



CHURCH OF CHRIST, CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, NEWINGTON, CT

BELFRY ECHOES

WINTER 2024



**WE ARE AN OPEN AND
AFFIRMING CONGREGATION**

Worship Service |
Every Sunday at 10:00 am

Communion Service |
1st Sunday each month

Rev. Melanie Enfield, *Senior Pastor*
menfield@newingtonucc.org

Tobey Aubert, *Program & Outreach Coordinator*
taubert@newingtonucc.org

Peter Niedmann, *Organist and Director of Music*
pniedmann@newingtonucc.org

Rev. Dr. Kenneth C. Brookes, *Pastor Emeritus*
kennethcbrookes@gmail.com

Michelle Dixon, *Office Manager*
officeadmin@newingtonucc.org

Bria Shaw, *Administrative Assistant*
bshaw@newingtonucc.org

Mary Jane DiPaola, *Finance*
mjdiapaola@newingtonucc.org



Like us on Facebook

1075 Main Street
Newington, CT 06111

 www.newingtonucc.org

 churchofchrist@newingtonucc.org

 860.666.4689

 860.666.5871

Advent Message

FROM THE PASTOR

We soon will be entering the Advent season, it comes with a lot of hustle and bustle, but also deep meaning. This year our theme is: Follow the Star, a path to new beginnings. Advent is a season of endings and beginnings. As the calendar year comes to a close, a new church year begins. Christ's birth ushers us into new ways of living and loving; and yet, the world as we know it spins madly on. In many ways, pregnant Mary was surrounded by endings—large and small, personal and political. But Mary proclaimed hope in a God who was and is making all things new. She offers a path to guide us.

Christ's birth was a beautiful new beginning for shepherds and Magi alike—all the while, King Herod tried to bring Christ's story to an end. When we ourselves navigate seasons filled with endings and beginnings, we need reminders. We need words that can feel like steady ground, like a path for our feet to find as we step forward into the unknown. This Advent season we will be offering words to guide and direct us as we follow the star to the baby in the manger.

Serving together, Melanie

Rev. Melanie Enfield
PASTOR

FOLLOW THE STAR

ON THE PATH TO NEW BEGINNINGS
ADVENT PREACHING SCHEDULE

DECEMBER 1ST

I am a Blessing, You are a Blessing

Luke 1:26-38; Isaiah 43:1-7

DECEMBER 8TH

We Belong to One Another

Ruth 1; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

DECEMBER 15TH

Do the Good that is Yours to Do: I can do something that matters.

Luke 3:7-16; Isaiah 58:9b-12

DECEMBER 19TH | 7PM

Longest Night Service

DECEMBER 22ND

Hope is worth the Risk

Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:46-55

DECEMBER 24TH | 5PM

Christmas Eve Family Service

DECEMBER 24TH | 10PM

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

DECEMBER 29TH

Receive

Matthew 2:10; Luke 2:10

JANUARY 5TH "STAR SUNDAY"

The Road is not Straight

Matthew 2:1-12; Isaiah 43:16-21

*All Sunday Morning Worship Services at 10am

Music news



Christmas
BY CANDLELIGHT

Concert of music for the season with choirs, orchestra, handbells, children, and organ. Singalong carols for the audience.

PETER NIEDMANN - MUSIC DIRECTOR

DECEMBER 8 - 4:00

Church of Christ, Congregational
1075 Main Street, Newington, CT
newingtonucc.org

FREE CONCERT

Sunday, December 8 at 4:00, our choirs perform with orchestra, directed by Peter Niedmann. A beautiful assortment of carols for Handbells, Youth Choir, and Adult Choir. Music of Handel, Rutter, Forrest, and more. Sing-along favorites for audience. Sanctuary is lit by candlelight. A perfect way to get in the holiday spirit! Bring family and friends. **FREE CONCERT**



CONCERT RECEPTION



The Music Board and Choirs request your assistance for the Christmas by Candlelight Concert on **Sunday, December 8, 2024. The concert starts at 4:00 PM.** Immediately following the concert, there will be a reception. We would appreciate baked items, desserts, snacks, finger type foods, appetizers and sandwiches. Items can be brought to the Church on Sunday and labeled concert.

