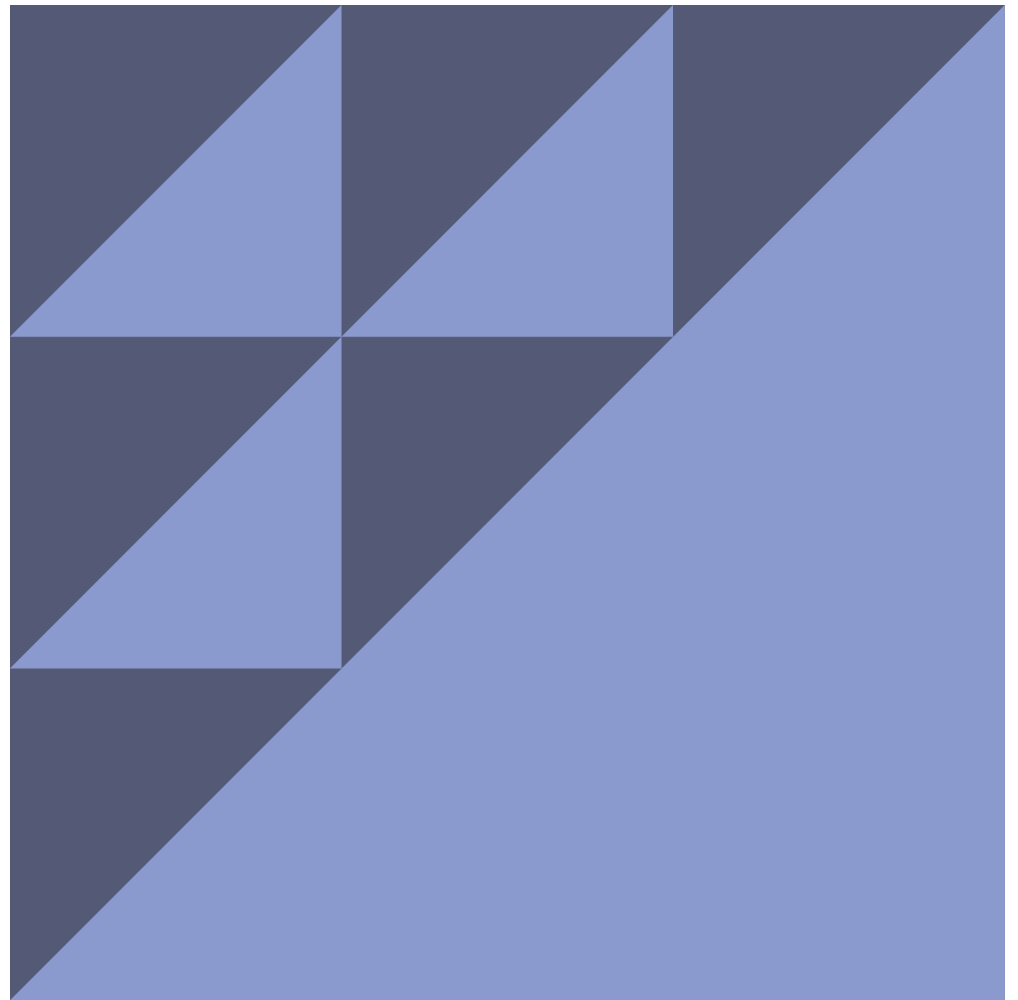




**Third Sunday
in Advent**

**DECEMBER
15
2024
10:00AM**



HOPE IS WORTH THE RISK

This traditional quilt square design is called “birds in the air”. Sometimes when we take a risk, hope takes flight. At times it may feel like you’re falling, but you’ll find that, in God’s embrace, you are flying.

▶ Our worship service is livestreaming on our YouTube Channel: [upcbgm.org/youtube](https://www.upcbgm.org/youtube)
Join via phone call on Zoom: Call (+1) 646-558-8656, Meeting ID 865 274 8433



Everyone is welcome here
**UNITED PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF BINGHAMTON**
do justice • love kindness • walk humbly with God



WELCOME TO THE CELEBRATION!

December 15, 2024 • 10:00am

Hope is vulnerable and can feel like a tremendous risk, especially if you've experienced loss or trauma. But Mary shows us a resilient hope that takes risks — she risks her body to bear a son who will become the hope of her people. Through the ages, people have chosen to hope for a transformed world, and to act in ways that can bring about change. It can feel safer and easier to be a cynic, but the world doesn't need more cynics. It needs people who say "It can be better" and make it so.

