

NIANTIC COMMUNITY CHURCH

An Open and Affirming/Reconciling congregation of the
United Church of Christ and the United Methodist Church

A Heritage of Faith since 1719 • Each Member a Minister

“Whoever you are;
wherever you are on life’s journey:
you are welcome here.”



December 26, 2010 • 9:00AM • *First Sunday of Christmas*

WE GATHER AS THE CHURCH

FOR YOUR REFLECTION

Mary, Mother of God,
we are the poor soil
and the dry dust;
we are hard with a cold frost.

Be warmth to the world;
be the thaw,
warm on the cold frost;
be the thaw that melts
that the tender shoot of Christ

piercing the hard heart,
flower to a spring in us.

Be hands that are rocking the world
to a kind rhythm of love;
that the incoherence of war
and the chaos of our unrest
be soothed to a lullaby;
and the round and sorrowful world
in your hands,
the cradle of God.

from “The Reed,” by Caryl Houselander

PRELUDE

“Infant Holy, Infant Lowly”

Linker

SHARING OF PARISH ACTIVITIES & RITUAL OF FRIENDSHIP

Those in each pew closest to the center aisle will please begin passing the Friendship Pads so that everyone has an opportunity to indicate their presence here today and make a note of any messages. After the sharing of parish concerns, all will be invited to greet one another in Christian fellowship and love. Prayer requests will be collected during the first carol.

INTROIT #220

“Angels from the Realms of Glory”

REGENT SQUARE

verse 1

RECEIVING GOD’S WORD AND CHRIST’S LIGHT IN OUR WORSHIP

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Christmas Day has come and gone. The waiting of Advent is over; the presents are all opened.

People: Visitors have come and gone. Only a few cookies remain! and we look towards the ordinary days of January.

Christmas Day has passed – but the story of wonder and joy has just begun. The glory revealed in Bethlehem is set loose on the world!

Christmas Day has passed, yet we are still pondering those wonderful things in our hearts, like Mary. The mysteries of faith will bring warmth into our winter, and brightness into the long nights.

All: Come, people of God, to sing the good news! Christmas Day has passed, but now Jesus is with us, for us to adore and follow!

✕ HYMN #246

“Joy to the World!”

ANTIOCH

Prayer requests will be collected.

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Eternal God, who can make all things new,
we humbly bring before you
the record of our lives in the year now ending.**

**Where life has been good to us,
let us recognize your goodness with awe:
a gift we could not earn.**

**Where we have been good to others,
help us to see how your spirit worked through us.**

**Where we have fallen short, forgive us,
and free us from brooding over what is past.**

**Cleanse us by your mercy,
guide us by your truth,
fill us with your love,**

**and make us worthy sisters and brothers
for the Holy Child, in whom we trust. In his name we pray; Amen.**

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Leader: The Word has become flesh and lives with us, bringing mercy and grace to cover every sin. Sisters and brothers, receive the loving gaze of the Christ Child, and know that we are forgiven.

All: Thanks be to God!

THE LORD’S PRAYER (*trespasses*)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE and PASTORAL PRAYER

WE PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL IN WORD

✧ HYMN #242

“Love Came Down at Christmas”

GARTAN

Children attending *Divine Activity Time* (for PreK–4th grade)
may leave during the singing of the hymn.

SCRIPTURE READING: Luke 2:41-52

Reader: Let us prepare ourselves for the Word of God as it comes to us in the reading of Holy Scripture.

People: Our hearts and minds are open.

A STORY

“This Is the Christmas”

John A. Nelson

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

for Joshua Daniel McNatt

LITANY OF BAPTISM

Pastor: We are gathered to present this child to the church and to dedicate him to God. What can we affirm about him?

People: That he is a child of God and made in the image of God.

As he grows in our congregation, how will he know that he is a child of God, made in God’s image?

We will give him our love and include him in the life and ministries of this church.

How will he learn of the Christian faith?

People: Through our teaching and the example of our lives. We will tell him about Abraham, the father of our faith; about Sarah, the mother of Isaac; about Moses and Miriam who led our ancestors out of bondage; about Ruth’s faithfulness; about the Jewish hope for a messiah; about Mary and Joseph’s openness to mystery; about our Savior, Jesus; and about the history of the Church as the people of God.

And what, in turn, will we expect of him?

We look forward to sitting with him at the Lord’s Table, sharing with him the costs and joys of discipleship, learning and growing with him in the Christian pilgrimage, and declaring with one voice our faith in God and God’s son, Jesus.

