



Everyone is welcome here

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BINGHAMTON

ACT JUSTLY • PRACTICE KINDNESS • WALK HUMBLY WITH GOD



**Sunday
January 18, 2026
10:00am**

Second Sunday
after Epiphany



► Our worship service is livestreaming on
our YouTube Channel: upcbgm.org/youtube

Join via phone call on Zoom:

(+1) 646-558-8656,

Meeting ID 865 274 8433

Welcome to the Celebration!

January 18, 2026 • 10:00am

We say that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed of God (the three titles mean the same thing, in Hebrew, Greek, and English). The stories and teaching of the prophet Isaiah, told for generations to believers in Judea and Galilee, were part of the story of exile and redemption that gave them hope that a messiah would come. We'll consider these four "servant songs" as the context in which Jesus's ministry and teaching took place, then during Lent we'll tell those stories, and during Holy Week we will listen to a fifth Servant song, found in Isaiah 53.

We Gather as a Community of Faith

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

GATHERING MUSIC "Comfort Ye, My People"

Robert Manners, *vocals*; Andy Chadwick, *piano*

Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God: Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Words: Isaiah 40:1–3. Music: From *Messiah*, by George Frideric Handel.

WORDS OF WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP (responsive)

adapted from a prayer by Rev. Penny L. Lowes

One: Listen! The voice of God calls out across the ages.

**All: We hear and respond. We rise up to worship God
from the valleys, the mountains, and the plains.**

One: Like a shepherd God leads us and tenderly gathers us together.

All: Comfort, comfort my people, says our God of love.

One: The Glory of the One God will appear,
and all of humanity will see it together.

**All: The grass withers and the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand forever!**

***SONG OF GATHERING** "Comfort, Comfort Now My People" (see page 3)

* = Please rise in body or in spirit.

155 Comfort, Comfort Now My People



1 "Com - fort, com - fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!" so says our God.
2 For the her - ald's voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,
3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er plac - es plain!



Com - fort those who sit in dark - ness mourn-ing un - der sor - row's load.
call - ing us to true re - pent - ance since the King - dom now is here.
Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be - fits his ho - ly reign!



To God's peo - ple now pro - claim that God's par - don waits for them!
Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way!
For the glo - ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a - broad,



Tell them that their war is o - ver; God will reign in peace for - ev - er!
Let the val - leys rise to meet him, and the hills bow down to greet him!
and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.



GATHERING PRAYER (*together*)

by Walter Brueggeman

Holy One who calls us,
we are still the people walking.
We are still people in the dark,
and the darkness looms large around us,
beset as we are by fear,
anxiety,
brutality,
violence,
loss —
a dozen alienations that we cannot manage.

We are — we could be — people of your light.
So we pray for the light of your glorious presence
as we wait for your appearing;
we pray for the light of your wondrous grace
as we exhaust our coping capacity;
we pray for your gift of newness that
will override our weariness;
we pray that we may see and know and hear and trust
in your good rule.

That we may have energy, courage, and freedom to enact
your rule through the demands of this day.
We submit our day to you and to your rule, with deep joy and high hope.

Amen!

We Tell and Hear the Word

TIME FOR THE YOUNG AT HEART

FOCUS LESSON *Isaiah 40:1–11*, CEB

- ¹ Comfort, comfort my people!
says your God.
- ² Speak compassionately to Jerusalem,
and proclaim to her that her compulsory service has ended,
that her penalty has been paid,
that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins!
- ³ A voice is crying out:
“Clear the LORD's way in the desert!
Make a level highway in the wilderness for our God!
- ⁴ Every valley will be raised up,
and every mountain and hill will be flattened.
Uneven ground will become level,
and rough terrain a valley plain.

⁵ The LORD's glory will appear,
and all humanity will see it together;
the LORD's mouth has commanded it."

⁶ A voice was saying:
"Call out!"
And another said,
"What should I call out?"
All flesh is grass;
all its loyalty is like the flowers of the field.

⁷ The grass dries up
and the flower withers
when the LORD's breath blows on it.
Surely the people are grass.