WE GATHER AS A COMMUNITY OF FAITH

OPENING BELL *The bell tolls to center our hearts and minds for worship.*

GATHERING MUSIC "Bogoróditse Djévo"

Aimée Backus, Ernest Backus,
Starletta Noll-Long, Austin Shadduck

English translation (from Church Slavonic):

Rejoice, O Virgin Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee:
Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb,
for thou hast borne the Savior of our souls.

Music: Arvo Pärt. © 1990 Universal Edition A.G.

WORDS OF WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP (*responsive*) *adapted from Words for the Beginning | A Sanctified Art*

One: In this weary world, we sing of joy.

All: In this fragile world, we lift each other up.

One: In this beautiful world, we look for God.

All: In this tender world, we hold onto hope.

One: This is the invitation of faith.

**All: So in this time of worship,
may we sing, lift up, look for, and hold onto our with-us God.
With hope in our hearts, amen!**

***SONG OF GATHERING** "My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout" (see pages 4–5)

GATHERING PRAYER (*together*) *adapted from a prayer by Fr. Tony Thampi Kayala*

**God, who are the Most High Lord of all,
you have a surprising preference
for people who are small and humble
and who expect everything from you.**

* = *Please rise in body or in spirit.*

HEARING ASSISTANCE *devices are available; please inquire with one of our technicians at the back of the sanctuary.*

**Through your Holy Spirit
make us open to you.
Help us to be ready, like Mary, to serve you and your plans,
and expect everything from you.
Come to us and give yourself to us
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen!**

TIME FOR THE YOUNG AT HEART:

We Light the Advent Candles of Hope, Peace, and Love

PRAYER (together) *adapted from Words for the Beginning | A Sanctified Art*

One: In a weary and worn world, how do we begin again? Where do we start?

All: Let us begin with our hearts open to the world.

Let us begin from a place of vulnerability and hope.

Let us begin with love.

One: Yes, let us begin with love.

Today we light the candles of hope, peace, and love.

All: May the warmth of these lights be our cornerstone.

May the truth in these lights help us begin again.

One: May it be so! Amen!

WE TELL AND HEAR THE WORD

FOCUS LESSON *Luke 1:46–55, CEB*

⁴⁶ Mary said,

“With all my heart I glorify the Lord!

⁴⁷ In the depths of who I am I rejoice in God my savior.

⁴⁸ He has looked with favor on the low status of his servant.

Look! From now on, everyone will consider me highly favored

⁴⁹ because the mighty one has done great things for me.

Holy is his name.

⁵⁰ He shows mercy to everyone,
from one generation to the next,
who honors him as God.

⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm.

He has scattered those with arrogant thoughts and proud inclinations.

⁵² He has pulled the powerful down from their thrones
and lifted up the lowly.

⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty-handed.

⁵⁴ He has come to the aid of his servant Israel,
remembering his mercy,

⁵⁵ just as he promised to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to Abraham’s descendants forever.”

REFLECTIONS “Words for the Beginning: Hope is Worth the Risk”

Rev. Kimberly P Chastain

100 My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout

Canticle of the Turning



1 My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the
2 Though I am small, my God, my all, you
3 From the halls of power to the for - tress tower, not a
4 Though the na - tions rage from age to age, we re -



God of my heart is great, and my spir - it sings of the
work great things in me, and your mer - cy will last from the
stone will be left on stone. Let the king be - ware for your
mem - ber who holds us fast: God's mer - cy must de -



won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
jus - tice tears ev - ery ty - rant from his throne.
liv - er us from the con - quer - or's crush - ing grasp.



You fixed your sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my
Your ver - y name puts the proud to shame, and to
The hun - gry poor shall weep no more, for the
This sav - ing word that our fore - bears heard is the



weak - ness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my
those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the
food they can nev - er earn; there are ta - bles spread; ev - ery
prom - ise which holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be



name be blest. Could the world be a - bout to turn?
 strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.
 mouth be fed, for the world is a - bout to turn.
 crushed by God, who is turn - ing the world a - round.

Refrain



My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the



fires of your jus - tice burn. Wipe a - way all tears, for the



dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn.

WE RESPOND TO THE WORD

***SONG OF RESPONSE** "Hope Is Worth the Risk" (see page 6)

WE SAY WHAT WE BELIEVE (*together*)

adapted from Words for the Beginning | A Sanctified Art

**We believe in a God who gives us reason to hope,
 a God who fills our nights with stars,
 who follows winter with spring,
 who dwells with and among us.**

**We believe that this God has dreams for creation,
 dreams of justice like a mighty stream
 and swords that will be beaten into plowshares.**

Therefore, we push cynicism aside.