QUESTIONS OF THE FAMILY

QUESTIONS OF THE CONGREGATION

Deacon: And do you, the congregation of Niantic Community Church, pledge to work toward creating and maintaining a nurturing and challenging Christian environment for this child?

People: We do, for he belongs to us as well.

Then, may God be with us.

God help us. Amen.

POURING OF WATER and BAPTISMAL PRAYER

THE PRAYER AND ACT OF BAPTISM

RENEWAL OF THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

Pastor: May the Eternal God, who in Christ has given us new birth by water and the Spirit, now give us the grace we need to fulfill what we have promised.

People: Let us be faithful to our Savior Christ, for ever and ever.

CONGREGATIONAL WELCOME

Deacon: Now, with joyful hearts let us welcome the newest member of the body of Christ:

People: We rejoice in God's empowering love, freely given to each and all. We welcome you, Joshua, newly baptized, into the loving embrace of our church, which is called the Body of Christ. We promise to pray for you, to seek the depths of faith with you, to support you, and to love you. We covenant with you to love God with all our hearts, minds, souls, and strength, and our neighbors as ourselves. In this way we shall learn from one another, grow stronger, and more often be faithful to God as servants to all people. So be it!

✠ HYMN #249

*"There's a Song in the Air"
verses 1 & 2*

CHRISTMAS SONG

WE RESPOND IN PRAYER AND FAITH

OFFERTORY

Leader: We have heard the promise of the prophets; we have seen the bright glory shown to shepherds; we have watched the wonder of the Holy Birth; we have remembered how deeply God changed the world, by becoming one of us. Now, we follow. With these tithes and offerings we rejoice in the gift of God's very self, and we devote our own selves to God, first of all.

Let us gather our gifts together and offer them to God in gratitude and praise.

RECEIVING TITHES AND OFFERINGS

THE MUSICAL OFFERING “Star-Child” *Young*
(Adult Choir)

✠ CHRISTMAS DOXOLOGY OLD 100TH
**Praise God, the source of life and breath;
Praise Christ, new born to conquer death;
Praise Holy Spirit’s mystery;
One God, pure grace, to set us free. Amen.**

✠ UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION
**Loving God, out of your great love for the world, you have given us so much.
We respond by offering these gifts and our very lives, to spread the Good
News of Jesus’ birth. We pray for the strength of your Spirit to be faithful
witnesses, praising your name and proclaiming your realm, now and forever.
Amen.**

✠ HYMN #251 “Go, Tell It on the Mountain” *African American Spiritual*

✠ BENEDICTION AND THREE-FOLD AMEN (Hymnal, 898)

POSTLUDE “Once in Royal David’s City” *Linker*

**Please remain seated in silence during the Postlude
before going out to serve as Christ’s representatives in the world.**



WELCOME TO NIAN TIC COMMUNITY CHURCH!

A Heritage of Faith since 1719, and an Open, Affirming, and Reconciling congregation, Niantic Community Church is a part of both the United Methodist Church and the United Church of Christ. It is also a welcoming home to people from a great variety of church backgrounds and life experiences. Your presence here today is a gift to us! We hope you will feel God’s Spirit here today through our worship and fellowship.

If you are a visitor, we invite you to sign our guest register by the rear entrance to the sanctuary. “Welcome” information packets, children’s bulletins, and toys are also available. Our services are recorded each week. You may listen to sermons online: from the home page of our website, click on the “Sermon Archive” link. Audio recordings are also available by calling the church office (860-739-6208).

**Please set cell phones and pagers to silent mode
(unless you’re expecting a call from Jesus)**

Assistive Listening Devices, Large Print Bibles, Bulletins, and Hymnals are available. Please ask an usher for assistance!

Today's Worship Leaders

Ushers: Susan Brown, Nancy Burkhardt, Sue Smith, Judy Layden

Worship Leader: Carol Donovan

Preacher: The Rev. John A. Nelson

Parish Host: Mary Wassung

Flowers have been placed in the sanctuary to the Glory of God and in celebration of our 17th anniversary by Dick & Sue Robinson.

✂ All who are able may stand at these times

OUR MINISTRY TEAM

Ministers: All Participants in the Life of the Congregation

Worship & Music

Organist and Music Director: Paul Althouse

Director of Handbell Choirs: Lynne Floyd

Directors of Children's and Gospel Choirs:

Lee Wilkerson & Nikki Rollins

Sound Engineers: Dick Robinson, Ron Deziel

Education & Youth

Interim Director of Religious Education &

Youth Ministries: Kayla Castronova

Children's Center Director: Kathy Tiller

Caring & Community

Community Minister: Patty Chaffee

Parish Nurse: Marie LaTourette

Holding the Parts Together!

