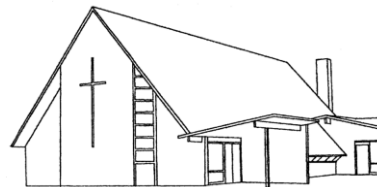


# NIANTIC COMMUNITY CHURCH

An Open, 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.”

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January 1, 2012 • 10:00AM

*The First Sunday of Christmas*

## WE GATHER AS THE CHURCH

PRELUDE

“The Old Year Has Passed Away”

*Bach*

### SHARING OF PARISH ACTIVITIES

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. Prayer requests will be collected during the second hymn.

### A SIGN OF OUR UNITY AND RECONCILIATION

Please greet those around you, wishing them “peace” or “the peace of Christ.”

### INTROIT

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

### CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Praise the One who spoke and made everything!

**Many: Let the rivers ripple with joy;  
let the mountains stamp their feet.**

Praise the One who adopts all of us as children!

**Let old folks tell familiar stories;  
let little children swim with dolphins.**

Praise God!

**We will sing of God's glory;  
we will shout our joy to the heavens.**

✠ HYMN #248

“On This Day Earth Shall Ring”

PERSONENT HODIE

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

**Gracious God, we pray this day  
for all who have come with us to Bethlehem.  
We pray for those who are impoverished and cold and hungry  
like the shepherds, that they may hear good news.  
We pray for those who are wandering and searching like the magi,  
that they may find the place to leave their gifts and their burdens.  
We pray for those who are busy, hurried, preoccupied like the innkeeper,  
that they may know the peace that comes from a true act of hospitality.  
We pray for those like Herod who have power,  
that they may use it for good and not for ill.  
We pray for ourselves –  
we who each need comfort and peace, even joy,  
in this starlit season and all the days of our lives. Amen.**

THE LORD’S PRAYER (*trespasses*)

**WE PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL IN WORD**

SCRIPTURE READING: Isaiah 61:10–62:3

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 THOUGHT FOR YOUNG MINDS

✠ HYMN #249

“There’s a Song in the Air”

CHRISTMAS SONG

Prayer requests will be collected;

Children (PreK–5<sup>th</sup> grade) attending Church School may leave as we sing the hymn.

SCRIPTURE READING: Luke 2:22–40

SERMON

“A New Age”

John A. Nelson

**WE RESPOND IN PRAYER AND FAITH**

CALL TO PRAYER

One: God be with you.

**Many: And also with you.**

May the peace of Christ dwell in your hearts.

**Christ is our peace, our light, and our hope.**

Let us pray.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE  
SILENT PRAYER  
PASTORAL PRAYER

OFFERTORY

Leader: When we read and hear ancient words of praise, they become alive again: our own voices make a space of wonder and thanksgiving for God. When we sing the marvelous songs of Christmas, we are remembering all the richness and delight of the season, just like the generations before us. With joy for God in our hearing and our hearts, let's respond with overflowing generosity.

**Let us gather our gifts with grateful praise, and offer them to God's purposes.**

RECEIVING TITHES AND OFFERINGS

THE MUSICAL OFFERING

"Alsatian Noel"

*Guilmant*

✕ CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

GREENSLEEVES

**So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh,  
Come peasant, king to own Him;  
The King of kings salvation brings,  
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.  
Raise, raise a song on high,  
The virgin sings her lullaby.  
Joy, joy for Christ is born,  
The Babe, the Son of Mary.**

✕ UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**God of wonder, joy, and Christmas mystery, we dedicate this offering to you.  
We pray your blessing upon every gift offered, on this altar and in our hearts  
and minds: use them all to share your miracle of love with the world. In Jesus'  
name; Amen.**

✕ HYMN #671

"Lord, Dismiss Us With Thy Blessing"

SICILIAN MARINER

✕ WORDS OF MISSION

The presentness of God reaches beyond this sanctuary.  
Our time in this sacred place now ends,  
but our connection to one other,  
and to God-with-us, remain.

**Together may we walk the path of justice,  
speak words of love, live the selfless deed,**

**tread gently upon the earth,  
and fill the world with Christ's compassion.**

✠ BENEDICTION AND THREE-FOLD AMEN

(Hymnal, 898)

May the God who dances in creation,  
who embraces us with human love,  
who shakes our lives like thunder,  
bless us and drive us out with power  
to fill the world with *shalom*.

