North Haven Congregational Church

United Church of Christ



North Haven, Connecticut

An Open & Affirming Congregation

FOUNDED 1716

NORTH HAVEN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Sunday, November 22, 2026 **9:30 a.m.**

*** = Please stand in body or in spirit.**

PRELUDE Largo B. Marcello

WELCOME

Leader: The Lord be with you.
Congregation: And also with you.

***THE CALL TO WORSHIP**

Leader: Blessed be our gracious God, who looks with kindness upon us.
People: We are the inheritors of the promises made long ago to our ancestors.
Leader: Blessed be our gracious God, who gathers us here in this place.
People: From across the street, from around the world, and from wherever we have wandered, God brings us home to the heart of grace.
Leader: Blessed be our gracious God, who remembers us always, and whose steadfast love endures forever.
All: Scoffers and singers, watchers and wigglers, we are those who recognize that all are redeemed by God, so we give thanks.

***OPENING HYMN** "We Gather Together" PH21
(Note this hymn is from the Pilgrim Hymnal, not Voices United)

CALL TO, AND PRAYER OF, RENEWAL

All: Merciful God, we confess that we often fail to give thanks to you – that we are slow to acknowledge that our lives are held together by your love and goodness toward us. So, gracious God: thank you.

- **Thank you, O God, for life and for the fullness of life in Christ.**

- **Thank you, O God, for all we enjoy in this world, and all that we don't enjoy, but which makes us better disciples.**
- **Thank you, O God, for the ability to gather the basic needs of life, and for the ability to share with others.**
- **Thank you, O God, for family and friends, and for your presence with us when those relationships are not all they could be.**
- **Thank you, O God, for minds and hearts that are drawn to you, for in you we find life's deepest meaning and our highest joy. Amen.**

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS & THE CANDLE OF PEACE

PRAYER FOR PEACE

All: O God of many names, lover of all people, give peace in our hearts, in our homes, in our world, in all things everywhere: the peace of our need, the peace of your will. Amen.

***GREETING OF PEACE**

L: The peace of Christ be with you!

C: And also with you!

L: Please share the peace of the Living Christ with others, with one saying, "The peace of Christ be with you," and the other responding, "And also with you."

***THE GLORIA PATRI**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost
as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

THE EARLY WORD AND NOISY OFFERING

(At this time, we invite the children to gather with Rev. Mike at the front for the Early Word [a.k.a. Children's Message] and the Noisy Offering. Following the Early Word, please join in the mutual blessing before the children depart for their Christian formation time.)

MUTUAL BLESSING WITH CHILDREN

Congregation: God be with you there.
Children: And God be with you here.

THE GIFT OF MUSIC

Autumn Carol
Words: John S. B. Monsell (1811-1875) Melody: Johann Steurlein (1546-1613) Setting by Russell Schulz-Widmar
Sung by the Chancel Choir

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

All: God of truth and light, fill our hearts and guide our steps by the ancient and holy words we are about to hear. May we all, preacher and congregation, be open to your Word, with all its challenge and comfort, its call upon us and its enlivening Spirit in us. Amen.

READINGS – Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24 — Barbara Massey
Matthew 25:31-46 — Mike Solberg

SERMON "The Closing Argument" — Mike Solberg

***HYMN** "For the Fruit of All Creation" — VU227

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING & THE OFFERTORY

***DOXOLOGY**

Praise God, from whom all blessing flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! Amen.

***LITANY OF DEDICATION**

All: Gracious God, on this day of giving thanks to you for the abundance of your love, we especially pray that what we offer now will be, most of all, the opening of our minds, hearts, wills, and hands, in service to those who bear the weight of injustice, inhumanity, and indifference - for, in them, we serve Jesus himself. May we, like all the faithful, be known for loosely holding what we have, ready to let it go for the work of repair, and for the spreading of your love and good news to all. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN** "Let All Things Now Living" VU242

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE

- Thanks to Janine Solberg for playing her flute today.
- The call to worship is based on a call from Thom Shuman, *Bearers of Grace and Justice*
- The Prayer of Peace is by Anglican Bishop George Appleton.
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The deacon/liturgist is Jim Bennett.
The scripture reader is Barbara Massey.
The greeters are Beth Anderson and Priscilla Maldonado.
The flowers are provided by John and Sue Tibor for Thanksgiving Cornucopia.
The camera operator is Joan Bennett.