We risk vulnerability.

**We hold onto hope,
 and we declare: "My soul magnifies the Lord,
 my spirit rejoices in God my Savior."**

Amen!

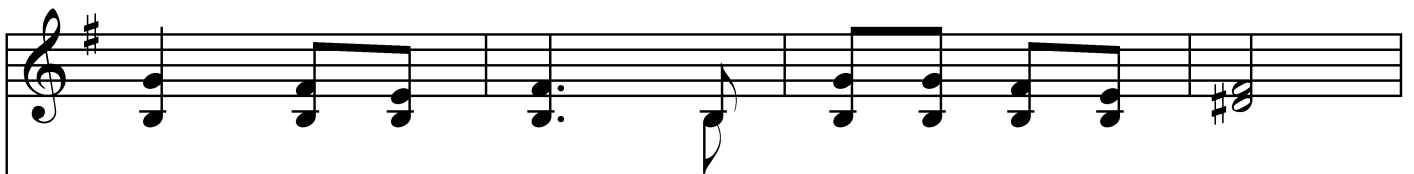
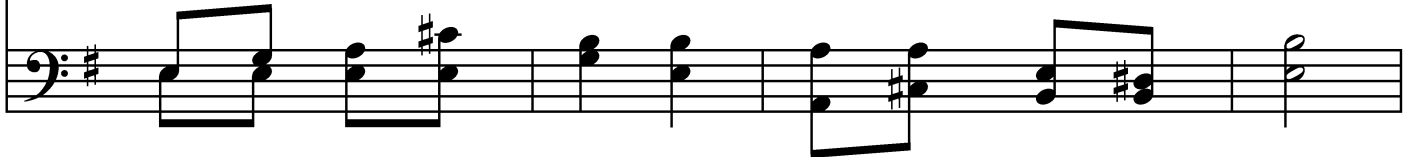
HOPE IS WORTH THE RISK



1. Col - lege stu - dents gath - er pro - test - ing for peace,
2. In Tai - wan, the dream - ers flood the streets with blooms:
3. Eth - nic mu - sic rings out from the Bal - tic Sea
4. Age to age and coast to coast, peo - ple have stood



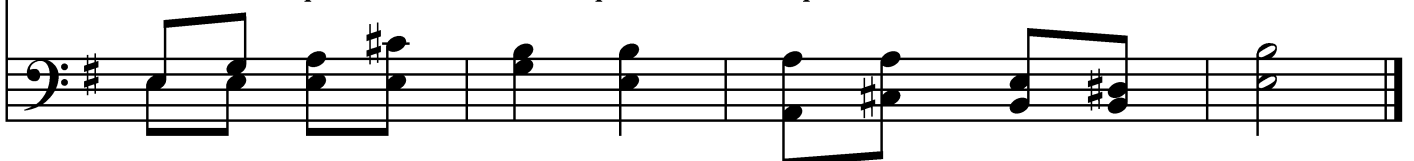
stand - ing firm in spite of vio - lence from po - lice.
sun - flow - ers and lil - ies— lib - er - ty's per - fume.
as the peo - ple sing their right to lib - er - ty.
risk - ing some - thing big in hope of some - thing good.



Em - pires will fight with force or pol - i - tics;



still the Spir - it whis - pers, "Hope is worth the risk."



Words: Anna Strickland, © 2024. Music: NOËL NOUVELET, Traditional French carol, 15th c.; arr. Anna Strickland, © 2024. Commissioned by A Sanctified Art, LLC. Free for congregational use.

WE OFFER OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS TO GOD

You are invited to support the ministry of this congregation through online giving at upcbgm.org/give, or by sending a check to the church office or putting an offering in the plates by the door.



You can contribute to the PC(USA)'s Christmas Joy special offering online at pcusa.org/christmasjoy or text CHRISTMASJOY to 91999, or use the Special Offering envelope from your worship guide in one of the plates by the doors, or send a check to the church office marked with "special offering" in the memo line.



MUSICAL OFFERING “‘Sleepers, wake!’ a voice is sounding”

UPC Choir

“Sleepers, wake!” a voice is sounding, from watch to watch the call rebounding:
“Awake, Jerusalem, awake!” Midnight past, the hour is nearing
when in the east, the darkness clearing, a new and brighter dawn will break.
The Bridegroom to receive, Arise! your couches leave, your torches light,
and mount the height of Zion’s wall to greet his coming, one and all.

