

First United Methodist Church
of Shelton, Connecticut
Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.



December 22, 2024 at 10:00 AM – 4th Sunday of Advent

Revised Common Lectionary Texts:

Micah 5:2-5a | Luke 1:46b-55 | Hebrews 10:5-10 | Luke 1:39-45

Prelude: "What Child Is This?"

16th Century English Melody

Welcome & Announcements

Centering Prayer

***Call to Worship:** "Canticle of Mary/Magnificat"

UMH 199

Musical Response: The glory of the Lord shall be revealed; all flesh shall see it together.

Leader: My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord.

People: My spirit rejoices in God my Savior, who has looked with favor on me, a lowly servant.

L: From this day all generations shall call me blessed:

P: the Almighty has done great things for me and holy is the name of the Lord, whose mercy is on those who fear God from generation to generation.

L: The arm of the Lord is strong and has scattered the proud in their conceit.

P: God has cast down the mighty from their thrones and lifted up the lowly.

L: God has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich empty away.

P: God has come to the aid of Israel, the chosen servant, remembering the promise of mercy, the promise made to our forebears, to Abraham and his children forever.

Musical Response: The glory of the Lord shall be revealed; all flesh shall see it together.

Prayer of Confession (Unison)

UMC Discipleship Ministries (adapted)

Holy God, you promised to do great things for us, yet we do not trust you. You extend your mercy to us, yet we do not trust you. You lift up the humble, you fill the hungry with good things, and yet we still do not trust you. Forgive us and help us to trust in the promises you have given us. Open our eyes to the small miracles and promises kept all around us. In the name of Jesus Christ or Lord, we pray. Amen.

Moment of Silent Confessional Prayer & Words of Assurance

Prophet's Proclamation: Micah 5:2-5a

This is the Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God

Lighting of the Fourth Advent Candle: The Keller Family

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 9:6-7

***Opening Hymn:** "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

UMH 234

Epistle Lesson: Hebrews 10:5-10

This is the Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Children's Message: "Promise Kept"

Children's Hymn: "God Is So Good" (verses 1-3)

TFWS 2056

***Gospel Reading:** Luke 1:39-45

This is the Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon: "Where Two are Gathered"

Anthem: "Love Has Come"

Words Ken Bible, Traditional French Carol

Prayers of the People, Pastoral Prayer, and The Lord's Prayer

Passing of the Peace

Invitation To Offer Our Gifts

Offertory: "He Shall Feed His Flock"

Handel

***Presenting Our Gifts:** "Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow." UMH 95

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

***Prayer of Dedication**

UMC Discipleship Ministries (adapted)

God of grace and wonder, we offer these gifts in response to your call. As Mary responded with faith, we too say, "Here we are, let it be to us." Use these offerings to further your saving mission on earth. Empower us to be bearers of Christ's presence, bringing hope and love to our community. May our giving reflect the promise of Emmanuel, God with us, and bring light and joy in this Advent season. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

***Sending Hymn:** "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

UMH 230

Benediction

Postlude: "For Unto Us A Child is Born"

Handel

*Please stand in body or spirit as you are able.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING BOX UPDATE

Thanks to all who brought food for the Blessing Box to worship on the 15th! Every item helps as we reach out in Christian love to help our neighbors. Please continue to watch for sales of nonperishable items that are always needed by people in our community. YOU are a blessing to others with this simple act.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP AT 4:30 PM

Last year's Christmas Eve worship at 4:30 PM was well received, so we are doing it again. Please invite family, friends, and neighbors to this joyous worship service filled with song and praise. Of course, we will be closing with candlelight and "Silent Night." Do plan to attend. Personal invitations from our congregation are the BEST way to attract people to worship. **ALL are welcome.**

DONATIONS FOR GARDNER HEIGHTS & BISHOP WICKE EMPLOYEES

The Mission team will be delivering gift baskets of treats to the employees that will be working on Christmas Eve at Gardner Heights and Bishop Wicke Health Center. This is one way we're sharing the love and joy of Christmas with our neighbors and showing our appreciation for the work that they do.

If you would like to add to the baskets, items can be brought to church over the next two weeks. We'll be delivering the baskets before our Christmas Eve Service at 4:30P.M. Appropriate treats would include packaged cookies, candies, snack bars, nuts and fruit.

