

**United Methodist Church at Shrub Oak - ORDER OF WORSHIP**  
**December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023 - Fourth Sunday of Advent**

**ALTAR FLOWERS:**

The flowers on the altar are given by Pastor Sandy and Debbie Vesuvio, "In celebration of the birth of our Savior"

**GREETING**

**CALL TO WORSHIP:**

L: Welcome, dear people, God has blessed our gathering.

**P: We come again on this journey, following the light.**

L: God's light shines for us today, bringing peace and comfort.

**P: May we, like Mary, respond to God's presence and love, with confident joy. Amen.**

**PRAISE & WORSHIP:** (YouTube)

**PRAISE SHARING**

**OPENING PRAYER:**

In the rush of preparation for holiday celebration, we come to this place to be fed by God. We need the peace, hope, love and joy that this season represents. We need to listen again with wonder at the magnificent words of Mary as she proclaims her faithful participation in God's most miraculous gift. Open our hearts this day, Lord, to receive the words and the blessings, to be fed and then to be those who will share with others as you have shared with us. In Jesus' Name, we pray. Amen.

**PRAYER of CONFESSION:**

It's getting harder and harder to focus on the true meaning of Christmas, the incarnation of God's love in the birth of God's Son Jesus Christ. We are caught in the web of festivities, travel, gifts, and glitter. And we have to admit that we really do enjoy all the holiday opportunities. We allow ourselves to be continually drawn in to the demands of others, leaving little or no time for ourselves, our families, and especially for You, gracious God. Forgive us. Help us to make some changes in our lives and our focus, so that this time of celebration may have the deepest sense of joy and purpose, not just be the rush and clamor of yet another holiday season that disappears all too quickly. Keep us focused on the eternal "yes" response to your call to us, to live our lives as those who would joyfully serve You. Heal and comfort us, Lord, this day and always. For we ask this in the name of Jesus, our Savior. AMEN.

**SILENT CONFESSION****WORDS of ASSURANCE:**

Hear the Good News: The Holy One forgives and bestows favor on each of us, even, and especially, when we are lowly in spirit. We are blessed from generation to generation by the Mighty One, whose strength and mercy are forever. In the Name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven. Thanks be to God Amen

**OPENING HYMN:** "Angels From the Realms of Glory" - UMH #220

**LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE:** Lisa Grace - FWS #2090

**SCRIPTURE READING:** Romans 16:25-27 (ESV) Cantic of Mary (UMH #199) read responsively

**GOSPEL:** Luke 1:26-38 (ESV)

**OFFERTORY ANTHEM:** "Lead on, O King Eternal"

**DOXOLOGY:**

**SERMON:** Lessons From Mary

1. Do Not Be Afraid
2. Nothing Is Impossible With God
3. Say Yes

**PASTORAL PRAYER**

**CLOSING HYMN:** "Go Tell It On The Mountain" - UMH #251

**BENEDICTION:**

God of Light and Hope, in whom there is no darkness, cause your light to shine on us and through us to others, that they may know of you and of your Love. Let us witness to your gift of Jesus who came and taught us how to live as children of Light. Go in peace, dear friends, and know that the God of light, hope, peace, and joy goes with you. AMEN

<https://www.ministrymatters.com/worship/entry/1966/worship-connection-december-20-2020>  
<https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/1966/worship-connection-december-24-2023>

## **SCRIPTURE READING**

### **Romans: 16:25-27 ESV**

<sup>25</sup> Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages

<sup>26</sup> but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—

<sup>27</sup> to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

### **Canticle of Mary: UMH #199** (read responsively)

L: My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,

**A: My spirit rejoices in God my Savior, who has looked with favor on me, a lowly servant.**

L: From this day all generations shall call me blessed:

**A: The Almighty has done great things for me and Holy is the name of the Lord, whose mercy is on those who fear God from generation to generation.**

L: The arm of the Lord is strong, and has scattered the proud in their conceit.

**A: God has cast down the mighty from their thrones and lifted up the lowly.**

L: God has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich empty away.

**A: God has come to the aid of Israel, the chosen servant, remembering the promise of mercy, the promise made to our forebears, to Abraham and his children forever**

## **GOSPEL READING**

### **Luke 1:26-38**

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,

<sup>27</sup> to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary.

<sup>28</sup> And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!"

