DECEMBER 22, 2024 | FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT ORSHIP **SERVICE OF WELCOME & WORD**

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS Please take a moment to complete the care pad in your pew.

Peace be with you. And also with you.

We thank God for these opportunities for fellowship and service. Thanks be to God!

PRELUDE

CAROL OF THE BELLS WESTFIELD CHRISTMAS CHOIR

CALL TO WORSHIP Across the universe creation waits for the prophets to speak their words of expectation and their vision of renewal

May we gather round them today once more and let their longing grip us and lead us into birth and blessing

So come now my friends this is the meeting place of promise and prophecy let us listen through the ancient words that we might be ready to hear a baby's cry

INVOCATION

Faithful God, you chose Mary, full of grace, to be the mother of our Sovereign and Savior, Jesus Christ. Now fill us with your grace, that with her, we may understand your ways, rejoice in your salvation, and embrace your will; through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

OR SPIR



*CALL TO CONFESSION

Our lives are full of mistakes and errors – places where we follow self-generated idols instead of the One True God. We are not alone in these mistakes – all of those who have come before us also were plagued with temptation and sin. Let us come before God, just as generations of believers have done, and pray for God's forgiveness and grace.

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

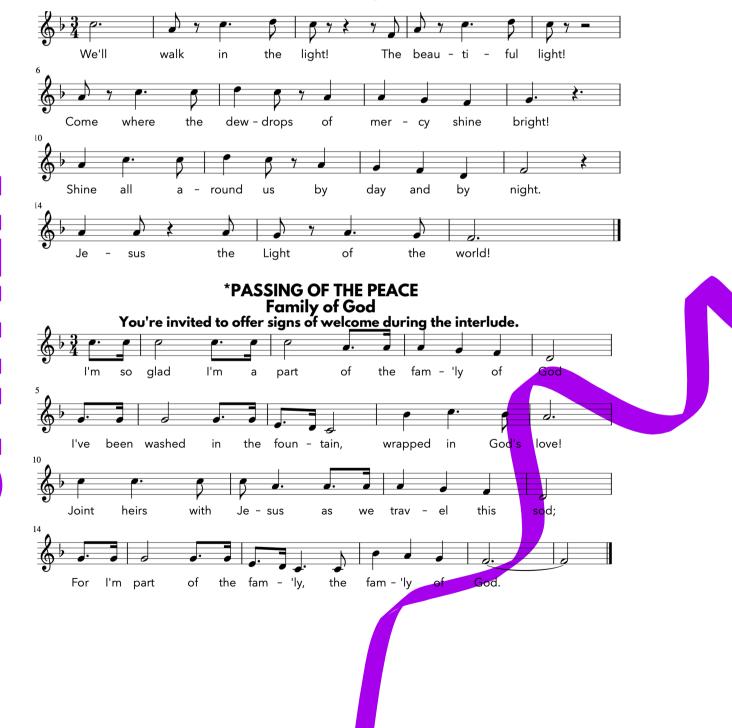
O Holy God of Promise, we so often place our trust in the things we can see, and touch, and easily believe. But you did not ask us to believe what is easy, vou have asked us to believe what is true! Forgive us, Holy One, when we doubt the ways you work. Forgive us when we find it hard to believe an ancient story. Forgive us we question how you chose to enter the world, born as one of us. Forgive our lack of faith and belief in ways which seem so impossible to believe. Help us to look in faith, open our belief, and set aside our doubts that you sent your Son, born of a virgin – the one who has come to set us all free. We offer these prayers in the name of your Son, Emmanuel, God with us. Amen.

*ASSURANCE OF GOD'S LOVE

But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons and daughters. And because you are sons and daughters, God has set the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba, Father!' So through God you are no longer a slave but a son and daughter, and if a son or daughter then an heir.

> In Christ, we are forgiven, adopted into God's family, heirs to the kingdom!

*SUNG RESPONSE Walk in the Light



*PLEASE RISE IN BODY OR SPIRIT

SONG OF WELCOME Draw the Circle Wide





The Jesus-y Questions

The Essential Questions

The Covenant

Let us, members of the Westfield Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, express our welcome and affirm our mutual ministry in Christ. We welcome you with joy in the common life of this church. We promise you our friendship and prayer as we share the hope and labors of the church of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit may we continue to grow together in God's knowledge and love and be witnesses of our risen Savior.