You can email me at bogh@sbcglobal.net. There will also be a sign up sheet in the Narthex. Thank you in advance for your help!



Night of Lights

Again, this year our church will have a significant role in the Newington Night of Lights. Main Street is closed for the event – right in front of our church.

This is a great community outreach activity – and it's a lot of fun!

Where: Here at church.

When: Friday, December 6th, (two one-hour shifts: 6PM to 7PM and 7PM to 8PM).

What: Volunteer opportunities during each shift are for:

Serving Cocoa

Distributing Candy Canes

Live Nativity (Mary, Joseph, Shepherds, Magi)

Sanctuary Greeter

Who: You!

How do I sign up: Put your name on the signup sheet in the Narthex.

Be a part of this great community event!

THE CHRISTMAS FUND FOR THE VETERANS OF THE CROSS AND THE EMERGENCY FUND



The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas “Thank You” gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees. United Church of Christ congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. Thank you! **Envelope Enclosed**



SAVE THE DATE
COMMUNITY DINNER
JANUARY 4 | 4:30 PM

2024

COOKIE WALK

DRIVE-THRU

It's that time of year again! Our annual Cookie Walk is December 7th and we need LOTS of cookies! Time to get out your favorite recipes. Cookie containers are available in Fellowship Hall until we run out, so stop down and pick up a few. This is a very popular community event and we appreciate your help in making it a success! Any questions, please contact Judy Warren 860-550-3160 or warren.jh4@gmail.com.

Saturday, December 7th, 9am The Cookie Walk is a drive-thru event with pre-boxed (3 sizes) homemade cookies available for purchase. We sell out every year so we need lots of homemade cookies to support this church fundraiser! This is a very popular community event and we appreciate your help in making it a success!



Help Decorate A GINGERBREAD HOUSE

Help Decorate a Gingerbread House! Join us on December 15th following worship during coffee hour in Fellowship Hall. Small houses will be supplied, all you need to do is bring a bag of candy to share. During this holiday season, we decorate our homes and we are grateful for the warmth and safety they provide. Decorating Gingerbread Houses together will remind us that "God's house" is open to all, and is a place where new relationships are built, and where we find belonging and hope.

Plan to join us on the Dec. 15th.



GINGERBREAD NIGHT AT MELANIE'S

SALT will be gathering at Rev. Melanie's house to make Gingerbread houses and have dinner and discussion together. Students please bring candy to contribute toward decorations! Gingerbread houses will be provided! **Sunday, December 1st at 5pm**



CHRISTMAS CAROLING



Both Middle School students and High School students will be joining together on **December 15th at 4:30** to prepare to go Christmas Caroling for folks in our church and the Newington community.



Calling All Angels, Shepherds and Kings!



On Sunday, December 24th at 5pm we will present the "Nativity Story in Tableau" during our Christmas Eve Family Worship service. Children and their parents are invited to come to the church just prior to the service to choose their costumes (we'll have helpers here to assist you!) and then the children will sit with their families for the start of the service. Everyone will have a chance to take part in this special retelling of the Nativity Story! More information will be sent via email to our Church School Families soon!

Middle School and High School students who would like to be readers for our live telling of the birth of Christ during our 5pm Christmas Eve service, please sign up in the Narthex. If needed, we will have a short practice session on Sunday, December 22nd after the worship service.