**Amen.**

POSTLUDE

“We Three Kings”

*Linker*

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



## **WELCOME TO NIANTIC COMMUNITY CHURCH!**

A Heritage of Faith since 1719, and an Open, Affirming, Reconciling congregation, Niantic Community Church is a federated congregation of 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. CD recordings are also available by calling the church office (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:** Nancy Burkhardt, Germaine Ruderman, Bob Castronova

**Worship Leader:** Ned Ruete

**Preacher:** Pastor John A. Nelson

**Parish Host:** Pam McCauley

Flowers have been placed in the sanctuary to the Glory of God  
by the Diaconate Board.

✕ All who are able may stand at these times

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Maren C. Tirabassi. © 1990 The Pilgrim Press.

## OUR MINISTRY TEAM

**Ministers:** All Participants in the Life of the Congregation

### Worship & Music

**Organist and Music Director:** Dr. 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

**Christian Education & Youth Minister:**

Russell Kirby

**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:** John Whritner, *president*;

Cindy King, *vice-president*; Avery Morgan,  
*clerk*; Linda Leavens, *treasurer*, Liz Kuchta,  
*historian*

**Financial Secretary:** Judy Layden

**Bookkeeper:** Sandra Kuchta

**Librarian, Newsletter Editor:** Jennifer Datum

**Pastor and Teacher:** The Rev. Dr. 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.)*

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Traveling mercies, especially through  
the holidays

### New concerns

Healing for family members who are  
hospitalized • Aunt Arlene, double  
pneumonia • Steve, diagnosed with lung  
problem • Cousin Jim, extensive back surgery  
• Santo DeSario, Sr., recovering from heart  
surgery.

### Continuing concerns:

Families and individuals struggling  
economically • Homeless children • Women  
who are victims of domestic violence  
Angelo Milardo, in hospice care • Jeff, on life  
support after accident • Walter, brother of  
Terri McTigue, in intensive care • Linda  
Helvig, recovering from surgery • Andy,  
recovering from stroke • Ellen, recovering  
from surgery • Comfort and peace for Aunt

Eunice • Gerry Samida • Guidance in caring for loved ones • Matthew, facing surgery for brain cyst • Molly Alexander, heart surgery • Kate, balancing two jobs • Harmony between parents and teens • Healing from ear infection and virus • Strength for taking big leaps of faith • For renewal of faith • Safety for the U.S. students who remain in Cairo • A peaceful way forward for Egypt.

Those suffering from depression and anxiety  
The homeless and the hungry: God, help us to remember that homelessness and hunger anywhere is our burden, as well.



*In treatment for cancer:*

Debbie Krasne, cancer treatment • Laurie, recovering from cancer surgery • Bret, cancer recurrence • Maria DeMarco, cancer • Doris Curtis • Katie, metastatic breast cancer • Janice Dahlman • Carrie Winter Stadnick, adenocarcinoma • Brian Chaffee, stomach cancer • Tina Daniels, breast cancer • Ed Painter • Clara Ball — and their families, friends, and caregivers.

*Friends and family now serving our country in the armed forces:* Scott Basham; Greg Balsmeier; Robin Bourne (in Afghanistan); Josh Earnhart; Matt Fergione; Tony Fergione; Paul Harper; Matt Liebal; J.P. Neilson; Thomas Miller; Brian Perchal; Zachary Peters; Peter Rondeau; Rich Smith (in Afghanistan); 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:**

Ophelia White • Challen Young  
Homer Higdon • Janice Sheahan  
Dan Dailey • Gail Cancelleri  
Louise Chase • Marian Shellman  
Michael Polesky • Uncle Bill

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.

### **Praise and Celebration:**

For the church's Outreach Committee, and for generosity in giving coats, toys, and money for needy neighbors through the Christmas season

- For a family member finding a job • Kelly and Joshua McNatt, safely moved to the Kenai peninsula • Matt Liebal's safe return from Iraq
- Baby Lillian Rose is now cancer free! • Niece Laura, blessed by prayer • Friends, families, and NCC!
- Miraculous recovery of Regina Benvenuti • Mark and Holly, soon to be first-time parents
- For all those bold enough to follow God humbly toward their goals and dreams!

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**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](mailto: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](mailto:prayers@nianticcommunitychurch.org), or call the church office (860-739-6208).