JOIN US FOR FELLOWSHIP TIME IN CARROLL HALL

Church Staff: All the Members, Ministers for the World
Donna Carpenter, Office Administrator
Karlee Etter, Ministry Coordinator for Children
Brianne Goldfuss, Nursery Attendant
Jeffrey Hutchins, Director of Music
Heather Meachen, Organist
Dave Nelson, Sexton
The Reverend Mike Solberg, Interim Minister

In Our Prayers This Week are:
Sue Tibor, Melanie Howlett, Charlotte Shea
Those who struggle with addictions and their loved ones.
Those who care for aging parents or other family members with special needs.
Those who yearn for belonging through this holiday season.
Those near and far who bear the weight of injustice, inhumanity, and indifference.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DONATIONS OF NEW MEN'S AND WOMEN'S CLOTHING NEEDED Last Wednesday nine bags of clothing were donated to Columbus House. The staff person was grateful for all the clothing. In addition to the request for new underwear, socks and sweat pants and shirts, I was informed that gently used men's and women's winter jackets and coats, winter boots or shoes are needed and would be accepted. A box is located in the narthex for donations. Thank you to everyone who has donated to the Columbus House. Your generosity in helping others in need is an expression of our caring for our brothers and sisters. Collection of clothing will continue through December.

SERMONS FOR THE TAKING
There are folders out in the narthex with Mike's written sermons in them. We have just updated through November 15th and will add sermons each week.

FOOD PANTRY NEEDS
Cans of Beans (Baked, Kidney, Black), Cans of Broth, Cans of Fruit, Jars or Peanut Butter and Jelly, Jars of Gravy, Mayonnaise, Boxes of Rice, Boxes of Cake Mix/Brownie Mix, boxes of Cereal, Boxes of Pasta, Coffee, Tea, Pamalat Milk, and Juice.

ATTENTION PHOTOGRAPHERS
We are seeking a few photographs with good resolution of our church and/or events and/or people for our new website that is under construction. These may also be used for our social media. The recommendation is a minimum of 1350x660 pixels (full resolution phone pictures may qualify, along with camera pics). If you have a good pic that might work, please see or contact Patience B. Thanks!

BRASS CONCERT ON SAT., DEC 5, AT 7:00 p.m.
We will soon be welcoming our good friends, *Brass,* on Saturday December 5, at 7:00 p.m.! Led by North Havener Drew Mazurek, *Brass* is a quintet of professional musicians brought together by a love of virtuoso playing and the camaraderie generated by live performance. *Brass* goes back to the very beginning of the Pierpont Concert Series over 20 years ago! We would be delighted to welcome them back with a full church! The sound of this brass quintet at the holidays is very iconic and heartwarming, especially in such a special sanctuary. Their concert will feature special arrangements of Christmas and seasonal favorites. Tickets are $15 at the door, with 12 and under free, or call the church office to reserve them.

ADVENT CELEBRATION
Join us on Dec. 13, from 11:00 - 1:00, for fellowship, a light breakfast, comradery and Advent themed crafting. If you plan to attend, please sign-up to bring mini bagels (a dozen) and cream cheese, or mini muffins (a dozen) and butter, or fresh fruit salad, or yogurt, or fruit juice. You can add your name to the sign-up sheet while enjoying Sundays' coffee hour in Carroll Hall.

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT
Our annual pageant will be presented during our Sunday worship service on December 20. All are invited (no rehearsal required) to participate; whether as shepherds, angels, or animals. When you arrive that morning, you will find scattered throughout the pews various costume pieces. Make sure all the kids have something, and then please take something for your own use during the retelling of our favorite story.

Have you signed up for the UCC Daily Devotionals? Maybe as Advent begins next week, you can start the new Christian year with a new Christian habit? Here's an example from last Friday. You can receive them every day in your email inbox. Sign up here: https://www.ucc.org/daily-devotional/

Integrity, by Phiwa Langeni | published on Nov 20, 2026

All of God lives fully in Christ (even when Christ was on earth). And in him you have a full and true life. – Colossians 2:9-10a (ICB)

The word integrity has roots in the word integrate, which generally means to bring parts together into a whole. When we think of the word integrity, we sometimes default to the first definition given by our friends over at Merriam-Webster – "the quality of being honest and fair" – rather than the second definition in the same dictionary – "the state of being complete or whole."