<sup>29</sup> But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.

<sup>30</sup> And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

<sup>31</sup> And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.

<sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,

<sup>33</sup> and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

<sup>34</sup> And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

<sup>35</sup> And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.

<sup>36</sup> And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.

<sup>37</sup> For nothing will be impossible with God."

<sup>38</sup> And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant<sup>[e]</sup> of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

*The Poinsettias On  
the Altar are donated  
by the following members:*



Pastor Sandra Mantz and Family

"In memory of Loved Ones and In Joyous Celebration of the birth of  
our Lord."

Glen and Marilyn Bucher

"In honor of Family and Friends"

Maxine Haigh

"In loving memory of my husband, Richard Haigh Sr."

Kathy Casey

"In loving memory of our wonderful mothers, Edna Klausman Valentine  
and Marie Casey."

Bev Goodman

"In memory of loved ones from the Goodman and Harrington Families,  
and in honor of Hope and Lucas."

Linda and Peter Hoernes

"In loving memory of Linda's parents, Bob and Barbara Reed."

Barbara and Curt Conklin

"In loving memory of Barbara's parents and to the glory of God."

Annette and Russ Reynolds

"In loving memory of Annette's mother, Anna Piucci; and in honor of  
Russ's mother, Grace Reynolds."

William and Glenda Geis

"In memory of loved ones, Rose and Bill Geis, May and Bill Paesler,  
Blandina Rivera, and Fred and Tess Rivera."

Deborah Vesuvio

"In memory of loved ones and in honor of our church family."

Lynne and Hank Schrot

"In loving memory of Henry and Alma Schrot and Charles and Ingel  
Wallance."

Kelley and Brent Horton

2 Anonymous Donors

## **UMCSO SCHEDULE**

Zoom links are included in Mailchimp. Please contact us with your email (umcso.ny@gmail.com) or call 914-245-4682 if you would like to receive Mailchimp emails.

## **WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

**WOMEN'S SMALL GROUP:** Monday, 7:00 pm, (ZOOM)

**MORNING BIBLE STUDY:** Tuesday 10:00 am (In Person)

**EVENING BIBLE STUDY:** Tuesday 7:00 pm (ZOOM)

**SMALL GROUP 1:** Wednesday, 1:00 pm (ZOOM)

**PRAYER GROUP:** Thursday, 11:00 am (Chapel)

**EVENING BIBLE STUDY:** Thursdays, 7:30 pm with Pastor Sandy (ZOOM). (See link below).

**SMALL GROUP 2:** Friday, 10:00 am (phone 1-267-807-9495; 656355452#)

**CRAFTS FOR A CAUSE:** Friday, 11:00 am - 12 noon (various homes)

**MEN'S GROUP:** Saturday 8:00 am (ZOOM)

**SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY:** 9:30 am in the GP room (In person)

**SMALL GROUP LEADERS MEETING:** Saturday, Jan. 6, 2024 at 9:30 am

**TRUSTEE'S MEETING:** Monday, Jan. 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm

**++++**

**Pastor Sandy Mantz invites you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.**

Topic: Bible Study

Date/Time: Thursday evenings at 7:30 pm Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2610447551?pwd=MXVIUGgvOFRrS3RZNVB2a0plRi8rUT09>

Meeting ID: 261 044 7551

Passcode: 246240

One tap mobile

+16469313860,,2610447551#,,, \*246240# US

+16465588656,,2610447551#,,, \*246240# US (New York)

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES:** Join us to worship and celebrate together the birth of our Lord on Sunday, Dec. 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023. There will be regular worship at 10:30 am and Candlelight Service at 7:00 pm.

**CONFIRMATION CLASS:** Will resume Sunday, Jan. 7, 2024 following worship.

**ANNUAL NEW YEAR PANCAKE BRUNCH:** We are blessed each year by the gifts of food, sharing, and hospitality of “Flapjack” Casey and the Casey family! Join us and let's welcome the New Year together on Sunday, Jan. 7<sup>th</sup> following worship

**~ A BLESSED AND MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ONE AND ALL ~**

### **REACH US ON FACEBOOK**

United Methodist Church at Shrub Oak

<https://www.facebook.com/Blessedassurancetoday>

There is a link to the Church's website.  
Pastor Sandy will post inspirational verses regularly.

.....