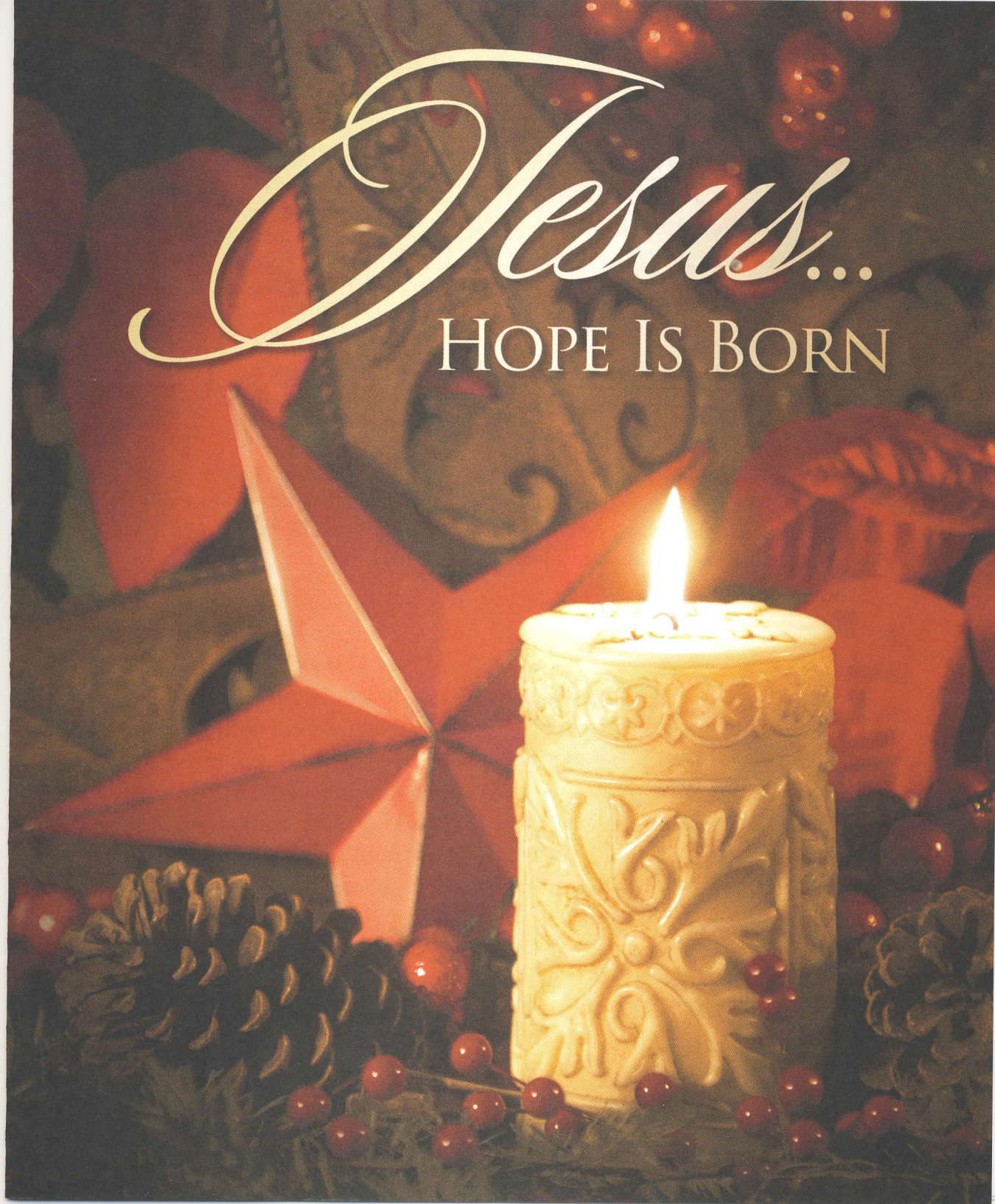
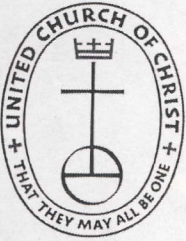


