



**The “Red Door” Church
First United Presbyterian Church**

381 Main Street, Oneonta, NY 13820

www.reddoorchurch.info

**7:00 PM on Christmas Eve
Wednesday, December 24, 2025**

Thais Burkhalter, Liturgist
Jean Giuda, Director of Music/Musician
Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Walton-Leavitt, Pastor

THE LITURGY

Order of Worship

*** - You are invited to stand.**

OneLicense.net #A-724947

All rights reserved.

SENTENCES OF MEDITATION

In the West, the traditional telling of the birth story of Jesus is overlaid with mythology. Some of these are so old and so pervasive that they are unconsciously affirmed.

~"The Manger and the Inn" by Kenneth E. Bailey

PRELUDE (Bells/Organ) (G144)

In the Bleak Midwinter

Gustav Holst

GATHERING

WELCOME, everyone, to this time of worship. We are delighted to have you with us this evening! We are here to praise God and to enjoy one another's fellowship as we serve both God and our neighbor.

In-person worship is in the Sanctuary. Face masks available.

OR, join us online or by phone using Google Meet.

Every Sunday -- Same Link: meet.google.com/viu-hpxa-mjq

By Phone: +1 301-857-2390 // PIN: 931 769 968#

As always -- all are welcome. Invite a friend to join us!

See Calendar at end of the worship portion of this bulletin.

Let us now prepare our hearts for worship by listening to the Introit.

INTROIT

In the Bleak Midwinter / Still, Still

Holst/Austrian carol

ADVENT WREATH CELEBRATION: Christ Candle

Emma Kirsch, Fran Puffer

One of the gifts of celebrating Advent each year is the reminder that the gift of Jesus is given to us -- and for us -- again and again. We are always discovering anew the depths of God's love through the gift of Jesus Christ. Hope, peace, joy, and love make up the path we walk through Advent in anticipation of the coming Christ child.

Candle Lighting: *The purple and pink candles are lit.*

Reading: Luke 2:1-20

Once again, we experience Christmas with music, readings, and memories.

Tonight, we will hear a part of the familiar story using different versions of the Bible. Listen now to part of the Gospel of Luke, chapter 2, from *The Voice translation (2008)*.

Narrator: Around the time of *Elizabeth's amazing pregnancy and John's birth, the emperor in Rome, Caesar Augustus*, required everyone in the Roman Empire to participate in a massive census – ² the first census since Quirinius had become governor of Syria. ³ Each person had to go to his or her ancestral city to be counted.

⁴⁻⁵ Mary's fiancé Joseph, from Nazareth in Galilee, had to participate in the census in the same way *everyone else did*. Because he was a descendant of *King David*, his ancestral city was Bethlehem, David's birthplace. Mary, who was now late in her pregnancy *that the messenger Gabriel had predicted*, ⁶ accompanied Joseph. While in Bethlehem, she went into labor ⁷ and gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped the baby in a blanket and laid Him in a feeding trough because the inn had no room for them.

Reflect: Jesus Christ is born today! Hope, peace, joy, and love are gifts from God that draw us to his manger scene. They are also the gifts we take forward with us into a new year.



Candle Lighting: *The Christ candle is lit.*

Prayer: Let us pray.

On this holy day, I open my heart to you, Lord Jesus. Help me sense your presence.
Grant me hope in chaos -- peace in the face of fear --
joy each day to move forward -- and love to show me the way.
Guide my steps, Lord that I may live as you would have me live.
And let all the people say: **Amen.**

Practice: Read the Nativity story in Luke 2:1-20 each of the twelve days of Christmastide – using different translations, if you can. Note any words that stand out to you. Write them down and use them to compose prayers for the year ahead that will help you discern how God is speaking and calling to you.

Credit: Advent words by The Upper Room Daily Devotional Guide © 2025

Reminder: This evening we are using the **BLUE** hymnals –
All are invited to sing Hymn No. 40 – *Joy to the World!* – verses 1 and 2

* PH Hymn No. 40 (vs. 1 & 2) ***Joy to the World!*** Watts/Handel

**Joy to the world! The Lord is come: Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room, And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing, And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.**

**Joy to the world! The savior reigns: Let us our songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

WORD

Please join me in reading our Prayer of Illumination. [PAUSE] ***Let us pray...***

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION (*in unison*)

**By the light of the Holy Spirit shining in our midst --
open our hearts and minds, O God, to your Word --
present now and always for the sake of your holy name. Amen.**

**Listen for the Word of God from Small Man to Big Man (*Paul to Titus*), chapter 2,
from the First Nations Version of the New Testament, a dynamic translation.**