Laureen and Willie Gilbert, East Killingly

Laureen - Executive Assistant for a DPW, I really enjoy my job and the people I work with. I've been doing it for 26 years. I enjoy stenciling on wood, refinishing old furniture, desks, shelves. I love the ocean, it's peaceful and mysterious. I've lived in Killingly for 5 years. Killingly is beautiful, I love the quiet and the scenic rides my husband I go on. I love new adventures, traveling, and sightseeing. I love cats and currently have 3, one is a brand-new kitten. I was raised Catholic but have not practiced that religion for many years. I want to be a part of a congregation that is welcoming and kind. This congregation seems very loving and positive. I see all the volunteering, projects and fun stuff and I want to be a part it! I also see the compassion this church holds for everyone and that is very uplifting, even in hard times.

Willie - Shipper/Receiver at a yarn company. Enjoys fishing, hunting, being outdoors. Loves sports of all types, especially all New England teams. Collector of sports cards and the Peanuts gang. I have never belonged to a church, been baptized or confirmed. My wife brought me to Westfield, she's a believer in a Higher Power and I found that interesting, I always wanted to see what it was all about. I'm enjoying Westfield church, all the people and volunteering that is done. It's a very positive, giving atmosphere and I'm excited to become a part of this great congregation!

Sara Muñoz, East Killingly

Hi my name is Sara! I moved to East Killingly 2 years ago. I was raised Christian and I just recently returned to my faith 3 months ago after being away from it for 10+ years. I work for AAA in MA. What brought me to the congregation was seeing people like me from the LGTBTQ+ being welcomed and preaching the gospel that I once felt rejected from. Thankful to God that I found Westfield and Pastor Chapman.

Angela LaRose, Canterbury

I grew up in Killingly and attended St. James church through my early 20's. I live in Canterbury and work with my husband at our business R & R General Repair garage. We have 3 children and a set of twin grand sons. I also homeschool our youngest son whom is 14. I enjoy playing billiards as I am on 4 teams lol. I also enjoy cooking; it's comforting knowing that my family and coworkers are fed and happy.

Beth & Zach Rondeau, Brooklyn

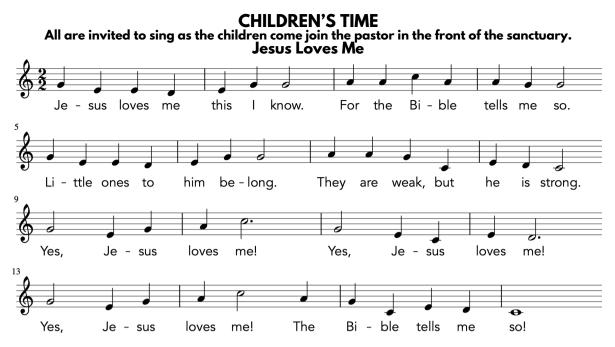
My husband and I have been together for four years and married for two. We have two beautiful children, Maya and Luca. We have a beautiful friend group who attend Westfield with their children and I am so thankful to the church for bringing us together. We are both relatively new to the religious scene but love what Westfield and it's attendees stand for and believe in; community and love.

Krystina Lewis, Putnam

I have lived in Putnam my whole life. My family lives in Maine and I enjoy going up there frequently. I have a younger sister who has blessed me with a beautiful niece and 2 nephews. My niece and nephews are my entire world.

Donna O'Shaughnessy, Danielson

I joined the UCC church in 2014 after being baptized Catholic. I am a Paraprofessional working here in town..I retired from Woodstock during the pandemic Upon moving to Killingly in 2021 I decided to sub. I missed the kids. I have attended Westfield off and on and feel that now is the right time to join. I have a daughter and two grandsons.



Children 5th grade and under wishing to take part in Sunday School may leave at this time.

GOSPEL LESSON NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION

God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was 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 for ever, 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. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with 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.

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb.

LUKE 1:26-55

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. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

And Mary said,

'My soul magnifies the Lord,

and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,

for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me,

and holy is his name.