⁸ The grass dries up;
the flower withers,
but our God's word will exist forever.

⁹ Go up on a high mountain,
messenger Zion!
Raise your voice and shout,
messenger Jerusalem!
Raise it; don't be afraid;
say to the cities of Judah,
"Here is your God!"

¹⁰ Here is the LORD God,
coming with strength,
with a triumphant arm,
bringing his reward with him
and his payment before him.

¹¹ Like a shepherd, God will tend the flock;
he will gather lambs in his arms
and lift them onto his lap.
He will gently guide the nursing ewes.

REFLECTIONS

Rev. Kimberly P Chastain

We Respond to the Word

*SONG OF RESPONSE "Isaiah the Prophet Has Written of Old" (see pages 6-7)

Isaiah the Prophet Has Written of Old

1. I - sa - iah the proph - et has writ - ten of old how
2. Yet na - tions still prey on the meek of the world, and

God's new cre - a - tion shall come. In - stead of the thorn tree, the
con - flict turns par - ent from child. Your peo - ple de - spoil all the

fir tree shall grow; the wolf shall lie down with the lamb. The
sweet - ness of earth, the briar and the thorn tree grow wild. The God,

moun - tains and hills shall burst forth in - to song, the
bring to fru - i - tion your will for the earth, that

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WE SAY WHAT WE BELIEVE (together)

**I dream a world where everyone
no other one will scorn,
where love will bless the earth
and peace its paths adorn.
I dream a world where all
will know sweet freedom's way,
where greed no longer saps the soul
nor avarice blights our day.
A world I dream where black or white,
whatever race you be,
will share the bounties of the earth
and every person is free,**

adapted from a poem by Langston Hughes

(continued on page 8)

**where wretchedness will hang its head
and joy, like a pearl,
attends the needs of all humanity —
of such I dream, my world!**

We Offer Ourselves and Our Gifts to God

CALL TO OFFERING

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 a donation in one of the collection boxes or offering plates by the door.



OFFERING OF MUSIC “Every Valley”

UPC Choir

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain made low; and the crooked made straight, and the rough places plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Amen.

Words: Isaiah 40:4–5. Music: John Ness Beck. © 1976 Beckenhorst Press. All rights reserved.

OFFERING OF PRAYER (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

by J. Puls and G. Cashmore

God of surprises, you call us
from the narrowness of our traditions
to new ways of being church,
from the captivities of our culture
to creative witness for justice,
from the smallness of our horizons
to the bigness of your vision.
Clear the way in us, your people,
that we might call others to freedom and renewed faith.

Jesus, wounded healer, you call us
from preoccupation with our own histories and hurts
to daily tasks of peacemaking,
from privilege to pilgrimage,
from insularity to inclusive community.
Clear the way in us, your people,
that we might call others to wholeness and integrity.

Holy, transforming Spirit, you call us
from fear to faithfulness,
from clutter to clarity,
from a desire to control to deeper trust,
from the refusal to love to a readiness to risk.
Clear the way in us, your people,
that we might all know the beauty and power and danger of the gospel.

We pray these things through Christ our Lord
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** “Blest Be the God of Israel” (see page 10)

BLESSING

adapted from a prayer by Rev. Brian Baker

The world is now too dangerous and too beautiful for anything but love.
May your eyes be so blessed that you see God in everyone.
Your ears, so you hear the cry of the poor.
May your hands be so blessed that everything you touch is a sacrament.
Your lips, so that you speak nothing but the truth in love.
May your feet be so blessed that you run to those who need you.
And may your heart be so opened, so set on fire,
that your love, *your love*, changes everything.

SHARING OF CHRIST'S PEACE

One: May the peace that passes all understanding
keep your hearts in the knowledge and love of God
and of God's son, Jesus Christ,
and may the blessing of God almighty,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be with you this day and always.
Peace be with you!

All: And also with you.