Let all creatures now adore him, all men and angels bow before him,
with harp and lute in sweet accord. From the pearly gates and towers
the cherubim proclaim his powers and spread aloud his mighty word.
No mortal eye or ear did ever see or hear such joyous thing;
let therefore ring the song of praise that to almighty God we raise.

Words and Music: Johann Sebastian Bach; English version by Milford East. © 1930 G. Schirmer, Inc.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (*together*)

Loving God, we know that ministry is not a service we receive at church so much as it is a life-giving work you call us to do with others. Use our gifts and our talents, blended with the gifts and talents of others around the world, to make a difference in our lives and the lives of others. Amen!

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS (*responsive*)

As each petition is concluded, the prayer leader and congregation respond:

One: Lord, in your loving kindness,

All: hear our prayer.

PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE

Lord our God,
you have revealed yourself as One
who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people.
In a world that looks away from injustice,
you cast your eyes on the destitute, the poor, and the wronged.
You have called us to follow you,
to preach good news to the poor,
to proclaim release for the captives
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
and to proclaim the time of your blessing.

Be present with your church, Lord,
as we respond to your call.
Open our eyes to the downtrodden.
Fill us with compassion for the plight of the alien,
the refugee, and the immigrant.
Lead us into ministries that help orphans and widows.
Give us courage to block the paths of the ungodly
who exploit the poor.

Set us free from pious exercises
that prevent us from the true worship you choose:
 sharing bread with the hungry,
 sharing homes with the homeless,
 sharing clothes with the naked,
 sharing hearts with our own kin.

So may your justice roll down like waters,
your righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.
Lead our footsteps to stand with the poor,
that we might stand with you.

Have mercy, O God:
 scatter the proud,
 put down the mighty,
 lift up the lowly,
 fill up the hungry,
 and send the rich away empty-handed.

For we pray in the name of your Son, who taught us when we pray to say:

THE LORD'S PRAYER (*together*)

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!

WE GO FORTH IN GRATITUDE TO SERVE

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INVITATIONS

***SONG OF SENDING** "People, Look East" (see page 9)

BLESSING

Words for the Beginning | A Sanctified Art

As you leave this place,
may you have the wisdom to lean on one another.
May you have the courage to hold onto hope,
the compassion to do the good that is yours to do,
and the confidence to trust that God sees you as a blessing.

People, Look East

N.C. A
C# Bm A D D
F# A Esus E

1 Peo-ple, look east, the time is near of the crown-ing of the
2 Fur-rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is plant-ed
3 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more light the bowl shall
4 An-gels an-nounce with shouts of mirth him who brings new life to

A A
G D Bm7 A7
C# D A D

year. Make your house fair as you are a - ble, trim the
there. Give up your strength the seed to nour - ish, that in
brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y weath - er, bright as the
earth. Set ev - ery peak and val - ley hum - ming with the

Em A7 Bm A Peo-ple, look east and sing to - day:
E E C# D N.C. D A D

hearth and set the ta - ble. Peo-ple, look east:
course the flow-er may flour-ish.
sun and moon to - geth - er. Peo-ple, look east:
word, the Lord is com-ing.

A G D Asus A D
C# B

Love, the Guest, is on the way.
Love, the Rose, is on the way.
Love, the Star, is on the way.
Love, the Lord, is on the way.

Words: Eleanor Farjeon, © 1960 David Higham Assoc. Ltd. Music: BESANÇON, French melody;
arr. Martin Shaw, © 1928 Oxford University Press. All rights reserved.
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For in a world full of dead ends,
Advent invites us to begin again.
So start here.
Start now.
Start with love and begin again.
In the name of Christ,
our new beginning,
go in peace.

SHARING OF CHRIST'S PEACE

One: Peace be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

SENDING MUSIC (together) "My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout" refrain

Refrain



My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the
fires of your jus - tice burn. Wipe a - way all tears, for the
dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn.

Words: Rory Cooney, © 1990 GIA Publications, Inc. Music: STAR OF THE COUNTY DOWN,
Irish melody; arr. Rory Cooney, © 1990 GIA Publications, Inc. All rights reserved.
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(Please exchange a greeting of peace with those around you as our worship concludes.)



