



*The order of service is subject to change at the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Italicized Bold print invites congregational response in unison.

*Means you are **invited to stand** if able and comfortable.

Large print hymnals, large print bulletins, service script, pew cushions, and Listening Assistance Devices are available at the entry of the Sanctuary

You're encouraged to check-in at New Milford UMC on Facebook & share our livestream.

WE GATHER TOGETHER

Prelude

Harlan Otter

Words to Ponder:

Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son. You shall name him Immanuel. When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded. Today, the promise of new life comes to us. How will we receive it? How will we claim it? How will we live it?

Welcome and Announcements

Introit

"We Three Kings"
by John Henry Hopkins, Jr.

Bell Choir

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Bonnie Weed & Family

***Call to Worship**

Martha McMahan

O God, hear our call.

Stir up your strength and come to save us!

Restore us, O God.

Let your face shine, that we may be saved.

For we know that new life is coming.

A child will change us all.

Let your hand be upon him in blessing.

For he will bring you near.

He will be God-with-us.

Give us life, O God, and we will forever call on your name.

***Opening Prayer**

Holy One, you send us new life in so many forms. Open our minds, that we may recognize it. Open our hearts, that we may receive it. Open our bodies, that we may embrace it. Open our souls, that we may live it. Open us this day and all days. Amen

***Hymn of Praise**

"Shine, Jesus, Shine"

TFWS#2173

***Passing of the Peace Of Christ**

Pastor Ed

Children's Message

Pastor Ed

WE HEAR THE WORD

Prayer of Confession (in unison)

Martha McMahan

O God, you bring us life in ways we do not even realize, in forms we do not always understand. We are so busy, the moments moving faster each day. We do not always pay attention to your

presence when it comes. Often we cannot see what is right in front of us. We are asleep, even when awake. And grace slips by us, unrecognized and unrequited. We miss the opportunity to find you in one another. We waste our chances for love. We put you to the test, not with our unbelief, but with our distraction. We think we are too busy for you. But you, God, still choose us. You take our struggles and turn them into strengths, calling us apostles, making us friends. You put your own self right into our hands, trusting that we can notice your gifts, recognize their meaning, and make a place for them in our lives. Forgive us, God, for our distractions. Slow our stride and calm our souls. Remind our busy brains that there is nothing we have to do to be loved by you, nothing we have to make or even be. For your new life is coming even now, waiting to make us whole. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Pastor Ed

Hymn of Response

"What Child is This?"

UMH#219

Scripture Reading

Romans 1:1-7

Martha McMahan

Salutation

1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, **2** which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, **3** the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh **4** and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit^[a] of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, **5** through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the gentiles for the sake of his name, **6** including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

7 To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Musical Interlude)

***Gospel Reading**

Matthew 1:18-25

Martha McMahan

The Birth of Jesus the Messiah

18 Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah^[a] took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. **19** Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. **20** But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. **21** She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." **22** All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

23 "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." **24** When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord

commanded him; he took her as his wife **25** but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

Reflecting on God's Message "Your Own Personal Gift from God" Pastor Ed
Prayers of the People Pastor Ed
Invitation of the Offering Pastor Ed
Offertory Anthem "Mary, Did You Know?" Chancel Choir
arr. Bruce Greer

***Doxology** "Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow" UMH # 95
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

Offering Prayer Pastor Ed
Gracious One, you have restored us in body and in soul. You have given us abundant life, more than we could have ever imagined. You have made your face shine upon us to make us whole. Holy One, bless now the offerings of our hearts and lives, that we might shine as you shine, and share your blessings with others. Amen.

WE RESPOND TO THE WORD

***Sending Hymn** "Alleluia, Alleluia" (v1,2&4) UMH#162

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
Do not let us fall into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

Benediction

Postlude Harlan Otter

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Pastor Ed Dayton - 860.354.4596 | Music Director, Harlan Otter | Liturgical Arts, Barbara Williams
Liturgist - Martha McMahan
Ministers: *All members of the New Milford UMC*



* Wesley, Frank, 1923-2002. Blue Madonna

Fourth Sunday of Advent | 12.18.2022 | 9:30 am

You are invited to worship with us in the quiet of prayer, in the joy of song, and in the desire to grow in the grace and knowledge of our LORD Jesus Christ. Part of our mission is to be a place for all people. All are welcome here! Whatever your gender identity, age, race, religious background, economic status, sexual orientation or condition of ableness, we greet you as a beloved child of God.