

Year's Eve, New Year's Day, or a Sunday early in the year. The heart of the service, focused on the Covenant Prayer, requires persons to commit themselves to God and asks congregants to participate sincerely. Please join us for this important and meaningful service.

Church Office Closed—The Church Office will be closed December 29th and 30th so that our office staff may enjoy the holidays with their families. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Meetings & Opportunities this week:
TODAY at 6:00 pm Light Supper in Fellowship Hall, sponsored by SPR
 at 7:00 pm Blue Christmas in Sanctuary
Mon., Dec 22 at 10:30 am Tai Chi in Fellowship Hall
 at 6:00 pm Open Door Band in Sanctuary
 at 7:00 pm Wesley Group in Classroom
Tues., Dec. 23 at 3:00 pm "Our Daily Bread" in Food Barn
 at 4:00 pm Girl Scout Troop 40213
 at 7:00 pm Church Council in Fellowship Hall
Wed., Dec. 24 at 5:30 pm Christmas Eve Contemporary Service
 at 7:30 pm Christmas Eve Traditional Service
 at 9:30 pm Christmas Eve Service of Lessons and Carols
Thurs., Dec. 25 MERRY CHRISTMAS
Sun., Dec. 28 at 10:00 am Joint Worship Service

Monday - Friday at noon AA meeting in Fellowship Hall

To view the most recent calendar, visit our website—
www.newmilfordumc.org/calendar.html

Advent Worship Services and Special Events
December 21—Blue Christmas Service
 6:00 p.m. light supper
 7:00 p.m. service
December 24—Christmas Eve Services
 5:30 p.m.—Contemporary Worship
 7:30 p.m.—Traditional Worship
 9:30 p.m. - Service of Lessons and Carols



**The Open Door
 Contemporary Worship
 11:30 am**

...in a religion born in a barn,
 an open door goes without saying

song 10
 song 29

"as we gather"
 "God of wonders"

welcome & announcements

passing the peace

song 72 emmanuel

lighting of the advent candle the martin family
 (see insert)

song 72 emmanuel

song 37 "what you are"

contemplative moment

song 26 "power of your love"

gospel lesson luke 1:26-38, 47-55
page 56 in the new testament in your pew Bible.
 the word of God for the people of God.
thanks be to God.

presentation of the offerings

children's message

message "waiting for fresh hope" rev. paul a. fleck

anthem "drift away"

joys & concerns

song "hark the herald angels sing" (see insert)
 song 24 "trading my sorrows"

sending forth

9:30 a.m. Ushers — Mike and Shawn Martin
9:30 a.m. Liturgist—Pat Tripp
11:30 a.m. Ushers —The Kolitz Family



The Service of Worship
 New Milford United Methodist Church
 68 Danbury Road
 New Milford, CT 06776
www.newmilfordumc.org
 860-354-4596

Rev. Paul A. Fleck, Pastor
 Sandy Lybe, Music Minister
 Brinna Kolitz, Youth Leader
 Emily Nixon, Open Door Band Leader

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 21st, 2014 at 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, age, race, religious background,
 economic status, sexual orientation or condition of ableness,
 we greet you as a beloved child of God.*

ENTRANCE AND PRAISE

Prelude

Announcements

Processional "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" ES IST EIN ROS
Hymn #216

Call to Worship

Leader: Light the lamps, prepare the room, God is coming to us!
People: Make our hearts and spirits ready to receive God's most gracious gift, God's Son, Jesus Christ.
 Leader: Push the darkness away. The light of love is truly coming!
People: May God's love light shine on us, in us and through us that God's glory may be seen. Amen.

Prayer for Illumination

We gather in preparation
For good news is about to be proclaimed.
 We gather in expectation
For joy is about to break forth in our midst.
 We gather in celebration
**For we are those people who have said yes to the manger,
 Yes to the one incarnate for others,
 Yes to the wholeness of God.**
 In preparation and expectation, let us celebrate!

Old Testament Lesson 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
Page 281 in the Old Testament in your pew Bible.

Please stand as you are able for the Gospel readings.
Gospel Lesson Luke 1:26-38, 47-55
Page 56 in the New Testament in your pew Bible.
 The Word of God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God.
All Sit.

CHILDREN'S CHURCH

The children are invited to come forward and sit at the chancel with the pastor as the congregation sings the first verse of Hymn 191, "Jesus Loves Me."

Children's Sermon

Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

OFFERING

Invitation to Offering

Offertory

Please stand for the Doxology

Presentation

**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.**

Offering Prayer

All Sit.

Anthem "Angel Carol" PAGE
The children are invited to go out to Sunday School after the Anthem.

Prayer

Gracious God, your servant Mary discovered new life growing within her and knew it to be your promised presence. In tender reverence for the holy mystery of your Incarnation, may we be as a womb for your blessed presence, ready to receive and nourish your Word in our lives, open to the stirrings of your Spirit within us. May we faithfully bear your love in the world, that by your grace Christ may be born in us.
Amen.

RESPONSES

Hymn 211 "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" VENIE EMMANUEL
Stanzas 1, 2 & 3

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Are you ready for love to come down at Christmas?

We're ready for Christmas right now. Don't the gifts we've bought demonstrate our love? Don't the carols we sing reflect our love?

But do you have enough love to welcome Christ, God incarnate, into your hearts and lives?

We want love to come into our lives. We want to prepare ourselves for love to come down at Christmas.

