tudor England.

Brightest and Best

1 & 5 Bright-est and best of the stars of the mor - ning,
 2 Cold on the cra - dle the dew - drops are shin - ing,
 2 Shall we not of - fer our cost ly de - vo - tion,
 3 Vain - ly we of - fer each am - ple o - bla - tion,

dawn on our mid - night and lend us your aid;
 God's ho - ly Child with the beasts of the stall;
 fra - grance of E - dom and of - ferings di - vine,
 vain - ly with gifts would we fa - vor im - part;

Star of the East, the ho - ri - zon a - dor - ning,
 an - gels a - dore while this ba - by lies sleep - ing,
 gems of the moun - tain and pearls of the o - cean,
 ri - cher by far is our awe - struck a - do - ra - tion,

guide where our in - fant Re - deem - er is laid.
 Mak - er and Mon - arch and Sav - ior of all.
 myrrh from the for - est or gold from the mine?
 dea - rer to God are the prayers of the heart.

TEXT: Reginald Heber, 1811, alt.

TUNE: James P. Harding, 1892, The New Psalms and Hymns, Richmond, Va., 1901

MORNING STAR

11.10.11.10

Today's Worship Leaders

Ushers: Sarah Morrison, Joanne Taber • *Reader:* Tony Good • *Deacon:* Sue Morrill
Fellowship time hosts: The Clark Family

Today's liturgy is adapted and reprinted from *Lectionary Liturgies* by the Rev. Thom Shuman © 2024 (lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com); used by permission. Cover art: Violet Hewitt Chandler, "The Spirit of Christmas"

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 Service, Witness, and 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 Mozambique: Christian
Council of Mozambique • Mozambique Synod –
United Congregational Church of Southern Africa
• Ricatla United Seminary • United Church of
Christ in Mozambique.

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,
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, 7 JANUARY

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

11:30AM Church Council meeting

MONDAY, 8 JANUARY

9:15AM Centering Prayer (via Zoom)

11:30AM Duplicate Bridge Club

WEDNESDAY, 10 JANUARY

12:30PM Staff Meeting

4PM Women's Bible Study

5:30PM Board of Deacons meeting

THURSDAY, 11 JANUARY

5:30PM Choir Rehearsal

FRIDAY, 12 JANUARY

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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email: welcome@salisburyucc.org • web: salisburyucc.org

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