



CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

with UCC Westerly

December 24, 2024 @ 4pm

***In-person &
Broadcast live from our sanctuary
CCLI Streaming License #21022154***

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Photo credit: Microsoft stock images

If you have brought a creche piece from home to receive a blessing, please place it on the altar near the creche when you are seated or during the first hymn.

Gathering Music –

[WORDS & MUSIC: Doug Brummund. ©2022 B.R. Music. All rights reserved. Used with permission.]

PASTOR’S WELCOME

PRELUDE *Christmas Reflections*

[MUSIC: Sarah Douglas. ©2004 Lorenz Publishing Company, Used by permission]

DEACON’S GREETING

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH – *The Manger*

<https://www.lovetoknow.com/celebrations/christmas/christmas-wreath-meaning>

The 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th candles are relit.

Deacon: Christmas is a time of gift giving. Think of all the gifts wrapped and waiting under your Christmas tree. Each gift is the embodiment of love chosen for someone special. Each gift is a kind of hope-filled wish for the person receiving it from the person giving it. A gift is a spark of joy given in love.

All: But what is a gift without hands to present it? Without hands to unwrap it and hold it up in wonder and delight? A gift needs a person to give it and a person to receive it and to unwrap the love and joy it represents.

Deacon: The Christ Child is God’s gift to us representing new life and new beginnings always possible. The Christ Child is a gift of love for each of us, empowering us to share that love far and wide. On this night God asks that you receive this gift of love made flesh, that you allow it to reveal in your life new possibilities and that you share God’s gift with unconditional love with all you meet. This is the true meaning of Christmas – the gift of love which knows no bounds.

All: God With Us, you have come among us in the person of a tiny, vulnerable baby, a newborn reaching out to be loved and cherished. As we honor this unconditional gift of love from you, we pray for peace where there is anger or fear, for hope to be reborn everywhere, for love to become tangible in the lives which need it most, and for joy that heals the soul and points to the future. We ask all this in the name of Your Son, and Mary’s. Amen.

The Christ Candle is lit.

All: Tonight, we light the Christ Candle on our Advent wreath to welcome the Babe in the Manger into our hearts and lives. May the holy light of this sacred night shining in the darkness remind us that the darkness can never, ever overcome this light coming from you into our lives. Amen.

OPENING CAROL – “O Come All Ye Faithful”

W&R#182

[WORDS & MUSIC: John F. Wade with contributions by others. ©Public Domain]

If you have not already done so, please come forward during this carol to place your creche piece from home on the altar among the others.

A SIMPLE CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

Words of Invitation, Explanation and Consecration

Prayer of Thanksgiving and the Lord’s Prayer:

We thank you, God, for embracing us at this, Christ’s table, on this holy night. May our encounter with the presence of Christ in these elements of bread and cup strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and empower us to make visible your truth in our lives. We pray this and every prayer in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray saying... Our Father...

CAROL – *Away in a Manger*

W&R#203, v. 1-2

[©Public Domain]

A MESSAGE FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:1-20

Message *The Gift*

Rev. Ruth

SPECIAL MUSIC – *Go Tell It on the Mountain*

The Tone Chimes Choir

[© Public Domain]

#A MOMENT TO BREATHE

OUR RESPONSE TO GOD

Acknowledgement of Gifts & Offerings*

Offertory Anthem – *On Christmas Night*

The Voice Choir

[traditional English Carol with setting and new WORDS by Eugene Butler. ©1988 The Sacred Music Press CCLI#1670627]

Doxology “*Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Christ all creatures here below;*

Praise Holy Spirit, Comforter; One God, Triune,

whom we adore. Amen. [©Public Domain]

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER AND THE BLESSING OF THE CRECHES

CAROL with Candle-lighting -- *Silent Night*

W&R#186

[WORDS: Joseph Mohr & MUSIC: Franz Gruber. ©Public Domain]

A PRAYER OF BENECTION

[adapted from *Touch Holiness*, Duck & Tirabassi, ©1990, The Pilgrim Press, p. 240]

On this holy night, hold on to the truth that God is in our future calling us; that God is in our past forgiving us; that God is in the present loving us. There is no greater gift, no greater blessing. Go out and be God’s blessing to the world so hurting and broken. Be as Christ to everyone you meet. Amen.

CLOSING CAROL – Joy to the World

W&R#179

[WORDS: Isaac Watts & MUSIC: George Frederic Handel, arr. Lowell Mason © Public Domain

**Please join us in ringing bells to welcome the Christ Child into our hearts once more!*

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**#A MOMENT TO BREATHE** is an experience of Thich Nhat Hahn’s breath of 10 exercise. It is very simple, inviting you to breathe as you normally would but counting each breath in and each breath out until you reach 10. If you lose track of your count at any point, start over. This is a remarkably simple but highly effective breathing exercise that can reset your mind and heart. Enjoy! 😊

**TO ANY VISITORS WITH US THIS EVENING, WELCOME!** We are so glad you decided to join us! We would love to be able to connect with you after your visit today if that would be of interest to you. If so, we respectfully request that you fill out one of our visitor cards with a little information about yourself. And please join us for fellowship time if you are so inclined!

**Our Diaconate Person for this evening and the coming week is Joann Spurley.** Please feel free to be in touch with her with your joys and concerns knowing that we care about you every day.

**\*ABOUT THE OFFERING.** We offer our deepest gratitude to our members and friends who are so generous with their pledges and financial gifts to the church, both those here in person and those joining online. Online participants are invited to give online via our “Donate” button @ [www.uccwesterly.org](http://www.uccwesterly.org) or mail your checks, made payable to UCC Westerly, to us at 9 Castle Hill Road, Pawcatuck, CT 06379. **A REMINDER that offering plates** are located at each entrance to the sanctuary. Thank you!

**A REMINDER THAT WE WILL BE RECEIVING DONATIONS FOR THE UCC’S CHRISTMAS FUND** through the end of the year. This is the Fund that provides assistance to retired clergy and clergy experiencing severe financial distress.

**Children’s books and activities** are available on the children’s table in the rear of the sanctuary.

To receive a copy of Rev. Ruth’s message from this evening, please contact our office administrator Jerin at 860-599-1226 or [uccwesterly@gmail.com](mailto:uccwesterly@gmail.com).

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**Luke 2:1-20**

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,  
‘Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!’

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.’ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

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OUR STAFF:

The Rev. Ruth Shilling Hainsworth, Pastor  
David Cranmer, Organist & Choirs Director  
Jerin Peloquin, Office Coordinator



**A REMINDER OF SERVICES HAPPENING AT UCC WESTERLY  
DURING THE REMAINDER OF ADVENT AND CHRISTMASTIDE**

***Sunday, December 29*** @ 9:45am A birthday party for Jesus as our Christmastide celebration!

***Sunday, January 5*** @ 9:45am – **EPIPHANY & our STAR SUNDAY CELEBRATION** Festive service of Communion, Light and Star Words for the coming year!