EPISTLE READING: Titus 2:11-14 – *Walking with Wisdom* (FNVNT) Liturgist

¹¹ For the gift of Creator's great kindness that sets people free has shined its light on all human beings. ¹² It instructs us to turn away from all that does not honor our Creator and from the desire to walk in the ways of this world. It instructs us to walk with straight and firm steps on a good and sacred path in this present world. ¹³ For we are looking and waiting for the blessing of the bright-shining appearance of the one who set us free and made us whole -- our Great Spirit, Creator Sets Free (Jesus) the Chosen One. ¹⁴ He paid the highest price to set us free from all our wrongdoings and purify for himself a people whose hearts burn with fire to do good deeds.

This is the Word of the Lord. [PAUSE] ALL: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL READING: Luke 2:1-7 (FNVNT – *Humble Birth*)

¹⁻² When the time drew close for Bitter Tears (*Mary*) to have her child, the government of the People of Iron (*Romans*) ordered that the people be numbered and put on government rolls. This happened during the time that Powerful Protector (*Quirinius*) was the governor of Bright Sun (*Syria*). ³ All the Tribal Members were required to travel to their own ancestral village to register.

⁴⁻⁵ He Gives Sons (*Joseph*) and Bitter Tears (*Mary*) set out on a long journey from Seed Planter Village (*Nazareth*) in Circle of Nations (*Galilee*), to House of Bread (*Bethlehem*) in the Land of Promise (*Judea*), the village of their ancestor, the great chief Much Loved One (*David*).

⁶ The time for Bitter Tears (*Mary*) to have her child was upon her! ⁷ But no place could be found in the lodging house, so He Gives Sons (*Joseph*) found a sheep cave where it was warm and dry. There she gave birth to her son. They wrapped him in a soft, warm blanket and laid him on a baby board. Then they placed him on a bed of straw in a feeding trough.

EVENING REFLECTIONS

Pastor Walton-Leavitt

*** PH No. 28 (vs. 1 & 2) *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice* Trans. Neale/German folk**

Good Christian friends, rejoice With heart, and soul, and voice;

Give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today;

Ox and ass before Him bow, And He is in the manger now.

Christ is born today! Christ is born today!

Good Christian friends, rejoice, With heart, and soul and voice;

Now ye hear of endless bliss: Jesus Christ was born for this!

He hath opened heaven's door, And we are blest forevermore.

Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!

THANKSGIVING

EVENING PRAYER and THE LORD'S PRAYER (*PH pg. 16 - traditional*)

...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.



CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE: Gloria, Gloria (*PH No. 576*)

Glo-ri-a, glo-ri-a, in ex-cel-sis De-o!
 Glo-ri-a, glo-ri-a, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia!

CHRISTMAS OFFERING

Tithe and Offering Options:

Sanctuary: Offering plates are near the exit doors.

- U.S. Post to FUPC at 2 Walling Ave., Oneonta, NY 13820
- QR Code (*Quick Response Code*): Our **new** unique code is →
- Vanco Mobile Faith app - Downloaded to Smartphone. Type in "Oneonta" to find us.
- Computer: **Our New web address for donation** - change to Vanco app: <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZD01>
- Bill Pay: Use your bank's online bill pay system
- Electronic funds transfer: Set up from your savings or checking account



ANTHEM

Christmas Blessing

Besig/Price

PRAYER of DEDICATION of the GIFTS

The WORD continues

THE LIGHT FORETOLD

Isaiah 9:2-7

PH Hymn No. 9

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Latin, 12th century

(please remain seated)

**O come, O come, Emmanuel, And ransom captive Israel,
 That mourns in lonely exile here Until the Son of God appear.**

Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

**O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer
 Our spirits by Thine advent here;
 Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
 And death's dark shadows put to flight. *(Refrain)***

**O come, Desire of nations, bind All peoples in one heart and mind;
 Bid envy, strife, and discord cease;
 Fill the whole world with heaven's peace. *(Refrain)***

THE LIGHT ANNOUNCED

Matthew 1:18-25

*** PH Hymn No. 44 (vs. 1 & 2) *O Little Town of Bethlehem* Brooks/English folk**

**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!**

~~~~~

**THE LIGHT GIVEN**

**Luke 2:1-7**

**PH No. 37 *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly* Polish carol**  
*(please remain seated)*

**Infant holy, Infant lowly, for His bed a cattle stall;  
Oxen lowing, little knowing Christ the Babe is Lord of all.  
Swift are winging Angels singing,  
Noels ringing, Tidings bringing:  
Christ the Babe is Lord of all.  
  
Flocks were sleeping; Shepherds keeping  
Vigil till the morning new.  
Saw the glory, heard the story, Tidings of a Gospel true.  
Thus rejoicing, Free from sorrow,  
Praises voicing Greet the morrow:  
Christ the Babe was born for you.**