Love will come down at Christmas. Let us light the candles of Peace, Hope, Joy and Love as a sign that we are preparing for the love of Christ in our midst.

Love is coming!

Hymn 211 "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" VENIE EMMANUEL
Stanza 4

[The First, Second, Third, and Fourth Advent Candles are lighted - the Candles of Peace, Hope, Joy, and Love]

Please stand as you are able for the hymn.

Hymn #218 "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear" CAROL

Morning Prayer

Joys and concerns are lifted before God and the congregation.

Pastoral Prayer

Prayer of Confession

It's getting harder and harder to focus on the true meaning of Christmas, the incarnation of God's love in the birth of God's Son Jesus Christ. We are caught in the web of festivities, travel, gifts, and glitter. And we have to admit that we really do enjoy all the holiday opportunities. But as we get closer to the big family celebrations and the actual celebration of Christmas, we begin to wonder how we are going to "survive" it all. We say to ourselves, "We won't let all this stress happen to us next year." But we know better. We allow ourselves to be continually drawn in to the demands of others, leaving little or no time for ourselves, our families, and especially for You, gracious God. Forgive us. You are all too familiar with our reasons and excuses for what is happening. Help us to make some changes in our lives and our focus, so that this time of celebration may have the deepest sense of joy and purpose, not just be the rush and clamor of yet another holiday season that disappears all too quickly. Keep us focused on the eternal "yes" response to your call to us, to live our lives as those who would joyfully serve You. Heal and comfort us, Lord, this day and always. For we ask this in the name of Jesus, our Savior. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Passing the Peace

The light and hope of Christ lives in each of us.
The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

The congregation joins in repeating Psalm 19:14

Let the words of my mouth,
**and the meditation of my heart,
be acceptable in your sight, Lord,
my strength and my redeemer.**

Sermon "Waiting for Fresh Hope" Rev. Paul A. Fleck

Litany

Leader: Darkness was over the world before creation. God called for Light and it was given. Bright, beautiful, warm, powerful. Are you ready to receive the Light?

People: We want to be ready.

Leader: Words of praise and community became words of anger and division. God's light shone but humankind covered their faces, hid themselves behind masks of prejudice and indifference. They needed the light, but turned their backs on it. Are you are ready to receive the Light?

People: We want to be ready.

Leader: Conquest, turmoil, abuse, fear covered the land. Hope was a dimly flickering flame, hidden deep within some hearts, extinguished in others. Darkness was again gaining a foothold in all the lands. Cries were heard "O Lord, how long will you hide your face from us?" But it was not God who was hidden. It was the hearts of the people, hungering and fearful. Are you ready to receive the Light?

People: We want to be ready.

Leader: In the fullness of time, God again sent someone who is to be the Light to the world. This someone is God's Son Jesus, who teaches us how to live, how to witness to God's love, and how to serve. This is the true light, which illumines everyone. Are you ready to receive the

Light?

People: Lord, help us to be ready. We so easily live in the darkness and long for the true Light. Open our eyes, our hearts, our ears, and our spirits. Help us to witness to Your most blessed gift, your Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

Please stand, if you are able, to sing the hymn.

Hymn #234 "O Come, All Ye Faithful" ADESTE FIDELES

SENDING FORTH

JOYS AND CONCERNS

our prayers are with:

- Art Carlson's brother-in-law, Sven, who is in Danbury Hospital and very ill.
- Steve Bowers who is now on dialysis and has been added to the transplant list.
- Anne Meehan's nephew, Scott, whose brain tumor was found to be malignant, but treatable.
- Kimber's friend, Linda, who has health issues which postponed her surgery.
- Roberta Buddle's niece, Cindy, who is undergoing chemotherapy.
- Roberta Buddle's niece, Wendy (Cindy's sister), who had a double mastectomy.
- Dorothy O'Rourke whose cancer has returned.
- Glenn Knapp, who fell and broke his hip, and is recovering in Village Crest.
- Laurel Partrick's cousin, Cynthia, is facing her third recurrence of cancer.
- Emily Nixon's cousin, who has been diagnosed with cancer.
- Steve and Adrienne Kern's friend, Steve, who has prostate cancer.
- Marlene Davis' son, who is undergoing chemotherapy.
- Kay Jones' niece, Sherri, whose cancer has returned.
- Jan and Gene Parsons' friend, Brad, whose cancer has returned.
- Sue Sterling's cousin, Mary, who has lung cancer.

Our Life in Community

For more information about any item listed below, please contact the Church Office at 860-354-4596 or office@newmilfordumc.org

Christmas Tree Sales are underway! A sign up form is available in the Narthex, or contact Dave Kullgren at 860-354-1102 or dkullgren1102@charter.net.

Advent Giving Program—The Missions Committee will be offering cards that you can give to your friends and family stating that you have given a monetary gift in their honor to a mission organization. The cards will not have a monetary amount attached to them; you may give any amount of money to one or more charities and receive as many cards as you like. Catalogs and order forms are also available on the church website—www.newmilfordumc.org. You may mail your order form to the church with payment and pick your cards up on Sundays between services. For more information, please contact Tracie Nixon at tracienix@gmail.com or 860-355-8628.

December 28 Joint Worship Service at 10 a.m.—Our founder John Wesley established Covenant Services as an important part of early Methodist life. The first Methodist Covenant Service was held August 11, 1755. Wesley found the service rich and meaningful. Eventually these services came to be held on New