Jesus...
HOPE IS BORN





First Congregational Church
28 N. Chenango Street, Greene, NY 13778
Church Phone: (607) 656-4923
Rev. Curtis Whitman, Pastor
Pastor's Study (607) 656-7449

Website Address – www.uccgreene.org
E-mail address – UCCGREENE@juno.com
Sunday Worship Service begins at 9:55 a.m.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

December 24, 2017

"The mission of First Congregational Church is to worship God, to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to celebrate the Sacraments; to realize Christian fellowship and unity within this church and the Church Universal; to render loving service toward all people; to strive for righteousness, justice and peace.

PRELUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

INTROIT "Oh, How Joyfully"

-Brian Wren

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Sing to our God a new song;
Sing to our God all the earth.

**People: Glory to God in the highest heaven,
Peace on earth to all!**

Leader: The heavens are telling the glory of God,
Let the earth rejoice, let trees of the forest sing for joy!

**People: Glory to God in the highest heaven,
Peace on earth to all!**

***HYMN “Angels, from the Realms of Glory”**

#189

***PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

O God of the Baby of Bethlehem, we come into your presence with praise and thanksgiving. We hear the glad tidings of the angel voices, we come to experience this good news of great joy for all the people. As the shepherds traveled to Bethlehem, we have traveled here – excited, expectant, hopeful; a bit skeptical. Let the words of sacred scripture seep into our hearts, to be treasured and pondered anew. We are here; we are ready, O God! Let the light of your love break forth! Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING: Isaiah 9: 2-7

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

All: (sing) Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (vs 1)

(The candle of Hope is lit)

Leader: In this world where discontent is revealed through actions and words, there is assurance in an expectant God. We come to this nativity with hope in the same holy radiance that encompassed the shepherds in their darkness. Angelic voices declared to them and to us: the Savior, the Messiah, the Lord, has been born in Bethlehem!

**All: (sing) "Hark! the herald angels sing,
Glory to the new born King."**

(The candle of Peace is lit)

Leader: The lowly shepherds, in awe of the heavenly angel's announcement that the Holy Prince of Peace is here, traveled, finding the beloved child just as was told to them, wrapped in pieces of fabric and lying in a manger. We share in the peaceful presence of Christ our Savior!

**All: (sing) "Hark! the herald angels sing,
Glory to the new born King."**

(The candle of Joy is lit)

Leader: Joy is shared as the shepherds' lives are changed!
Following the brilliant angelic call to seek the holy,
the shepherds were witnesses to the Lord, and they
glorified and praised God. We, too, rejoice in the joy
of God's love manifested in the Christ child!

**All: (sing) "Hark! the herald angels sing,
Glory to the new born King."**

(The candle of Love is lit)

Leader: The humble Christ child was revealed to the least
likely of the world, resting his head in the lowliest
of places: a feeding trough. Christ's birth was a sign
of extravagant love from the God who is greater than
all Creation. It is a declaration of divine grace to be
shared with all people, even us, still today. Glory and
honor be to the newborn Christ!

**All: (sing) "Hark! the herald angels sing,
Glory to the new born King."**

(The Christ candle is lit)

Leader: Christ is born! The Messiah has come into the world!
May we proclaim to the world our joy and share the light that
we have received in Christ. Today, we glorify the gift of true
light and abundant life that Christ brings to the world!

All: Thanks be to God!

ANTHEM "Hope, Peace Joy and Love"

SCRIPTURE READING: Luke 2:1-20

HYMN "Away in a Manger"

#203

A CHRISTMAS STORY "The Christmas Angels"

CHRISTMAS PRAYER

HYMN "Angels We Have Heard on High"

#188

CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERTORY "Hallelujah Jesus Is Born!"

PRAYER OF DEDICATION *(in unison)*

**Christ comes! Our hearts are full, our joy is boundless.
May this offering be a living message of peace, love, spirit, joy and hope
to this church, to this community, to this nation and world. Amen.**

CANDLE-LIGHTING SERVICE FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

Leader: We come to a special part of tonight's service.
As Christ comes bringing the light of God's love,
we light our individual candles
to signify our individual and collective commitment
to live as Christ's faithful in the world.

