



NORWICH UNITED CHURCH

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Dear friends,

It is that time of year when we prepare for the birth of Jesus. It is this time of year when we expect to get the "warm and fuzzy feelings." Giant corporations understand how we crave the dreams of peace, and the hope that it is possible. Advertising this time of year has strong sentimental tones, with candles and lots of soft exposure. Families are gathered, doing the simple things of life and celebrating with a perfect soft drink or coffee.

Not everyone is finishing off the year by shopping for the perfect gift to place under the tree. Some are wondering how to put food on the table. Some are suffering the trauma of war and violence. We in the church are re-telling the story of one who brings dreams of peace into reality. We look forward to hearing the story of a young couple searching for a place to lay their weary bodies when there was no room in the inn. It is the story of shepherds who heard the song of the angels and dared to hope the message of peace was true, and, in that hope, they left the hillside and searched out the holy infant. This is the season when we share the story of the magi who followed a star.

As we journey to Christmas, God will be us. In the ordinary moments of washing up the kitchen after supper, God will be there. God will be there in the phone call with the siblings. As you help the kids with the cookies for Santa – God will be there, too.

God's loving spirit has been our guide over the past year. During the winter months, we invited the community inside our warm and cozy space, serving lunches of soup and sandwiches, the indispensable time-out with Moms and Tots, and Messy Church for the whole family. With your generous support, NUC has hosted musical evenings, lifting our spirits. Of course, we need to mention our NUC Summer Camp program. This Camp fills a need within the community, giving families during the summer months, much-needed affordable child care. Each summer, the Camp supplies care for over two hundred children, and provide youth with summer employment. So much is happening within the walls of Norwich United Church! I have disclosed only the surface of the activities. NUC is an exciting place; God's spirit is alive and shining in our community because of your support. Thank you.

While the rest of the world is searching for any kind of hope, we know the creator of hope. We know the creator of peace. We know the creator of joy, the creator of love. We know our search is not in vain.

"Prepare the way of Lord." The reading from Isaiah calls to us – "Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly ..."

Where will our Advent pilgrimage lead us this season?

The call to comfort is the call to share the hope and the peace of Christ. We need to remember change is possible. In this season of Advent, we are still at the beginning of the story as we share the birth story of Jesus, who showed us all a better way to live together. He taught us to live into God's call to love, with the understanding that hope is an action. God is calling us to a different reality. Dare we dare to dream? Dream of peace. Dare to hope.

In closing, we look forward to coming together on Christmas Eve for a special Christmas Eve Service. We will light the candles, and the soft glow of God's light will shine in the darkness. We will sing Silent Night, knowing God is with us.

*"Radiant beams from thy holy face,
with the dawn of re-deeming grace,
Jesus Lord at thy birth ,
Jesus Lord at thy birth."*

*I bid you Advent Peace,
Janice Pow, DLM*

We hope you will join us here at NUC....

Norwich Musical Society Band

Tuesday, December 19, 7:00 p.m.

(admission is a non-perishable item towards the local Foodbank)

Community Christmas Eve

Sunday, December 24, 7:00 p.m.

Free Community Christmas Dinner

Christmas day, 11:00 A.M. – 2:00 p.m.

(please RSVP)

