



Photo credit: Rev. Ruth, 2024

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

with UCC Westerly

LESSONS & CAROLS
December 22, 2024 @ 9:45am*
In-person and
Broadcast live from our sanctuary
CCLI Streaming License #21022154

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

PASTOR’S WELCOME

PRELUDE – *Christmas Fantasia*
[Rob Roy Peery. ©1962 & 1965 Lorenz Publishing Company, CCLI#2453152]

DEACON’S GREETING

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH – *The Manger*

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

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

DEACON: A manger is a few pieces of wood nailed together to serve a good purpose. Just a set of wooden arms strong enough to hold a new bundle of hay each day. A manger protects the hay, keeps it clean and dry and away from the mice. A manger stands guard to offer its food to the animals who rely it. The manger welcomes the hungry who gather round it trusting that it holds what they need.

All: **But how can the manger become more than what it is used to being? Is it possible that it might become something else to welcome a more precious gift even than food? When might a manger become a cradle for new life? Might it be when the loving hands of weary parents lay the newborn baby in it, hands ready to tend this precious new life? And what of the tiny hands reaching up out of the cradle for warmth and love?**

DEACON: A manger needs a person to imagine it as a cradle, to smooth out the hay and layer on the blankets. This entire moment needs a person to stroke the tiny forehead, snuggling the newborn in loving arms. A manger remains a manger unless someone, this precious baby’s parents, place its tiny form in this most unusual place.

All: **O God, may our lives cradle your love made flesh on Christmas morning as we behold the Baby Jesus. May our love for you inspire us to become shelter for those in need of hope and new beginnings. May our hands offer welcome to the stranger, in the name of the Christ Child who reaches out to us from the manger.**

The 4th candle is lit.

All: **We light the fourth candle of the Advent wreath to remember the manger and the loving parents who recognized its potential to provide rest and shelter to**

the newborn Christ Child. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness does not overcome it.

OPENING SONG – *Go, Tell It on the Mountain*
[@Public Domain]

W&R#218

A CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION IN LESSONS AND CAROLS
Telling the story of how Christmas came to be...

<i>First Lesson</i>	Genesis 1:1-5, 26, 31; 2:1-3	<i>Ed Stratton</i>
<i>Second Lesson</i>	Exodus 3:7-15	<i>Kathy Tarasuk</i>
<i>Third Lesson</i>	Isaiah 9:2, 6-7	<i>Ede Steele</i>
<i>Fourth Lesson</i>	Isaiah 11:1-4a, 6-9	<i>Sandi Davis</i>
<i>Carol -- “O Come All Ye Faithful”</i> [@Public Domain]		W&R#182, v. 1-2
<i>Fifth Lesson</i>	Luke 1: 26-35, 38	<i>Bethany Foster</i>
<i>Sixth Lesson</i>	Luke 2:1-17	<i>Debbie Micelli</i>
<i>Seventh Lesson</i>	Matthew 2:1-12	<i>Jenny Brummund</i>
<i>Eighth Lesson</i>	John 1:1-5	<i>Gary Davis</i>

#A MOMENT TO BREATHE

A TIME OF PRAYER

Pastoral Prayer & Silent Prayers

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

Musical Response

OUR RESPONSE TO GOD

Acknowledgement of Gifts & Offerings*

Anthem – *A Celtic Noel*

The Voice Choir

[Hymn tune THE FIRST NOEL, from W. Sandys’ *Christmas Carols 1833*, arrang. Patrick Tierney]]

*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]

CLOSING SONG -- *Once in Royal David’s City*
[@Public Domain]

W&R#183, v. 1-3

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A PRAYER OF BENEDICTION

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

Through Christ you are a child of God who dearly loves us all. Go forth in peace, joy and hope to share God's love. Rise up to heed Christ's call. 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 – *Go Out with Praise*

[Gilbert M. Martin. ©2010 Lorenz Publishing Company, used by permission]

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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!

## **A REMINDER OF OUR CHRISTMAS CARD EXCHANGE in Fellowship Hall!**

*Please post one of your family's Christmas Cards on the board AND leave a donation for THE CHRISTMAS FUND of the UCC which supports clergy facing dire financial distress.*

**Our Diaconate Person of the Week for this 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!*

**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 you can check with Jerin in the office.

THE UNITED CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WESTERLY, UCC

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OUR STAFF:

The Rev. Ruth Shilling Hainsworth, Pastor

David Cranmer, Organist & Choirs Director

Jerin Peloquin, Office Coordinator

*PLEASE NOTE that the church office will be closed on Wednesday, December 25 for Christmas Day and on Wednesday, December 31 for New Year's Day.*

*MERRY CHRISTMAS*

*From the Staff!!*

*Rev. Ruth    Dav    Jerin*



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

***Sunday, December 24 – Christmas Eve Service @ 4pm***

Traditional festive service of candles, carols, special music and Communion with a Christmas message from Rev. Ruth. **BRING YOUR BELLS TO WELCOME THE CHRIST CHILD & YOUR CRECHE PIECE FOR A BLESSING!**

***Sunday, December 29 @ 9:45am – A Birthday Party for Baby Jesus on the Christmastide Sunday!***

***Sunday, January 5, 2025 @ 9:45am – EPIPHANY & our STAR SUNDAY CELEBRATION*** Festive service of Communion, Light and Star Words for the coming year!

## THE READINGS

### **1<sup>st</sup> Lesson – Genesis 1:1-5, 26; 31; 2:1-3**

*Ed Stratton*

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.’ God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Lesson – Exodus 3:7-15**

*Kathy Tarasuk*

Then the LORD said, ‘I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.’ But Moses said to God, ‘Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?’ He said, ‘I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.

But Moses said to God, ‘If I come to the Israelites and say to them, “The God of your ancestors has sent me to you”, and they ask me, “What is his name?” what shall I say to them?’ God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ He said further, ‘Thus you shall say to the Israelites, “I AM has sent me to you.”’ God also said to Moses, ‘Thus you shall say to the Israelites, “The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you”:

This is my name for ever, and this my title for all generations.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Lesson – Isaiah 9:2, 6-7**

*Ede Steele*

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.  
For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named  
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness from this time onwards and for evermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

**4<sup>th</sup> Lesson – Isaiah 11:1-4a, 6-9**

*Sandi Davis*

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse,  
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.  
The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,  
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of counsel and might,  
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.  
His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,  
or decide by what his ears hear;  
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,  
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;  
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,  
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.  
The wolf shall live with the lamb,  
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,  
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,  
and a little child shall lead them.  
The cow and the bear shall graze,  
their young shall lie down together;  
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.  
The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,  
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.  
They will not hurt or destroy  
on all my holy mountain;  
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD  
as the waters cover the sea.

## **5<sup>th</sup> Lesson – Luke 1:26-35, 38**

*Bethany Foster*

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

## **6<sup>th</sup> Lesson – Luke 2:1-17**

*Debbie Micelli*

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.



## **7<sup>th</sup> Lesson – Matthew 2:1-12**

*Jenny Brummund*

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, ‘Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising and have come to pay him homage.’ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

“And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who is to shepherd my people Israel.” ’

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, ‘Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.’ When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary, his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

## **8<sup>th</sup> Lesson – John 1:1-5**

*Gary Davis*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.