



**\*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 NMUMC on Facebook & share our zoom recorded service.

*WE GATHER TOGETHER*

**Prelude** Harlan Otter

**Words to Ponder:**

God is the potter; we are the clay. May God fashion us into vessels of beauty and purpose this Advent season.

**Welcome and Announcements**

**Lighting of the Advent Wreath** The Lora Family

**Introit** "Stille Nacht" Chancel Choir  
by Franz Xaver Gruber

**\*Call to Worship** Chuck Samson

The Lord of hosts redeems us when we stray.

**With a mighty arm, God comes to save us.**

When God hid his face, we strayed.

When God withdrew her presence, we stumbled.

**God has fed us with the bread of tears and given us tears to drink in full measure.**

Yet, through his Son, God calls us back from the pit and restores our future.

**God shines upon us with love, that we might be saved.**

Come! Let us worship.

**\*Opening Prayer**

God of glory, your power darkens the skies and causes the moon to grow dim.

When we scatter to the four winds, gather us from the ends of the earth and restore us as your people.

Awaken us from slumber, that we may be found ready when the master of the house returns.

Amen.

**\*Hymn of Praise** "Come Thou Long Expected Jesus" UMH#196

**\*Passing of the Peace Of Christ** Pastor Ed

**Children's Message** Pastor Ed

*WE HEAR THE WORD*

**Prayer of Confession (in unison)** Chuck Samson

The mountains quake at your presence, O God.

The nations tremble at your feet.

Rather than rejoicing in our salvation, we have wandered from your path and lost our way.

Tear open the heavens and come down, Mighty One, as you did of old.

Awaken our world from slumber, and help your people stand in awe at your glory.

May your refiner's fire purify us of our transgressions, that we might be reshaped into vessels worthy of your kingdom. Amen.

**Words of Assurance** Pastor Ed

**Hymn of Response** "Great is Thy Faithfulness" UMH#140

**Prayer of Illumination (in unison)** Chuck Samson

O God, you are the potter; we are the clay.

As we listen for your word of life this day, fashion us into vessels fit for your purposes.

For we are your people, and you are our God.

**Scripture Reading** 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13 Chuck Samson

**9** How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? **10** Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

**11** Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. **12** And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. **13** And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.[<sup>a</sup>]

*(Interlude)*

**\*Gospel Reading** John 1:1-5 Chuck Samson

**The Word Became Flesh**

**1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being **4** in him was life,<sup>[a]</sup> and the life was the light of all people. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

**Reflecting on God's Message** "Young Billy Walsh." Pastor Ed

**Prayers of the People**

**Invitation of the Offering** Pastor Ed

**Offertory Anthem** "Do You Hear What I Hear?" Chancel Choir  
by Gloria Shayne

**\*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  
You have enriched us in every way, O God, through our faith in Christ Jesus.  
You have granted us grace and blessed us with every spiritual gift.  
In gratitude for your many blessings, we offer our tithes and offerings this day.  
Enrich and bless these gifts, that they may go into the world and help build your kingdom. Amen.

### **COMMUNION**

Musical Setting B

**Communion Anthem** "One Bread, One Body" UMH#620

### **WE RESPOND TO THE WORD**

**\*Sending Hymn** "Soon and Very Soon" UMH#706

**Benediction**

**Postlude** Harlan Otter



# **First Sunday of Advent**

## **12.3.2023 | 9:30 am**

68 Danbury Road, New Milford, CT 06776 | [www.newmilfordumc.org](http://www.newmilfordumc.org) | 860.354.4596  
Pastor Ed Dayton - 860.354.4596 | Music Director, Harlan Otter | Liturgical Arts, Barbara Williams  
Liturgist – Chuck Samson | Acolyte – Colin  
Ministers: *All members of the New Milford UMC*

*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.*