

**THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF VERNON, UCC**

~Fourth Sunday of Advent ~

December 20, 2015

**WELCOME!**

*We're glad you are here.*

<b>PRELUDE</b>	"Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" "Joyous Christmas Bells" "Carols of the Bells"	Bach Broughton Ritter
<b>Bell Choir</b>	"Silent Night" "Adeste Fideles"	arr. Wagner arr. Lorenz

**WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**WELCOMING the LIGHT of CHRIST**

**\*CALL to WORSHIP** (*Isaiah 7:14*) Judy and Hannah Ramsdell and Pat Aldrich

Leader: We look for an extraordinary sign of hope for our world but God's sign is most ordinary of all:

**People: A young woman is with child.**

Leader: We look to power for strength in our world but God points to the most vulnerable:

**People: She gives birth.**

Leader: We look far and wide for a key to God's mystery, but God points us home:

**People: She calls this child Immanuel: God-with-us!**

Leader: Let us rejoice, and worship our God

**People: in our ordinary, vulnerable lives: God-with-us!**

**\*OPENING HYMN** #170 "How Great Our Joy!"

**ADVENT WREATH**

**The Candle of JOY** (*from Luke 2:10*)

Reader 1: "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.'"

Reader 2: As Christmas draws near there is a sense of excitement in the air. We can feel the stir of joy in our hearts, and see it in the faces of others. We light this candle today, reminded of the words of the angel so long ago, "I bring you good news of the great joy which shall be for all the people."

*Lighting the Candle of Joy (in silence)*

Prayer (*unison*)

**O God, in happy anticipation we await the coming of Christ. Where once there was darkness, you have given us your great light. Fill our hearts with the joy of knowing your presence in our lives, and work through us to make your presence known in the whole world. Amen.**

**Hymn Response** #467 "Fill the World with Love" (*vs.4*)

*Let us hesitate no longer in our doubt and our dismay; there's a pow'r at work within us that has promised a new day. And the time will surely come, it will not be long delayed when God fills the world with love, when God fills the world with love.*

**JUNIOR CHOIR** "Jesus Christ Is Born Today" G. Grier/D. Wagner  
*accompanied by Hand Bell Choir Members*

**TIME with the YOUTH**

**The LORD'S PRAYER** (*unison*)

***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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.***

**\*GLORIA PATRI**

***Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.***

**SCRIPTURES** Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah 7:14 (*p. 636*)

**\*HYMN** #162 "What Child Is This" (*vs. 1*)

*What child is this who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping? Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?*

*This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing: haste, haste to bring him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary.*

New Testament: The Gospel of Matthew 1:18-25 (*p. 1*)

**SERMON** "What Child Is This?" Rev. Suzanne Personette

**\*HYMN** "Star-Child" (*insert*)  
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**SHARING of JOYS and CONCERNS**

**MORNING PRAYER**

**PRAYER RESPONSE**

**CALL to OFFERING**

**OFFERTORY** "Sing We Now of Christmas" arr. Fettke/Grassi

**\*DOXOLOGY**

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

**\*PRAYER of DEDICATION** (unison)

With these gifts, dear God, accept the praise and thanksgiving of our hearts, which rejoice in your goodness and love. Let our gifts point to your presence in the world, and further your dream for the world through Jesus, Emmanuel, *God-with-us*. Amen.

**\*CLOSING HYMN** #143 "Joy to the World"

**\*BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE** "Joyful Tidings and Christmas Joy" Moffatt/Ritter

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon us, because he has anointed us to bring good news to the poor. He has sent us to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. ~ based on Luke 4:18-19*

**\*All who are able are invited to stand.**

Join us for coffee and conversation after the service in Fellowship Hall.

**In Our Ongoing Prayers . . .**

**Deb Hampton's friend Juan** passed away leaving his wife and two teenagers; **Judie Peterson**, Cheryl Purnell's cousin, on the loss of her son; **remembering Sandy Hook; Canada's welcome of Syrian refugees; recent climate change agreement; First Responders; Kathy Oliphant**, sister-in-law of Millie and Bill Oliphant, recovering from breast cancer surgery; San Bernardino, CA; stricter gun laws; tolerance of religious diversity/skin color/sexual orientation; remembering our widows and widowers; Jeannie and Ernie Uthgenannt; Bertha Sullivan; Terri Carr; David Hollister; Daniel Burnett-Pollock; Emmalee Watkins; Bess Howe; Dave Toolan; Lillian Morse; Debbie Chase; Dick Myer, Margaret Klukas; Candy, Lynette Melanson's sister; Dave Boucher; Joyce Smith; Gilmay Markunas and family; Pat Lazeren; Bobby Dwire; Warren Little; Tom Fitzgerald; Melinda Singh; Paul Westerberg; people struggling with mental illness; Ed Rockland; the people of Syria, including the family of Tarek Eid; Heidi Howie; Wendy Parker; Rachel Andrews; Carol Shea; Bobby Kelley; Nancy Bailey; Will Fisher and Jessica Surratt; Mason Bower; Debbie Marshall; Michael Turner; Richard Brooke; Ray Turner; Martha Fowler; Michael Bebrin; Thelma Gifford; Cooper Doyle; Horst Pohlmann; John Kaminski

*New additions in bold print*

**Joyful Noise Bell Choir Members:** Dave Bower, Michelle Bower, Jane Burr, Margaret Klukas, Althea Madigan, Stacy Melanson, Joanne Myer

**Greeters and Coffee Hour:** Furnishings & Memorials and Library Committees

**~ ANNOUNCEMENTS ~**

**TODAY'S ACTIVITIES**

**Junior Choir Rehearsal:** 11:30 a.m., PF Room

**Sunday School Christmas Eve Rehearsal:** Noon-3 PM

**J\*Walkrz:** 3:30 PM, Fellowship Hall

**THIS WEEK'S ACTIVITIES**

**Bible Study:** Monday, December 21, 11 a.m., Library. **Please Note:** Join us for a short, unique Christmas video that will put you in the Christmas spirit.

**Men's Breakfast Group:** Tuesday, December 22, 6:30 a.m., Vernon Diner

**Ladies Luncheon:** Tuesday, December 22, noon at Mitchell's. Anyone needing a ride should call Jan Muro at 860-872-1757. Please sign up in Fellowship Hall.

**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES**

**Children's Pageant – "Twas the Light Before Christmas"**

Thursday, December 24, 5:30 p.m.

*Be a part of a fun, unique celebration of Jesus' birth.*

**Candlelight Service**

Thursday, December 24, 11 p.m.

**Our Christmas Eve offering** at the 5:30 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. services will go to the Christmas Fund of the United Church of Christ. This fund supports monthly pension supplementation for 325 lower-income retired UCC clergy and lay employees, quarterly health premium supplementation for 209 lower-income retired UCC clergy and lay employees, emergency grants for 50 active/retired UCC clergy and lay employees. If you would like to write a check, we'd ask that you make it out to FCCV and in the memo please put *Christmas Fund*. Thank you so much for your gift of compassion!

**Lessons and Carols:** Sunday, December 27 during the Worship Service

**Transition Team Informational Meeting:** Sunday, January 10 in Fellowship Hall after Coffee Hour. **Child Care will be provided?**

**Thank you from Women's Fellowship** to those who baked for our Cookie Sale. We really appreciate your time and energy during this busy time of year. We sold out!

**To my church family:** This year instead of sending greeting cards, I will make a donation to Pay It Forward. Best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy 2016. Paul Shimer

**Please Note:** To request a visit with one of the pastors, please contact the Church Office at 860-875-7580.