~~~~~

THE LIGHT GLORIFIED

Luke 2:8-20

*** PH No. 22 (vs. 1 & 2) *Angels, from the Realms of Glory***
Montgomery/Smart

**Angels from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation's story Now proclaim Messiah's birth.**

***Refrain:* Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King!**

**Shepherds, in the field abiding,
Watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing;
Yonder shines the infant light: *Refrain***

~~~~~

**THE LIGHT SPREAD ABROAD**

**Matthew 2:1-12**

**PH No. 53**

***What Child Is This***

*Dix/English ballad*

*(please remain seated)*

**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?**

***Refrain:* This, this is Christ the King,  
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
Haste, haste, to bring Him laud,  
The Babe, the Son of Mary!**

**Why lies He in such mean estate,  
Where ox and ass are feeding?  
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here  
The silent Word is pleading. *Refrain***

**So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh,  
Come one and all, to own Him.  
The King of kings salvation brings;  
Let loving hearts enthrone Him. *Refrain***



**CANDLELIGHTING CEREMONY**

*(As the music starts, the candle lighting will begin.)*

**SILENT PRAYER**

**HYMN *(remain seated)* Silent Night, Holy Night**

*Mohr/Gruber*



**Poinsettias** this year have graciously been given by:

The Brown family, *in memory of* Rennie Brown, Rennie's Parents, and Larry's Parents  
Thais Burkhalter, Scott Genardo, Abigail Mack, *in memory of* Erin Samantha Scott Pfoutz  
and Mary Scott Burkhalter "Nana"

Emma Kirsch, *in memory of* Joan Wood

The Morell family, *in memory of* Norine Allen

The Rothermel family, *in memory of* Carroll & Mildred Lehman



***Donors may pick up a poinsettia after worship this evening.***

**Thursday and Friday, December 25<sup>th</sup> & December 26<sup>th</sup>**

**Church Office Closed** in observance of Christmas.

### **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28<sup>th</sup> – First Sunday of Christmas**

Lectionary: Isaiah 63:7-9; Psalm 148; Hebrew 2:10-18; Matthew 2:13-23

**10 AM Morning Worship:** All invited to bring favorite Nativity stories and/or hymns.

Liturgist: Thais Burkhalter

**Choir on holiday break** until Wednesday, January 7<sup>th</sup> rehearsal.

**Thursday and Friday, January 1<sup>st</sup> and 2, 2026**

**Church Office Closed** in observance of New Year.

### **SUNDAY, JANUARY 4, 2026 – Second Sunday of Christmas**

Lectionary: Jeremiah 31:7-14; Ps 147:12-20; Ephesians 1:3-14; John 1:(1-9) 10-18

Epiphany (Jan. 6): Isaiah 60:1-6; Ps 72:1-7, 10-14; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12

**10 AM Morning Worship** focus will be on the Epiphany (January 6<sup>th</sup>) passages  
including visit of the Magi (wise ones) with the Holy Family. Liturgist: TBA

**Saturday, January 10<sup>th</sup>**

**Deadline for 2025 Giving to our Church** – donations may be received and recorded  
after which year-end statements will be prepared. If you would like your donation credited  
for 2025, be sure to date your check December 31, 2025 or before.

### **SUNDAY, JANUARY 11<sup>th</sup> – Baptism of the Lord**

Lectionary: Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29; Acts 10:34-43; Matthew 3:13-17

**10 AM Morning Worship including Sacrament of Holy Communion.** Liturgist: TBA

If joining us online or by phone, please have Communion elements near you --  
preferably bread and juice or wine.

**2026 Church Directory** is being compiled. Any changes in your contact info?

Please check with Carol in the church office to make sure we have them!

Call Carol at (607) 432-7520 or write to her at [reddoorchurch@stny.rr.com](mailto:reddoorchurch@stny.rr.com)

Please notify Pastor Walton-Leavitt at 607-242-8184 (cell) or [cynuff@aya.yale.edu](mailto:cynuff@aya.yale.edu)  
OR Carol Sprague, Office Administrator, at 607-432-7520 or [reddoorchurch@stny.rr.com](mailto:reddoorchurch@stny.rr.com)  
in case of illness or need of pastoral care.