The light will be brought to the end of each row,
tip your unlit candle into the flame so that it may take hold.
Do not tip your lit candle!
Pass the light along your row until every candle is lit.
As the candles are lit we will join in singing.

***HYMN "Silent Night"**

#186

CHRISTMAS BENEDICTION

Leader: And now let us hold up our candles...

One candle is but a flicker, but together, we create a bright flame of Christ's light in the world. Consider the beauty of our lights shining together. Jesus is the light of the world! Jesus is the hope of all our tomorrows! May we be witnesses of the light Christ brings, Amen.

As you gently extinguish your candle, carry the light of Jesus' love with you.

HYMN "Joy to the World!" (vs 1)

#179

***Those who are able are asked to stand**

*Welcome to this worship service.
Hot chocolate is served in the Social Hall following the service.*

2017 Poinsettias have been placed:

In Honor of our Grandchildren: Matthew Oderkirk; Allan Burgess; Jack Burgess, Given by Peg and George Marr

In Memory of Frank T. Moorhead Given by Donna and Kevin and Beth Moorhead

In Memory of my Famolaro Family, Miles Family, Chiarino Family and Schultheis Family and in Honor of Joanna Chiarino Given by Theresa and Tyler Schultheis

In Honor of our Parents Given by Bill and Jenn Fowler

In Memory of my Husband Walter Burrows and Daughter Tammy Given by Martha Burrows

In Memory of Cosmo Catucci and Richard and Helen Scott Given by Jordon and Deb Lilley

In Memory of Joseph & Joyce Possemato, Howard and Eva Palmatier, Given by Cary, Jodi, Harper and Jack Najarian

In Memory of Aram & Madolyn Najarian, Carlton & Marge Thompson and in Honor of Jack & Trena Najarian Given by Cary, Jodi, Harper and Jack Najarian

In Memory of Eva and Howard Palmatier and Joe and Joyce Possemato Given by Joe and Donna Possemato

In Memory of my Parents Howard & Eleanor Burden Given by Ruth Bennett

In Memory of Louis Barton, Don and Abbie Walters and in Honor of Shirley Barton, Given by Phil and Sharon Barton

In Memory of William and Steven Sanders and Lincoln and Dale Bryant and in Honor of Margaret Bryant and Kay Sanders Given by Karen, William and Shania

In Memory of Louis Barton Given by Shirley Barton

In Memory of Parents, Grandparents and loved ones and in Honor of Children and Grandchildren and loved ones Given by Russ and Nancy Haberl

In Memory of Jim and Esther Murray and Chal & Pearle Strain Given by Tom and Jan Strain

In Memory of Bob & Peg and Alayne Simmonds Given by Don Simmonds

In Memory of Arthur Gimbal and Rebecca Neal Given by Thomas and Faith Neal

In Memory of Bruce Beebe Given by Phillip & Natalie Beebe

In Memory of Dorothy LaRow and Mildred Pixley Given by Marlene and David Sherwood and Alta Martin

In Honor of Louise Richards Given by Phil and Sharon Gagnon

In Memory of my Parents, Gert and John Matson Given by Kay Doak

In Memory of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Beeber, and Mr. and Mrs. Aaron Whitman Given by the Whitman family

In Memory of John Vassil Given by Anita Vassil

In Memory of Bruce and Marjorie Evans and Robert and Esther Devlin and in Honor of our Children, Grandchildren and Great Grandchildren Given by Claus and Esther Evans

In Memory of Harold and Carolyn Winston and Henry and Helen Kroncke Given by Donna and Fred Kroncke

In Memory of Walt, Vivian, Bryce and Bill Cairns and Christine and Henry Sloan and in Honor of Grandchildren, Lauren and Zachary Given by Nancy and Ed Sloan

In Memory of Dave & Emily VanSlooten, Bob VanSlooten and Rose and Tony Paino Given by Mike Paino Family

In Memory of Thomas Breck Given by Loren and Lanette Breck