NEW STUDY IN JANUARY - GREAT RESPONSE - PLEASE JOIN

Pastor Bill wants to hear from you about your interest in a study of Adam Hamilton's *Making Sense of the Bible*. He has already heard from several people who will join and are looking forward to our study. **PLEASE express your interest by December 29 so we can get the materials ordered.**

Adam Hamilton, the book and study's author, is an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church and a prolific author with a long list of books and studies to his credit. His teaching is clear, accessible, and consistent with the theology of the United Methodist Church.

This study will be held biweekly (every other week) over six Wednesday evenings via Zoom. The first session is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, January 8. (Tentative schedule: Jan 8 & 22, Feb 5 & 19, and Mar 5 & 19.)

Books will be provided with funds from our education account, so you do not need to worry about the cost of materials to attend. Just let us know if you want to participate.

Please watch the YouTube informational video to see if the topic interests you. It is here: https://youtu.be/XL31pUOUw_U

If you are interested or have questions, please contact Pastor Bill.
Thanks!

Please Keep in Your Prayers

Cindy Iorfino's Family
Stuart Oja's Family
Jim Rackiewicz's Family

Ron Giannattasio
Linda Loglisci
Elaine Wood
Jean Ovesny
Roseann & Bob Haakerud
Phil Easman
Bob Singletary
Nancy Hauser

Rev. Doug & Carol Osgood
Mary Ann Miller
Kati Welch
Trudy Bicknell
Judy Laing
John & Mary Ann Shail
Jim & Barbara Stinson
Carol & Rudy Shook
Robyn Bicknell
Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton
Rev. Alpher Sylvester

TO REACH PASTOR BILL

Please call or text 475-282-2800. He may also be reached via email: pastor@umcshelton.org. His office hours at the church office are Mondays and Fridays from 8:30 am to 1:30 pm (but may vary from week to week).

WEEKLY EMAIL NEWSLETTER

An email newsletter is sent out each Wednesday. Please have any items for submission to the church office by Wednesday at 9 am. If you are not receiving the emails, sign up on the church website or drop a not into the collection plate with your name, email address, and an indication that you want to receive the weekly update.

SERVING TODAY:

Bill Florin, Pastor
Ron Giannattasio, Organist
Chris Craft & Daniella Natividad, Liturgists
Sal Iorfino, Video & Sound Tech

CHURCH LEADERSHIP:

Bill Florin, Pastor
Ron Giannattasio, Organist
The Rev. Doug Osgood, Interim Director of Music

Bob Singletary, Chair. of Church Council
Elaine Wood, Chair. of Staff Parish Relations Committee
Bob Wood, Chair. of the Board of Trustees

WELCOME

We welcome you to our worship and our church community. We are so glad you are here. We invite you to participate in the service as much as you feel comfortable and to sit out parts of the service you might not yet feel comfortable with. Wherever you are in your journey of faith, you are welcome here. As our "Welcoming Statement" says, "We welcome **all** to full inclusion in the life and ministry of our church."

(see below for complete "Welcome" and "Mission" statements)

**SUNDAY WORSHIP // 10:00 also live-streamed & recorded
Fellowship 11:00 am**

Welcoming Church Statement

A welcoming family of God committed to becoming more and more like Jesus Christ.

We affirm and respect each individual as a child of God. We celebrate the uniqueness of each person and welcome people of every age, ethnicity, and race, sexual orientation and gender identity, marital status, socio-economic situation, and physical/mental ability.

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we strive to create a community of faith that reflects Christ's message of love and justice. We invite all to full inclusion in the life and ministry of our church in Christ.

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF SHELTON
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PHONE: (203)929-3537 WEB: UMCSHELTON.ORG

O Come, All Ye Faithful UMH 234

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.
Come and behold him, born the King of angels;

Refrain:

O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.

True God of true God, Light from Eternal,
Lo, he shuns not the Virgin's womb;
Son of the Father, begotten, not created;

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;

See how the shepherds, summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze;
we too will thither bend our joyful footsteps;

Child, for us sinners poor and in the manger,
we would embrace thee with love and awe.
Who would not love thee, loving us so dearly?

God Is So Good (verses 1 – 3) TFWS 2056

God is so good,
God is so good,
God is so good,
God's so good to me.

God cares for me,
God cares for me,
God cares for me,
God's so good to me.

God loves me so,
God loves me so,
God loves me so,
God's so good to me.

O Little Town of Bethlehem UMH 230

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie;
above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars together, proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth!

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given;
so God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!