Church Secretary: Judy Snitkin

Church Officers: Kim Kalajainen, *president*;

John Whritner, *vice-president*; Avery

Morgan, *clerk*; Linda Leavens, *treasurer*, Liz

Kuchta, *historian*

Financial Secretary: Judy Layden

Bookkeeper: Maureen Godin

Librarian, Newsletter Editor: Jennifer Datum

Pastor and Teacher: The Rev. John A. Nelson

OCCASIONS FOR SERVICE, WITNESS, AND PRAYER

In Our Prayers:

We gladly list joys and concerns, and typically print them for four weeks after they are offered in worship. (Prayer requests may be renewed at any time.)

New Concerns:

For those spending Christmas apart from loved ones • For those whose Christmas includes grief for loved ones who have died • Estranged families during Christmas • Servicemen and -women, apart from family during holy days • Luke Proud, recovering from surgery • Healing for Lisa Aschenbrenner • Annie Bingham, hospitalized after stroke • Doreen and Walter, both seriously ill • Safe travels for Clara Ball, moving to Michigan • Healing for nephew Ian, following back surgery • Patricia Cooper, recovering from hip surgery • Mary Lee, undiagnosed medical condition • Healing for Bella following surgery • Cathy, diagnosed with inoperable brain tumor •.

Continuing concerns:

Howard Christensen, recovering from surgery • Alan Mitchell, recovering from hand surgery • Persons addicted to pain medication, and family and friends who try to help • A friend struggling with depression and anxiety • Wendy, hip surgery • John Messer, surgery for brain tumor, and parents Donna & Terry • For a friend & son who lost their jobs • Matthew Strollo, health concerns • Mary Brailey's sister Louise, recovering from surgery • for Margaret Gayda's return to health • Nephew Sam, back surgery • Jean Fanelli, recovering from stroke • Alice, who lost everything in a fire • Jean, recovering from neck surgery • For a safe delivery and healthy baby for Lewis and Andrea • Healing for Laurie, and restoration of eyesight • For travelers • Neighbors who are homeless, now facing cold weather • John

Pellett, at Yale Hosp. with lung infection • Virginia, Mary-Kent, Aunt Lyla, Huey, and Connor • Alyssa, traveling in Prague • Paul Swann • Those suffering from depression and anxiety.

In treatment for cancer:

Sakina King, cancer • Paul Jacobowski, cancer • Mercedes, struggling with chemotherapy • Ken Esposito, health care organizer with the Christian Activities Council, pancreatic cancer • Missy Gardner • Clara Ball — and their families, friends, and caregivers.

Those for whom the holiday season increases their burdens: the grieving, the financially struggling, those wrestling with illness, those separated from loved ones, those serving their country far from home.

Youth and families affected by the recent violence in New London

Partners of the Connecticut Conference (UCC) in the Kyung-Ki Presbytery and their communities on the Korean peninsula, with prayers for peace amidst great tension.

The nation of Myanmar, that the release of Aung San Suu Kyi may bring greater freedom to her fellow citizens.

The nation of Indonesia beset by volcanic eruptions and tsunamis.

The people of Haiti in the cholera epidemic, and the people who seek to aid them.

Friends and family now serving our country in the armed forces: Scott Basham; Greg Balsmeier; Alyson Barrett; Brian Donovan; Josh Earnhart;

Matt Fergione; Tony Fergione; Matt Liebal;
Nathaniel Lowe; Thomas Miller; Brian Perchal;
Zachary Peters; Peter Rondeau;
Caitlin Strauhal; Stephen Weiss.

All those serving or living in war or conflict
zones around the world, particularly in Iraq,
Afghanistan, Colombia, Gaza, Georgia, India,
Pakistan, and the Sudan.

**Family & Friends
who have passed away:**

Randy Shaffer
Kenneth Falls • Beth Powers
Ray Herzberg • David Pashley
Ed Hayden • Rebecca Bibart
Nancy Jeanne Jacobson • Mary White
Joan LeFrank • Sally Stanton
Alyssa Kristoff.