109 Blest Be the God of Israel

Song of Zechariah

1 Blest be the God of Is - rael, who comes to set us free;
 2 God from the house of Da - vid a child of grace has given;
 3 On those who sit in dark - ness the sun be - gins to rise,

who vis - its and re - deems us, who grants us lib - er - ty.
 a Sav - ior comes a - mong us to raise us up to heaven.
 the dawn-ing of for - give - ness up - on the sin - ner's eyes.

The proph - ets spoke of mer - cy, of free - dom and re - lease;
 Be - fore him goes the her - ald, fore - run - ner in the way,
 God guides the feet of pil - grims a - long the paths of peace.

God shall ful - fill that prom - ise and bring the peo - ple peace.
 the proph - et of sal - va - tion, the har - bin - ger of day.
 O bless our God and Sav - ior with songs that nev - er cease!

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SENDING MUSIC "Blest Be the God of Israel"

Aimée Backus, *flute*; Andy Chadwick, *organ*

Music: Hal H. Hopson (MERLE'S TUNE), © 1983 Hope Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

(Please exchange a greeting of peace with those around you as our worship concludes.)

After the service, everyone is invited to join us for a time of fellowship and refreshments.

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 160 meals a week. Volunteers are needed during the day on Monday and Tuesday to help with food prep, 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: srabo54@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.* 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**, Lou McKeage lmckeage@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.

The Annual Meeting Part 1 is scheduled for Sunday, January 25, following the worship service.

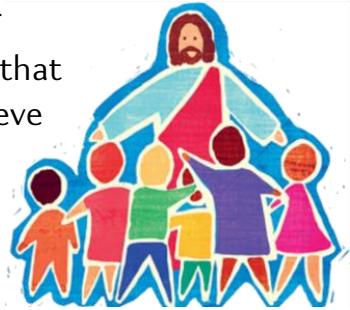
On Sunday, January 25, at 11:15am, we will gather to renew the covenant between the congregation and the pastors, to receive the budget for 2026 and talk about the road ahead, and to consider all that God has done for us.

This meeting will be hybrid, immediately following the worship service, in the sanctuary and in the Zoom room upcbgm.org/zoom or via phone call (+1) 646-558-8656, Meeting ID 865 274 8433. (Note that the meeting will NOT be streamed on YouTube.)

We renew the covenant between pastors and congregation every year by voting on their terms of call. “Terms of call” is the PC(USA) language for what, in the business community, is called a “compensation package”. Recognizing that God’s call to pastoral ministry is expressed in a three-way covenant between the presbytery, the congregation, and the pastor, each year you are asked to support the work of the pastors by agreeing to support them financially as well as through your prayers and participation. After the congregation votes, the terms will be sent to the presbytery for their approval.

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.



There is a nursery for infants through age four staffed with two nursery attendants, if that is a better choice for your family. The nursery is at the end of the hall past the bathrooms. Nursery staff are on duty from 9:00am to 12:00pm. Parents are welcome to stay in the room and listen to the service over the speaker, or to return to the sanctuary to worship. Please let us know if you have questions.

PRAYER CREDITS: **Call to Worship** adapted from a prayer by Rev. Penny L. Lowes, posted on re-worship.blogspot.com. **Gathering Prayer** from “Epiphany Prayer” by Walter Brueggeman. **We Say What We Believe** adapted from “I Dream a World” by Langston Hughes, © 1994 by his estate. **Prayer of the People** by J. Puls and G. Cashmore, posted on A.E. Hunt Progressive website, reposted on Still Waters, theresaecho.com. **Blessing** adapted from a prayer by Rev. Brian Baker, posted on deanbaker.org/2019/11/my-burning-man-blessing.html.

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Pastors Rev. Kimberly P Chastain and Rev. Becky Kindig ~ **Reader** Cindy Burger
Musicians Aimée Backus, *Music Coordinator*; Andy Chadwick, *accompanist*; Austin Shadduck, *United Ringers director*; Taylor Hagquist, Robert Manners, Starletta Noll-Long, and the UPC Choir
Technicians Chris Burger, Emily Hugenbruch, Scott Kindig, Sara Lieberman, Lou McKeage