

*Please rise in body or in spirit

Prelude – “Watchman, Tell Us of the Night” Parry/arr. Mansfield

Greeting

This is the day that the Lord has made.

Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Opening Hymn – “Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart”

Call to Worship

Now the Lord who made you has this to say: “Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name, and you are mine.

We hear the one who calls us by name, but we are still so often afraid.

May the spirit of God move in this place: the spirit of faith, not fear; the spirit of looking ahead and not backward.

Lord, remind us again that you walk with us, whether we pass through the waters or walk through fire.

We will not fix our eyes on the former things but point our gaze toward the new miracle that God is working for us!

We will look ahead with hope, peace, and joy and be unafraid.

Handbell Introit – “Processional on ‘O Come, O Come, Immanuel’”
arr. Lorenz

Opening Prayer

God of Dreams, from ages past you have done great things for your people. Awaken us to the dawn of your upcoming glory as we wait and watch in this Advent season. Fill our mouths with laughter, our tongues with shouts of joy, and our hearts with compassion for the least of these. As we worship you, pour out your courageous spirit upon us, that we may be signs of your everlasting love for all who suffer in this beautiful world you created. Amen.

Advent Wreath Lighting, Candle of Joy Loiselle Family
Response - “Come, Lord Jesus, We Are Waiting” vs. 3 Christopherson
Unison Prayer

God, we sometimes have a hard time looking ahead. We worry about what we have forgotten, or what we have done wrong, or what we have not done at all. Help us to let go of the past and look forward, trusting in the new things you are doing all the time. We give thanks for the joy of the season and for all the ways we can bring joy to others while we wait. Amen

Passing of Peace

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Call to Prayer

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Prayer of the People (see last page)

The Lord’s Prayer

Offertory Reflection

Handbell Offertory - “Change Ring Prelude on ‘Divinum Mysterium’”
Gramann

Doxology

Prayer of Dedication

Gracious God of deep joy, even when storms rage and doubts rise, you call us to see with kingdom eyes—to look for healing, hope, and signs of your grace breaking in. In this Advent season of expectation and weariness, we bring these gifts as expressions of joy, rooted not in ease but in trust. May our giving bear witness to your good news: that the blind still see, the lame still walk, and the poor still receive care. Use these offerings and us as signs of your coming reign, lights in the storm, and carriers of joy. In the name of Jesus, our hope and our Redeemer. Amen.

Hymn - “It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”

Gospel Reading – Matthew 1:18-25**

Sermon Series – Based on Erin Wathen’s *Calling All Angels*
Rev. Megan Stowe

Closing Hymn - “You Are Mine”

Announcements

Benediction

And God’s people say: **Amen.**

Benediction Response – “Emmanuel” McGee/arr. Ingram

Postlude – “Angels from the Realms of Glory” Smart/arr. Thygerson



**After the scripture readings, please respond, “Thanks be to God.”

We extend a warm welcome to all who are attending our worship service this morning in person, on Zoom, or watching later via a video link.

The Flowers on the altar this morning are given to the Glory of God by Robin and Peter Orford, Happy Christmas to all!

Today – Festival Ringers

Acolyte – Josephine Ciardi

Lay Reader – Kathy Ha

Minister of Music – Karen Leonard

Pastor – Rev. Geisa Matos

Guest Pastor – Rev. Megan Stowe

Worship Resources

- Call to Worship - Erin Wathen's *Calling All Angels*
- Prayer of Dedication – UMC Discipleship Ministry Worship Planning, Dec 14, 2025

THIS WEEK AT WEST CHELMSFORD UMC

Sunday, December 14th, 3rd Sunday of Advent

9:30 AM, Worship Service In-person and via Zoom

10:00 AM, Sunday School, in the Education Wing

10:30 AM, Coffee Hour in the Vestry

2:00 PM, Cub Scouts Pack 70 Tiger Den Meeting in the Education Wing, Classroom 1

7:30 PM, Finance Committee Meeting via Zoom

Monday – 6:30 PM, Cub Scout Pack 70 Arrow of Light Den Mtg., in the Education Wing, Classroom 6

6:45 PM, Cub Scout Pack 70 Bear Den Mtg, in the Education Wing, Classroom 1

7:30 PM, Jubilee Ringers Rehearsal in the Sanctuary

Tuesday – **7:30 PM, Church Administrative Council Meeting via Zoom**

Wednesday – 6:30 PM, Cub Scout Pack 70 Wolf Den Meeting in the Education Wing, Classroom 1

7:30 PM, Festival Ringers Rehearsal in the Sanctuary

Thursday – **7:30 PM, Senior Choir Rehearsal in the Choir Room**

Friday – Cub Scout Pack 70 Webelos Den Meeting in the Education Wing, Classroom 1

Saturday – 11:00 AM, Private Event in Fellowship Hall

Sunday, December 21st, 4th Sunday of Advent, Cantata Sunday

9:30 AM, Worship Service In-person and via Zoom

Ongoing Prayer Requests

- Victims of the earthquake in Alaska
- World peace and conflict in the Middle East and Ukraine
- All who are sick, mourning, and/or lonely

Article Submission Due Dates

- Articles for the **mid-week email** are due in the church office by **9:00 AM on Monday**.
- Articles for the **church bulletin insert** are due in the church office by **9:00 AM on Tuesday**.
- Articles for the **January 2026 Newsletter** are due in the church office by **Monday, December 15, 2025**.