Living with integrity allows us to experience the peace and joy that emerge with overcoming dividedness in its many forms in our lives. It does not mean living without mistakes or bad decisions or struggles.

It isn't easy to live with integrity, especially when we come face-to-face with parts of ourselves that are disappointing or not quite what we'd like.

I'm convinced that wholeness is God's desire for us. When we're whole, we're able to embrace and share the gifts we're given. Each and every day is an opportunity to actively live into who God continues to create us to be.

We're called to live with integrity, to bring forth all of who we are toward wholeness. So, let's be honest and fair with ourselves and with each other. Let's open up to how God is drawing us toward true integration within and among each self, attending to the divine presence embedded in every part of Creation.

Because to live a full life is to allow God to live fully in us.

Prayer:
Deliver us from dividedness, internally and externally. Invite us fully into the beautiful struggle of living with integrity. Amen.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday	**11/22**	9:30 a.m. 10:45 1:00 p.m.	WORSHIP (In-Person/Live Stream) Adult Bible Study Tibetan American (K, CR)
Monday	**11/23**		FOOD PANTRY CLOSED
Tuesday	**11/24**	10:00 a.m. 12:00p.m. 3:00 6:00	Al-Anon (CH) PLP (Parking lot or CH) United Girls' Choir Bible Study (Zoom)
Wednesday	**11/25**		WINDOW MAILING
Thursday	**11/26**		Thanksgiving, Office Closed
Friday	**11/27**		Office Closed
Saturday	**11/28**		
Sunday	**11/29**	9:30 a.m. 10:45 a.m. 1:00 p.m.	WORSHIP (In-Person/Live Stream) Adult Bible Study (K) Tibetan American (RR,CR)

MISSION

Our church's mission is to bind ourselves with Jesus Christ in:

- *Worship together;*
- *Nurture of Christian discipleship; and*
- *Compassionate service to our community and beyond*

VISION

We are a hub for the larger community as a church of action:

- *Conducting regular, robust worship in a responsible and relevant way in an ever changing and challenging world;*
- *Welcoming all people from different and diverse backgrounds to become a community of disciples together; and*
- *Involved in purposeful action and activities through the structure of self-directed Mission Teams.*

VALUES

We:

- *Pray together, encourage each other, and trust one another;*
- *Take personal responsibility for fellowship and our community; and*
- *Celebrate with honored tradi*



- We are off to a strong start with our pledging for 2027! As of Wednesday, we had 51 pledges for a total of $174,000. We expect something like 75+ pledges when all are in, and we hope to get to a total past $200,000. We know there are a few we don't have included in the total yet, and reminder calls and emails have begun.

- If you have not yet returned your pledge card for 2027, please do so soon, so we can plan well for next year (and you can avoid getting a phone call! – lol).

It doesn't matter how much you have. What matters is how much you are willing to give from what you have. I am not trying to make life easier for others by making life harder for you. But it is only fair for you to share with them when you have so much, and they have so little. Later, when they have more than enough, and you are in need, they can share with you. Then everyone will have a fair share, just as the Scriptures say, "Those who gathered too much had nothing left. Those who gathered only a little had all they needed." (2 Corinthians 8:12-15)

SAVE THE DATES

November 22	Noisy Offering Sunday Thanksgiving Sunday
December 5	Christmas *Brass* concert at 7:00 p.m.
December 6	All-come Discovery Meeting after worship (All are encouraged to attend and share thoughts about the past, present, and future of our congregation, as it relates to our pastoral search process)
December 9	Zoom version of the above meeting – 7:00 p.m. (links will be in emails to the whole congregation)
December 13	Advent celebration: 11:00 -1:00 (Please note time change)
December 20	Annual Christmas Pageant during worship
December 24	Christmas Eve service at 7:00 p.m.
FOOD PANTRY CHRISTMAS	Pack boxes - Dec. 17 & 18 Pick-up & deliver - Dec. 19 *(Additional volunteers needed – call office to sign up now)*