After the service, everyone is invited to join us downstairs for a time of fellowship and refreshments. For those who are feeling "crafty", you can join in making ornaments that we can give as gifts to the guests of our community meal and pantry to brighten their season! Supplies for ornaments and decorating stations will be set up in Fellowship Hall.

Get Involved! Without any doubt, the ministry of our congregation depends largely on the dedication and selfless contributions of volunteers — the incredible individuals who give generously of their time, energy, and unique talents. Here are some ways you can help us do Christ's work in our community:

Community Meal & Pantry: Each Tuesday at 5pm, we offer a sit-down meal that is free for anybody, serving about 100 people a week. Volunteers are needed during the day on Monday and Tuesday to help with food preparation, and on Tuesday evening to serve the meal and clean up afterwards.

On Wednesdays from noon to 5pm, we run a free food pantry that also offers personal care & hygiene items when they're available. Volunteers help staff the pantry, and donations of non-perishable food and personal care items are always welcome.

Contact Kitchen Coordinator Sherry Conklin for more info: meal@upcbgm.org

Worship services: You may not have noticed how many people are involved in our Sunday morning worship services, but most weeks there are at least a dozen of us, and often there are more than 20: folks who read prayers and scripture, greet visitors, share musical talents, operate technology, set up refreshments, help serve communion, or contribute their ideas and support behind the scenes. If you'd like to take part, contact Worship Team chair Suzie Raboy: sraboy54@stny.rr.com

Music at UPC: Music is an important part of our coming together at United Presbyterian Church. We are excited to make music with every resource that we have, and to use a variety of styles, not all at once but intermingled. What emerges is a vibrant worship service with music that includes everyone who wishes to participate.

UPC Choir: Wednesdays, 6:30–7:30pm in the Music Room (next to the Chapel). The vocal choir provides music for worship most every Sunday. We welcome new members at any time, and we would love to have your participation. It would be good to have you with us!

United Ringers handbell choir: Sundays, 11:30am–12:30pm in the Sanctuary. Our handbell choir plays 2–4 octaves of Malmark handbells and handchimes, providing music for worship about once a month. If you're interested in learning how to play handbells, please inquire. New members are always welcome! No previous experience needed. No auditions to start. If you can count to 4, you can learn to play!

We also invite instrumentalists and vocalists who'd like to share their gifts to talk with any of our music leaders about providing special music for worship — you can call the church office, email music@upcbgm.org, or speak with them in person after worship.



Other ministries: Our ministry teams are always welcoming new team members. If you'd like to help with or learn more about the workings of the church, talk to one of the pastors or the elders on Session: Campus Ministry, Pastor Becky bkindig@upcbgm.org; Card Committee, Margaret Davis mdavis.margaret@gmail.com; Community Outreach, Pastor Kimberly pastor@upcbgm.org or Sherry Conklin meal@upcbgm.org; Finance, Andy Chadwick cchadwick1@stny.rr.com; Hospitality, Sally Hunt shunt1@stny.rr.com or Sherry Conklin meal@upcbgm.org; Personnel, Cindy Burger csburger@frontiernet.net; Property, Pastor Becky bkindig@upcbgm.org; Sewing Group, Cindy Burger csburger@frontiernet.net.

Children in Worship: “Let the little children come to me..” —Matthew 19:14

We are glad that your children are here today, and we hope that you know that they are welcome and encouraged to be in worship with you. We truly believe that a community of faith is made up of people of ALL ages. There is a PrayGround space with coloring sheets and quiet toys in the front of the sanctuary to use there or can be taken to another pew, if that suits your family’s needs. Sunday school materials are mailed to our families once a month to do together at home.



There is also a nursery space at the end of the hall at the front of the sanctuary that is open for use with a parent or guardian. It has a changing table, a rocking chair, and some toys appropriate for age two and under. There is a speaker in the room so you can listen to the service. Please let us know if you have questions.

COVER IMAGE: “Hope is Worth the Risk” quilt square design by A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

PRAYER CREDITS: “Words from the Beginning” prayers by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org
Gathering Prayer adapted from a prayer by Fr. Tony Thampi Kayala, posted on tkayala.com

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Pastors Rev. Kimberly P Chastain and Rev. Becky Kindig ~ **Reader** Doug Jones

Musicians Aimée Backus, *Music Coordinator*, Rebecca Mebert, *accompanist*, Austin Shadduck, *United Ringers director*, Ernest Backus, Andrea Gilebarto, Starletta Noll-Long, and the UPC Choir

Technicians Andy Chadwick, Scott Kindig, Sara Lieberman, Ken Mebert