Servicemen and service women who have lost
their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan

*We thank God for their lives, and offer prayers of
comfort and support for family and friends who
mourn their passing.*

**Thanksgiving for
Ministers of our Church:**

Children's Center Board: Laura Greenstein;
Linda Helvig; Mary Brailey; Anita Potts;
Barbara Ross; Karen Waites; Heather Larson

Praise and Celebration:

Eagle Scout award for Kyle Estey • Doctors,
nurses, technicians, therapists, administrators,
and all others involved in delivering healing
care • Good results from medical tests • For
the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" • For
William Michael, adoptive son of Charlie &
Susan Goeben, grandson of Dick & Ellen
Goeben, thanks to the generosity of spirit of
the birth mother • Blessings received, for Jake
& Kathryn • Nancy & Jerry Burkhardt's 47th
anniversary • For a granddaughter, Lucy
Moore • For successful hip surgery for Louise
Corcoran • Tyler Page (son-in-law of Meg
Mahon), now Doctor of Chiropractic • Ellie
Harper Meier, born on Nov. 28th to Lewis &
Andrea Meier • For support given to Michael
Strollo in completing Eagle Scout project.

If you have a prayer request or would like a pastoral visit, be sure to let us know by calling the church office (860-739-6208) or emailing Pastor John at jnelson@nianticcommunitychurch.org. Sometimes we don't find out about an injury or illness or other need until long after — so please call!

We also have an on-going prayer chain. To add a prayer request to the Prayer Chain please send an email to prayers@nianticcommunitychurch.org, or call the church office (860-739-6208).

Avoiding probate OR MINIMIZING ESTATE TAXES AT DEATH REQUIRE PROPER PLANNING. WHEN YOU ARE DOING THIS PLANNING, CONSIDER MAKING A GIFT TO YOUR CHURCH.

NEXT SUNDAY MORNING, January 2nd. Worship Services at 9 & 11:15am; 10:00-11:00am "Between Hour Café;" 10:15am Adult Sunday School. Pastor John A. Nelson, preaching. Scripture readings: Jeremiah 31:7-14; Psalm 147:12-20; Ephesians 1:3-14; John 1:(1-9), 10-18.

Your 2011 Offering Envelopes are available for pick up. They are located in the hallway outside the Church Office. If you want envelopes and they are not there, please call either the Church Office (860-739-6208) or Judy Layden (860-739-6741).

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP BOOK CLUB has chosen "The Art of Racing in the Rain" by Garth Stein as its next reading selection. We will meet January 16th at 7 pm at the church. Hope to see you there.

TIDINGS - MONTHLY NEWS FOR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS. Traditionally, we have combined the December and January editions of Tidings newsletter. This year, however, we are producing separate issues for each month. Therefore, if you have any information you would like to have included in the January edition, please e-mail it as soon as possible to: Tidings@TheDatums.com. Also, if you would like to receive an e-mail letting you know when you can view Tidings online, please send you name to the e-mail above, or contact the church office. Thank you very much! Jennifer Datum

PHOTOGRAPHS OF 2010 JACK FROST BAZAAR: Do you know someone who may have taken pictures during this year's Bazaar? I am looking for photos of volunteers/workers, tables/displays, decorations, or any setup or cleanup activities. Please contact or send photos to susanbrown655@gmail.com as soon as possible.

Our Record of Faithfulness In Giving And Attending

Received to Date for 2010: \$395,471.38; Needed to be current for 2010: \$403,652.76

Last Sunday's Attendance: 9:00 a.m. – 176; 11:15 a.m. – 45; Church School – 40;

Total: 261

THIS WEEK AT NIANTIC COMMUNITY CHURCH

We are a community of Christians:
learning God's ways;
sharing God's love;
extending God's peace and healing grace to all.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26

9:00AM **Worship Service with Devine
Activity Time**

MONDAY, DECEMBER 27

4:00PM Nominating Committee (Parish
Life Office)
7:00PM Personnel (Parish Life Office)
7:00PM PPRC (Fellowship Room)
7:00PM Men's Choir (Sanctuary)

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 28

7:15AM Breakfast Bible Study (Niantic
Diner)
No Bell Choir Practice
No Children's or Gospel Choir
Practice
7:00PM Prayer Shawl Knitting Group
(Fellowship Room)

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 28 CONTINUED

7:00PM Men's Group (Parish Life Office)
7:00PM Boy Scouts (Dining Hall)

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 29

No Disciple class
7:30PM NA (Dining Hall)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 30

No Shoreline Food Pantry
8:00PM AA (Dining Hall)

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31

Church Offices & Children's Center closed
7:30PM AA (Dining Hall)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 1

10:00-11:00AM AA (Multipurpose
Room/Fellowship Room)
7:30PM AA (Dining Hall)

Niantic Community Church

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www.NianticCommunityChurch.org

Church Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 8:30-5:00 p.m.; Friday 8:30-Noon