Altar Visuals: As we enter the Advent season and contemplate the arrival of the baby Jesus, our altar visuals will center on the theme of angels. Angels, intermediaries between God and humans, are mentioned numerous times throughout the Bible. While popular culture often portrays angels with wings, halos, and as female figures, biblical accounts describe them differently—as shining, glorious messengers, frequently appearing as male. Each Sunday, the altar will highlight a different character visited by the Angel Gabriel and the significance of his message. In these encounters, Gabriel's words often begin with, "Be not afraid," offering comfort and hope as God's promises unfold. May these visuals invite us to reflect on God's messengers and the profound messages they bring during this sacred time.

Today we remember that an angel visited Joseph to let him know that it was right to marry Mary. This angel is not named but referred to as an "angel of the Lord". Again, the angel says, "Do not be afraid." Can you imagine what the world would have been like if Joseph had not gone against tradition and married Mary? On the curtain there are 3 more symbols, the **lamp** – Jesus, Light of the World, the **fish** – an early symbol of Christianity, the sign of **JOY** – to remember Mary's joy, "*my spirit rejoices in God my Savior*" **Luke 1:43**. Shepherds have been added to the manger as they now await Mary and Joseph.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES/EVENTS

Men's Group Study - We will continue our discussion of the 5 Masculine Instincts after the service on **Sunday, December 21st, at 11:00 AM**. We will be discussing Chapter 4 and the story of Sampson with regard to the Masculine Instinct of "Adventure". A short video for review will be shown prior to the discussion.

We will meet in the Youth Lounge. For those of you who do not have books or would like to invite a friend, please contact Bill Evans, 978-852-1456 or evans1818@verizon.net.

The sign-up sheet for the St. Paul's Meal is now online. To volunteer, please click on the link below. The St. Paul's Meal will be served on **Wednesday, December 24, 2025**. Thank you for your support of this important mission.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040448A8AB28AAFF2-60765043-stpauls>

2026 Flower Calendar – *The 2026 Flower Calendar is posted on the wall in the entryway.* Select a favorite date, write your name and phone number on the calendar. The flower arrangement each Sunday is \$30.00. Make your check payable to the church with a notation that it is for the altar flowers. If you have any questions, please get in touch with Diana Bard at 978-692-7668.

Poinsettias – The Christmas Poinsettia sign-up list is in the entryway. Flowers have been preordered for our December 21st worship service. There are only two red poinsettias left. Please indicate if you'd like to take it and enjoy it for the holidays, or give it to a sick or shut-in to make their holidays cheery and colorful. The cost is \$13.00 each. Please make your check payable to the church, with the notation "Christmas Poinsettias." If you have any questions, please contact Diana Bard at 978-692-7668.

Open Pantry Donations - The Open Pantry of Greater Lowell is currently in need of shelf-stable milk. Shelf-stable milks are safe to store at room temperature and can be purchased at Amazon, Walmart, Target, Whole Foods, Market Basket, and many other local stores. Donations of any unexpired, non-perishable food items are, of course, always welcome. Donations of goods should be placed in the large container outside the

back door of the church that is marked for Open Pantry, and monetary contributions can be mailed to the church or placed in the collection plate. Please be sure to annotate monetary donations for the "Open Pantry". Your generosity will be appreciated more than you know. If you have any questions, you may contact the Missions Committee.

4 Ways to Give to WCUMC

- **Mobile Giving** – Download the Tithely app. Fill out the Tithely secure donation transfer form. Enter donation and fee coverage (if desired)
- **QR Giving** – Using your phone's photo app, click the link after hovering over the QR code (see below). Fill out the Tithely secure donation transfer form. Enter donation and fee coverage (if desired)
- **Click "Give" or "Donate"** – Go to www.wcumc.us. Fill out the secure donation transfer form for PayPal or Tithely. For Tithely, remember the code number assigned for future login. Enter donation and fee coverage (if desired)
- **Cash or Check** – Place in the offering plate during the Worship Service or send your donation via the US Postal Service to WCUMC, 242 Main Street, North Chelmsford, MA 01863.

QR Giving Code:



Prayer of the People

Holy God of Hope, we praise you for your presence in our lives. We live within the promise of your steadfast love. Our fears rise and fall. Our worries crowd our hearts. Our strength feels fleeting.

Yet your Spirit grounds us. Your promises hold us. Your love reminds us that we are never alone.

We lift to you all who are suffering: those facing hunger, poverty, or displacement; those grieving loss, violence, or disaster; those longing for healing of body, mind, and spirit.

Pour out your courage upon us, that we may be agents of your hope. Living as witnesses of your peace, joy, and mercy in the world. In the name of Jesus, Emmanuel, we pray. Amen.

Congregation Caring needs your help!

If we can call on you to help out in one of the areas listed below, please check off one or as many ways to help us get things done. Fill in your name, phone number, and email so we can create our go-to list. Place it in the collection plate or hand it to the usher. Many hands lessen the task.

Thank you in advance for supporting your church family.

The following would be for a funeral happening at WCUMC:

- Can we call on you to make or purchase something in the event that a funeral meal will take place in Fellowship Hall
- Kitchen help and serve
- Set up
- Clean up

Can we call on you to...

- Deliver flowers
- Drive someone to an appointment, Sunday service, or another church event
- Deliver a meal when the need arises
- Bring a dessert or snack to Sunday coffee hour (one item to share)

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Your contact preference: (please circle) text, email, or phone call