His mercy is for those who fear him

from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

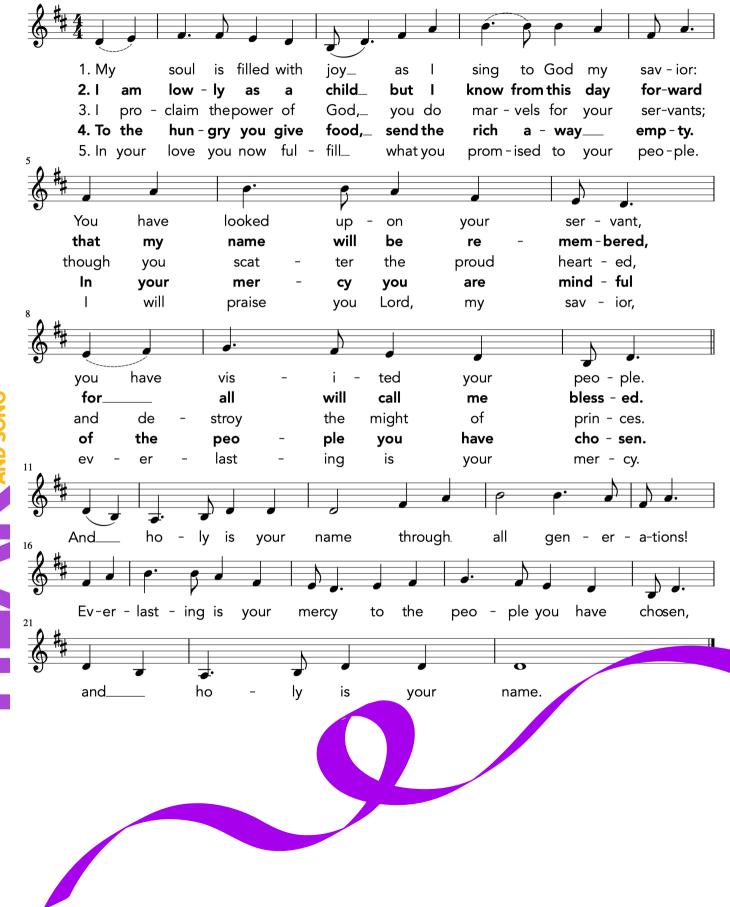
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly;

- he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.
- He has helped his servant Israel,

in remembrance of his mercy,

according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

ASE RISE Y OR SPIRI *HOLY IS YOUR NAME WILD MOUNTAIN THYME



GOSPEL LESSON

THE MESSAGE

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to the Galilean village of Nazareth to a virgin engaged to be married to a man descended from David. His name was Joseph, and the virgin's name, Mary. Upon entering, Gabriel greeted her:

Good morning! You're beautiful with God's beauty,

Beautiful inside and out! God be with you. She was thoroughly shaken, wondering what was behind a greeting like that. But the angel assured her, "Mary, you have nothing to fear. God has a surprise for you: You will become pregnant and give birth to a son and call his name Jesus.

He will be great,

be called 'Son of the Highest.' The Lord God will give him

the throne of his father David;

He will rule Jacob's house forever no end, ever, to his kingdom." Mary said to the angel, "But how? I've never slept with a man."

The angel answered,

The digeraliswered,

The Holy Spirit will come upon you, the power of the Highest hover over you;

Therefore, the child you bring to birth will be called Holy, Son of God. "And did you know that your cousin Elizabeth conceived a son, old as she is? Everyone called her barren, and here she is six months pregnant! Nothing, you see, is impossible with God." And Mary said,

Yes, I see it all now:

I'm the Lord's maid, ready to serve. Let it be with me just as you say. Then the angel left her. Mary didn't waste a minute. She got up and traveled to a town in Judah in the hill country, straight to Zachariah's house, and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby in her womb leaped. She was filled with the Holy Spirit, and sang out exuberantly, You're so blessed among women,

and the babe in your womb, also blessed! And why am I so blessed that the mother of my Lord visits me? The moment the sound of your greeting entered my ears, The babe in my womb skipped like a lamb for sheer joy. Blessed woman, who believed what God said, believed every word would come true! LUKE 1:26-55

And Marv said. I'm bursting with God-news; I'm dancing the song of my Savior God. God took one good look at me, and look what happened— I'm the most fortunate woman on earth! What God has done for me will never be forgotten, the God whose very name is holy, set apart from all others. His mercy flows in wave after wave on those who are in awe before him. He bared his arm and showed his strength. scattered the bluffing braggarts. He knocked tyrants off their high horses, pulled victims out of the mud. The starving poor sat down to a banguet: the callous rich were left out in the cold. He embraced his chosen child, Israel; he remembered and piled on the mercies, piled them high. It's exactly what he promised, beginning with Abraham and right up to now.

RESPONSE TO READING

Through this scripture, God is still speaking. **And we are listening.**

SERMON THE REV. DR. JONATHAN CHAPMAN



SHARING OF CONCERNS

For all these persons and all who are in need. Hold your people near, O God.

PASTORAL PRAYER THE CANTICLE OF TURNING

SHARING OF JOYS

We give thanks to God

for these blessings.

Thanks be to God.