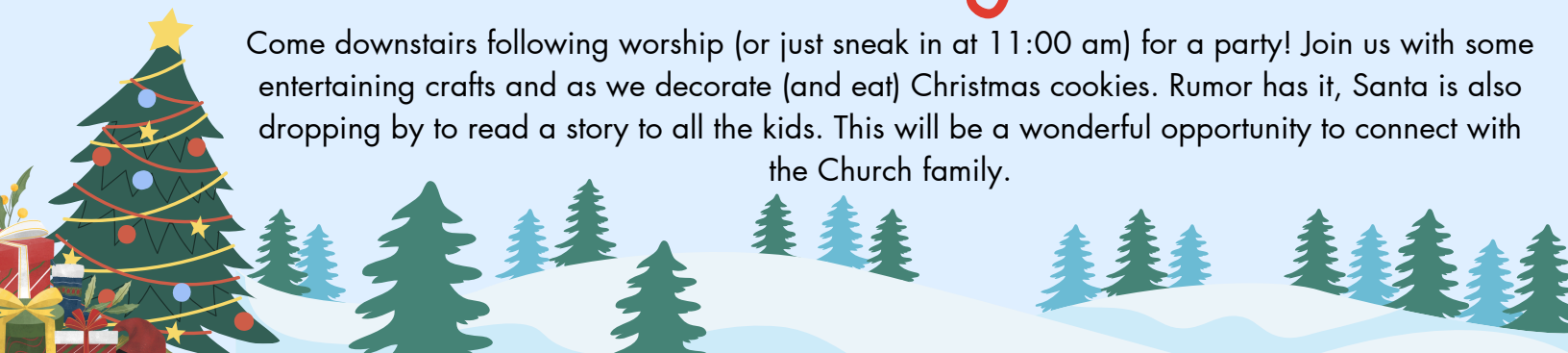


CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Christmas Party

DECEMBER 8TH
11AM

Come downstairs following worship (or just sneak in at 11:00 am) for a party! Join us with some entertaining crafts and as we decorate (and eat) Christmas cookies. Rumor has it, Santa is also dropping by to read a story to all the kids. This will be a wonderful opportunity to connect with the Church family.



LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE

Thursday, December 19th at 7:00PM

We invite you to come to one of the most beautiful services of the year. The holiday season is not always bright and cheery for all. So on December 19th we will gather to offer a time and place for people to grieve, to reflect, to slow down, to pray and light a candle for hope. The sanctuary is beautiful at night, the music is soothing and the community is healing. If you are available, come on join us at 7:00 pm.



FAMILY SERVICE
DECEMBER 24, 2024 | 5PM

Christmas EVE



CANDLELIGHT SERVICE
DECEMBER 24, 2024 | 10PM

GUIDED BY THE LIGHT STAR SUNDAY CELEBRATION

Sunday, January 5, 2025 | 10AM

On Epiphany, we remember the wise men who traveled great distances to offer their gifts to the newborn Christ. They received God's gift, then offered their gifts to God. On January 5th, we are receiving star words during our worship service.

During our Star Sunday celebration, we will recognize our young adults (18-24 year olds.) we invite them to come, sing, and receive a blessing that day.

If you would like to share how your star guided you through 2024 on that Sunday, please email Rev. Melanie menfield@newingtonucc.org



**CHURCH OF CHRIST
CONGREGATIONAL**
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
NEWINGTON, CT

1075 Main Street, Newington, CT 06111-2997

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Pledge envelopes for 2025 will be available for pickup in the hallway near the South entrance by Dunkin Donuts)



Christmas Memorial Fund

Each Christmas we have memorial poinsettias in the Sanctuary during our Christmas Services. It is a chance to memorialize loved ones during the Christmas season. After the Christmas Service, the plants are delivered to members in our congregation who are bereaved, ill, or are no longer able to attend services. Funds that are collected in excess of the money needed to purchase the plants will be donated to various missions of the church. If you wish to make a contribution, please make your check payable to Church of Christ, Congregational, put "Christmas Memorial Fund" on the memo line, and return it along with this completed form to the Church Office by

Sunday, December 15th.

PLEASE ACCEPT MY CONTRIBUTION OF: (check one) ...



\$15.00

Additional Donations \$

... TO THIS YEAR'S CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL FUND

PLEASE PRINT NEATLY

CONTRIBUTION FROM:

IN LOVING MEMORY OF: (one name per line unless it's a couple)

PLEASE give us your name and phone in case we have any questions.

NAME:

PHONE: