



SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP *with UCC Westerly*

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 15, 2024 @ 9:45am
In-person &
Broadcast live from our sanctuary
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Gathering Music –

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

PASTOR'S WELCOME

PRELUDE *Advent Pastoral*

[James Southbridge. ©2004 Lorenz Publishing Company, used by permission.]

DEACON'S WELCOME

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH – *The Staff*

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

The 1st & 2nd candles are relit.

DEACON: A staff is a simple thing. It's cut from a tree and carved into something useful. A staff is just a walking stick, sturdy and dependable, something to lean on when you are weary. For a shepherd, like those who cared for the sheep on the outskirts of Bethlehem, a staff provided extra support when the path was rocky. It could also be used to give a stubborn sheep a gentle prod to move along to the next green pasture or the staff's crook used to rescue a wayward lamb.

All: **But what is a staff without hands to grip it firmly? What is a staff without hands to place it wisely for support? What is a staff without hands to prod the sheep on to new pastures or rescue silly lambs from danger?**

DEACON: A staff needs a person to test its strength. A staff needs a person to lean on its dependability. A staff needs a person who knows the sheep and sees when they go astray. A staff needs a person unafraid of danger, willing to kneel down in the mud to rescue the sheep and lead it forward.

All: **Lord Jesus Christ, we seek you in this Advent season. Be our staff to lean on when we lose our footing. Be our guide when we cannot find our way. Pull us free from danger. Sweet Baby Jesus, rescue us with the light of your love. Be our strength each day so that we may live with courage and compassion, come what may. Amen.**

The 3rd candle is lit.

All: **We light the third candle of the Advent wreath to symbolize the staff which offers strength, safety and support when needed to move forward into each new day. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness does not overcome it.**

OPENING HYMN – *I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light*

W&R#248

[WORDS & MUSIC: Kathleen Thomerson. © 1970 Celebration (Admin. The Copyright Company) CCLI#89848]

THE MORNING MESSAGE –

Scripture Reading: Psalm 23

Message – *The Comfort Stick*

Meditation Music – *Savior of the Nations, Come*

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Rev. Ruth

#A MOMENT TO BREATHE

A TIME OF PRAYER

Pastoral Prayers & Silent Prayer

The Lord's Prayer in whatever words are most comfortable for you.

Musical Response

BLESSING OF OUR ADOPT-A-FAMILY GIFTS FOR OPERATION FRESH START

OUR RESPONSE TO GOD

OFFERTORY ANTHEM – *In the Bleak Midwinter*

The Tone Chimes Choir

[©Public Domain]

Acknowledgement of Gifts & Offerings*

Doxology: [©Public Domain]

“Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Christ all creatures here below; Praise Holy Spirit, Comforter; One God, Triune, whom we adore. Amen.”

CLOSING HYMN – *People Look East*

W&R#161

[WORDS: Eleanor Farjeon & MUSIC: French Melody. Words ©1960 David Higham Assoc., Ltd. & Music Arrg. ©1928 Oxford University Press. CCLI#3011380]

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A PRAYER OF BENEDICTION [adapted from *The New Century Hymnal* #877]

May the Great Ruler of all places and times, the God of many names, enfold you with the divine presence so that you can be ready and strong, for all the days to come. Amen.

Sung Response – Let There Be Peace on Earth

W& R#614

[WORDS & MUSIC: Sy Miller & Jill Jackson, © 1955, Ren.1983 Jen-Lee Music. Used by Permission. CCLI Copyright License 21022161]

PASSING OF THE PEACE

POSTLUDE – *Thou Art the King*

[Chester Nordman. ©1970 Lorenz Publishing Company. CCLI#619517]

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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. This is a remarkably simple but highly effective breathing exercise that calms your mind and heart. Enjoy! 😊

**TO ANY VISITORS WITH US THIS MORNING, 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 you are comfortable doing so, please find one of our *CONTACT* cards in the back of the sanctuary to fill out and leave in one of the offering plates. We also hope you will join us for fellowship time if you are so inclined!

**Our Diaconate Person of the Week for this week is Bethany Foster.** 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!

**THE PRAYER MINISTRIES** of this church are many and varied and you are welcome to participate in any or all of them. In the sanctuary, you will find prayer notebooks by either door within which to write specific prayer requests for Sunday. You will also find prayer candle tables at which you may light a candle for your own prayer concerns. You will also find in the front pews prayer shawls and prayer bears to offer comfort to those struggling. For more information on our prayer ministries please speak with any Deacon or Rev. Ruth at any time.

*You are welcome to donate flowers for the chancel any week. Our sign-up sheet is located on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall or speak with Rev. Ruth for more information.*

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### **PSALM 23**

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name’s sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff— they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

*To request a copy of today’s message be sent to you, kindly contact Jerin in the office at (860)599-1226 or [uccwesterly@gmail.com](mailto:uccwesterly@gmail.com).*

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OUR STAFF:

The Rev. Ruth Shilling Hainsworth, Pastor

David Cranmer, Organist & Choirs Director

Jerin Peloquin, Office Assistant