



United Methodist Church  
of Westport and Weston

December 8, 2024  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent

Hybrid Worship – 10:00am

*Our Vision is to Know, to Live  
and to Share the Love of Jesus Christ.*

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CENTERING PRAYER

*Loving Lord, when we have strayed, you have called us to come home to you, “Return to me with all your hearts, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing.” With all our hearts we return to you, and gratefully accept your gentle love from the one whose spirit lives in us, Jesus Christ, our loving Savior. Amen.*

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pastor Heather

PRELUDE

*In the Bleak Midwinter*  
John Hoddinott, guitar; Ahyoung Son, piano

C. Rosetti

\*CALL TO WORSHIP

Based on Joel 2:1-2 & 12-17

Blow the trumpet in Zion!  
Sound the alarm on God’s holy mountain.  
Call all the people together – young and old.  
**For the day of the Lord is coming,  
a day unlike any other.**  
Even now, God says, return to me with all your heart;  
change your life, not just your outward appearance.  
**Let us return to our God, and to God’s ways.**  
For our God is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger, and full of compassion, mercy and steadfast love.  
**Love is here. Love, the Lord is on the way.**

\*OPENING HYMN

*People, Look East*

UMH 202

MESSAGE FOR ALL GOD’S CHILDREN & ADVENT CANDLE-LIGHTING

“LOVE”

Pastor Heather

*Children are always welcome to remain in Worship. Children ages five and up are welcome to join Advent Activities in the classroom. The Nursery is not staffed, but is open, if you and your child need a place to retreat.*

**Holy Living God, Blessed Jesus, Guiding Spirit,  
alight within us your flame of LOVE this day.  
Grant us openness to hear your message.  
Grant us courage to be your messengers in the world,  
creating more LOVE in the midst of fear.**

This is the Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

“the promise of *compassion*”

Rev. Heather A. M. Sinclair

## OFFERING OUR PRAYERS &amp; GIFTS

*Through our baptism and membership in the church, we covenant to give of our prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness. Financial gifts, tithes and offerings support the mission and ministries of this congregation and the connectional church. Online giving is available at [WestportUMC.org](http://WestportUMC.org).*

*Prayer cards may be placed in the offering plates to be lifted up during the Prayers of the People and/or added to the weekly Prayer List.*

MUSIC OFFERING

*When Morning Gilds The Skies*  
John Hoddinott, guitar; Ahyoung Son, piano

J. Barnby

\*HYMN OF PRAISE

Tune: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow.  
Praise God, all Spirit messengers below.  
Praise God, the source of all our gifts!  
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.***

OFFERING PRAYER

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

“A Blessing for Open Arms” by Kate Bowler

Blessed are you with open arms  
to welcome God this Advent,  
willing to invite its promises  
into the center of your longing.

Blessed are you,  
even now in the waiting.  
Open to receiving what is beautiful  
though clothed in such precarity.

Blessed are you,  
agreeing to stand still long enough  
to let your eyes adjust to the darkness  
until the starlight begins to appear,  
the dawning of God’s promises.

In that gentle light,  
find a corner of your heart  
where hope can stay protected.  
A place from which we can  
nurture a little gratitude,  
a little compassion,  
enough to go around.

Some for God and some for yourself.  
And some for the next unsuspecting  
soul that wanders into your light.  
Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (*You are invited to pray in the version and language of your heart.*)

\*CLOSING HYMN

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

UMH 211, vv. 1, 2, 6 & 7

BENEDICTION

*"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love." 1 John 4:7-8*

POSTLUDE

*Angels from the Realms of Glory*  
Ahyoung Son, organ

H. Smart



*Portions of the Order of Worship are adapted from:  
The United Methodist Hymnal, The United Methodist Book of Worship, and The Faith We Sing,  
Nashville, TN: The United Methodist Publishing House  
All music is in the Public Domain, unless noted.  
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Theme and Image: "A Weary World Rejoices," [katebowler.com](http://katebowler.com)  
Call to Worship: Thom Shuman, [lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.ca](http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.ca)*



**WELCOME!** It is a blessing to welcome you to worship today. If you are visiting, please fill out a visitor card, introduce yourself to Pastor Heather or an usher, and check out [WestportUMC.org](http://WestportUMC.org) to find out more about the mission and ministries of this community of faith. **ALL ARE INVITED** to Fellowship Time in Fellowship Hall following the Worship Service.

**WE WILL BE OFFERING ADVENT ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN** each Sunday morning during the month. On December 8 & 15 there will be the opportunity to make an Advent wreath and learn about **HOPE, LOVE, JOY** and **PEACE**.

**GRACE CONNEXION** meets at 11:30am on Sundays. Last week we began a three-week study of *Ladder to the Light: An Indigenous Elder's Meditations on Hope and Courage* by Choctaw elder and Episcopal priest Steven Charleston. Copies of Charleston's book are available at the church for a \$12 donation.

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 7:30PM – THE LONGEST NIGHT:** a peaceful service to reflect on the grief and hope of the season



**DURING SUNDAY WORSHIP, DECEMBER 22,** we will tell the Nativity Story with the **Spontaneous Christmas Pageant** where everyone can play a part.

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 5:30PM – CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP** with Candlelight & Carols for all ages

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## UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF WESTPORT AND WESTON

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OUR MINISTERS

EVERY PARTICIPANT IN THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION

REV. HEATHER A. M. SINCLAIR, PASTOR

SUSAN GILDER, LAY LEADER

JOHN HODDINOTT, DIRECTOR OF MUSIC & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT • AHYOUNG SON, ORGANIST  
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