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

Belfry Echoes

ADVENT 2025



WE ARE AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

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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***
mjdipaola@newingtonucc.org

1075 Main Street
Newington, CT 06111

www.newingtonucc.org

churchofchrist@newingtonucc.org

860.666.4689

860.666.5871

what child is *this?*



Message FROM THE PASTOR

This Advent, our theme is borrowed from one of our beloved Christmas carols: What Child Is This? This familiar song invites us to look beyond the lullaby and truly consider who Jesus is, and who we are called to become as faithful witnesses to his good news. Advent is often described as a season of waiting. And yet, we cannot wait to have hope. We cannot wait to live with joy. We cannot wait to share love or to seek peace. Our world is longing for all of this right now, and the church is called to live it boldly and generously.

My prayer is that our worship this season will offer space to breathe deeply, to find comfort, to be assured of God's presence, and to be challenged as we prepare our hearts for Christ's birth. Our sanctuary will be beautifully adorned, inviting each of us to pause, remember the sacred, and rediscover the holy in the midst of our harried days.

This is a season meant to be shared. Consider who you might invite, a neighbor, a friend, a family member, to join you in worship, either in person or online. Come and experience the wonder of Advent, the beauty of community, and the joy of preparing together for the Christ who comes to make all things new.

May this season bring meaning to each and every one of us,

Rev. Melanie Enfield
PASTOR

Advent Preaching Schedule

DECEMBER 7TH
The Silent Word
Luke 1:5-25
Rev. Melanie Enfield

DECEMBER 14TH
The Son of Mary
Luke 1:26-56
Rev. Melanie Enfield

DECEMBER 21ST
Enthroned by Love
Matthew: 1: 18-25
Rev. Melanie Enfield

DECEMBER 22ND | 7PM
Longest Night Service

DECEMBER 24TH | 5PM
Christmas Eve Family Service

DECEMBER 24TH | 10PM
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

DECEMBER 28TH
I Will
Matt. 8:1-4; John 11; Matt. 10:13-16
Tobey Aubert

JANUARY 4TH "STAR SUNDAY"
The Light that Leads Us Forward
John 1:10-18
Rev. Melanie Enfield

***All Sunday Morning Worship Services at 10am**

MUSICNews





Sunday, December 14 at 4:00, our choirs perform with orchestra, directed by Peter Niedmann. Carols for the season with choirs, handbells, organ, orchestra *and* carol sing-alongs. Music of Handel, Rutter, Forrest, Brahms, Niedmann and more. 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 14, 2025. 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.

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 5th, (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 Giving Tree

The Christmas season is a special time of year, a time for gathering with family and friends. As we come together to celebrate this year, let's also take the opportunity to help those in need. Please support our community by grabbing a gift tag from the Giving Tree which will be in the narthex from November 23rd until December 14th

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We will again be supporting Newington Human Services, the Friendship Center and Family Promise (soon to be Neighborhood Promise). Please note that the tags are color coded to each organization. Red tags are for Newington Human Services, yellow tags are for the Friendship Center, and green tags are for Family Promise (soon to be Neighborhood Promise). Shopping lists will also be available at the Welcome Center in the Narthex. Please remember to attach the gift tag to your unwrapped item and leave it in the marked containers in the Narthex.

COOKIE WALK

Saturday, December 6th | 9am - 12pm

It's that time of year again! Our annual Cookie Walk is going back to the "choose your own cookies" format! There will be 3 box sizes available. Come early as we sell out quick!



GINGERBREAD *House Exhibit*

Display your creation and SHARE it with the community at the Night of Lights Fesitval.

All ages and skill levels welcome.

Bring your Holiday Masterpiece to the Church on Thursday, December 4th (anytime between 12:00 & 8:00 p.m.). Please put your gingerbread house on a sturdy foundation.

Questions? Need more information?
Contact: Kara Russell (thectrussells@gmail.com)

Gather55
NOURISH·CONNECT·GIVE

Free Timers Luncheon

You are invited to have lunch at Hands on Hartford! This amazing non-profit does it all, from assisting those with food insecurity, to housing needs, to social service navigation and so much more. Mark your calendars to enjoy a fabulous lunch at their restaurant and take a tour of there facility as you hear and see first hand the care they give to those in need. Look for the Sign up sheet in the Narthex.

Thursday, December 4th 11:30 -1:00pm
Gather55, 55 Bartholomew Avenue, Hartford, CT

Dinner & Conversation 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 7th at 5pm





Christmas Caroling

Both Middle School students and High School students will be joining together on **December 21st at 5:00pm** 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.

Christmas Party

DECEMBER 7TH | 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

Monday, December 22nd 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 22nd 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.

Christmas EVE





FAMILY SERVICE
DECEMBER 24, 2024 | 5PM

CANDLELIGHT SERVICE
DECEMBER 24, 2024 | 10PM

Guided By The Light
STAR SUNDAY CELEBRATION

Sunday, January 4, 2026 | 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 4th, 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 2026 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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United Church of Christ congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years, caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 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**

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 14th.

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: _____