**DINNER GROUP SIGN-UPS** continue this Sunday at coffee hour. Please consider joining this fun-filled group of people as they begin a new year of fine dining and great fellowship. Contact either Cheri Meier (cherimeier@hotmail.com or Edna Gilstad (egilstad@aol.com) if you have further questions.

**THIS MORNING**, we will be holding our One Room Church School (ORCS) for grades preK through 5 for the holiday, and will be learning a little bit about inclusion of those around us, as well as learning a few new songs. It'll be fun!

**SENIOR HIGH** will be doing the St. James homeless shelter meal tonight. Since it's a holiday and people are scarce, we need any available youth, grades 9-12, to help out! Join us at the church at 6 PM; we'll be back around 8 PM.

**NEXT SUNDAY MORNING, January 8, 2012.** Worship Services at 9 & 11:15am; 10:00-11:00am "Between Hour Café;" 10:15am Adult Sunday School. John A. Nelson preaching. Scripture readings: Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29; Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11.

**BIG TIME THANKS** to LOTS of people for making this year's Christmas Eve Family service wonderful: Leena Faulkner, Pam Stollo, Amy Agles and Ocean Pellet for checking, repairing, replacing and prepping all the costumes; Bob Castronova and Terry McCarthy for building the new stable that doesn't fall over; the Christensen family for arranging for the animals and taking care of them; Elizabeth Heaney, Cindy King and Kathy Leindecker and countless others who helped with dressing, undressing, herding and refereeing children; Dick Robinson for hanging the star; and all the other unsung heroes who pitched in when needed!

**WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP BOOK GROUP** selection is "The Pastor Has Gorgeous Legs" by Lynne C Holden. Rev Holden's first church was the Pendleton Hill Baptist Church in North Stonington. We will meet on January 8th at 7 pm in the Fellowship Room.

**WINTER RETREAT DAY** planned for Saturday, January 14th 10am-2:30pm. Cross the threshold of a new year with a day of retreat using inspiration from Christine Valters Paintner's reflective art journal, Crossing the Threshold...New Year, New Beginnings. The day will offer opportunities to explore St. Benedict's message of "Always we begin again..." through metaphor, silent reflection, discussion, journaling, music, and a labyrinth walk. Homemade soup and bread will be served for lunch. Limited to 10 participants. Register by calling the church office (860)739-6208.

## THIS WEEK AT NIAN TIC 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.

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### SUNDAY, JANUARY 1 *NEW YEAR'S DAY*

- 10:00AM Worship Service (No Church School  
or Infant Care)  
6:00PM High School Youth-Shelter Meal  
(Dining Hall)  
No Middle School Youth Fellowship

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### MONDAY, JANUARY 2

*Church Offices & Children's Center closed*

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### TUESDAY JANUARY 3

- 7:15AM Breakfast Bible Study (Niantic Diner)  
5:30 PM Children's Choir (Sanctuary)  
6:00PM Youth Bells (Multipurpose Room)  
6:15 PM Gospel Choir (Sanctuary)  
7:00PM Parish Life Ministries (Parish Life  
Office)  
7:00PM Worship Team (Office)  
7:00PM Adult Bells (Multipurpose Room)  
7:00PM Boy Scouts (Dining Hall)

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### WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4

- 9:30AM Disciple I (Fellowship Room)  
7:30PM NA (Dining Hall)

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### THURSDAY, JANUARY 5

- 9:00AM Newcomers Club (Dining Hall &  
Kitchen)  
5:30PM Shoreline Food Pantry (Dining Hall)  
7:00PM Finance Committee (Fellowship  
Room)  
7:00PM The Healing Art of Photography-  
Take II (Fellowship Room)  
8:00PM AA (Dining Hall)

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### FRIDAY, JANUARY 6

- 6:30PM Confirmation Class Lock-In thru  
Noon Saturday  
7:30PM AA (Dining Hall)

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### SATURDAY, JANUARY 7

- 10:00-11:00AM AA (Multipurpose and  
Fellowship Rooms)  
7:30PM AA (Multipurpose Room)

**PLEASE RECYCLE THIS BULLETIN!**

### Niantic Community Church

170 Pennsylvania Avenue, Niantic, CT 06357 • Phone: 860-739-6208

Fax: 860-739-8308 • E-mail: [NianticCommChurch@sbcglobal.net](mailto:NianticCommChurch@sbcglobal.net)

[www.NianticCommunityChurch.org](http://www.NianticCommunityChurch.org)

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