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THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father,

who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO GIVE

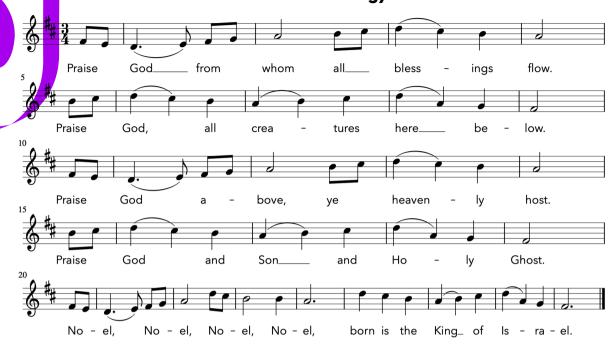
Let's give with joyful hearts, that others may benefit from the Gospel of Jesus Christ and God's realm be made real. We will now collect the morning offering.

OFFERTORY

SPON

*PLEASE RISE IN BODY OR SPIRIT





*O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM ST. LOUIS



*PLEASE RISE IN BODY OR SPIRIT

DEINEDICTION

POSTLUDE

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LAY LITURGIST: Katie Hall

GREETER: Marc & Lu Poitras

COUNTERS: Elaine Smith, Carol Ryley

OFFERING: Judy Haines, David Day, Sandra Alvord, Ronda Mandel OUR FAITHFULNESS ATTENDANCE LAST WEEK 130

AVERAGE THIS MONTH

YTD INCOME \$265,108

BUDGET NEEDED \$288,711

YTD EXPENSES \$295,221 THE ONE LINK THAT RULES THEM ALL!

LINKTR.EE/WESTFIELDUCC

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES:

We LOVE kids at Westfield. Children are welcome to stay through the whole service. If your child is more active, relax! We believe God put the wiggles and giggles in children. Don't feel you have to suppress it in God's house. All are welcome!

Sit toward the front where it is easier for your little ones to see and hear what's going on at the altar. They tire of seeing the backs of others' heads.

Quietly explain the parts of worship. Sing the hymns, pray, and voice the responses. Children learn liturgical behavior by copying you.

If you have to leave the service with your child, feel free to do so, but please come back. As Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me."

Remember that the way we welcome children in church directly affects the way they respond to the Church, to God, and to one another. Let them know that they are at home in this house of worship.

THE REV. DR. JONATHAN CHAPMAN



The Rev. Dr. Jonathan Chapman graduated from Candler School of Theology, Emory University, in May 2019 with his Doctor of Ministry in Biblical Witness and Proclamation. His capstone work, The Year of Mark, received the People's Choice Award among his cohort. While at Candler for his Master of Divinity (May, 2010), he was active with the Office of Worship, and was awarded the Hoyt Hickman Award for Outstanding Liturgical Scholarship. Jonathan is a 2007 Congregational Fellow and 2006 Undergraduate Fellow with The Fund for Theological Education. He graduated from Elon University in 2007 with a degree in Religious Studies. At Elon, he was selected as a Leadership Fellow and was awarded the W. L. Monroe Christian Education and Personality Award in the 2007. While at Elon he joined Elon Community Church, United Church of Christ, the congregation in which he was ordained.

Jonathan joined Westfield in October of 2012 and was officially installed as Pastor and Teacher in May of 2013, presiding over its revitalization. In October of 2022, he celebrated a decade with Westfield.

He was selected to be a part of the Next Generation Leadership Initiative, a program sponsored by the Pension Boards of the United Church of Christ that works with young clergy committed to parish ministry through a decade-long relationship. Dr. Chapman consults with congregations on a variety of topics ranging from revitalization to worship to marketing their churches. He married his husband, Greg (pastor of Enfield Congregational Church, United Church of Christ in Enfield, CT), in December of 2014 at Westfield. Jonathan is an award-winning stained glass artist.

Rev. Jonathan's Onsite Hours are Monday-Thursday, 9am-12pm. His additional work day is Sunday, when he is available by appointment. His days off are Friday and Saturday.

Find time with Rev. Jon by scanning the QR code or going to calendly.com/revjonchapman

Contact info for Rev. Jonathan: (o) 860-774-8438 (m) 770-265-2171 (text ok) (e) jon@westfielducc.org



All of the Congregation The Rev. Dr. Jonathan Chapman Kevin Williams Sue Theroux Donna Bartholomew Jessica Payette Michelle Plasse



Ministers Pastor Director of Welcome Director of Music Director of Children Church Administrator Facilities Caretaker