

First Sunday in Advent; Hanging of the Greens
December 3rd, 2023

Rev. Jesse Kearns, Pastor
First Christian Church Chico



(Disciples of Christ)

AGREE TO DIFFER • RESOLVE TO LOVE • UNITE TO SERVE

Wi-Fi Network: FCCDOC Password: 5303433727

10 a.m. Sunday Worship • Ph. 530-343-3727 • chicodisciples@gmail.com
fccchico.com  [fccchico](https://www.facebook.com/fccchico)  [fccchico](https://www.instagram.com/fccchico)  [ChicoFCC](https://twitter.com/ChicoFCC)  [FCCChico](https://www.youtube.com/FCCChico)

Welcome Visitors! We are excited that you have chosen to worship with us today; all are welcome and beloved—all races, gender identities, sexual orientations, socio-economic statuses, *everyone*.

I. Prelude (“Sing it True”)

II. Ringing of the Bell

III. Candle Lighting Liturgy

How does a weary world hope?

By telling stories of hope,
By lighting candles in the night,
And planting seeds in the winter that
Will bloom in the spring.

By praying for children as they grow, and
Picking up trash on the sidewalk.

By insisting that small acts can make a
difference.

There are a million ways to practice hope.
So today we light the candle of hope as a reminder
and a charge.

**With God’s help, may we bring hope
Into a weary world. Amen.**

IV. Welcome and Announcements – (Bill Peterson)

- Today – Fellowship following service hosted by Elders with candy cane hunt and gift bags for children.
- Monday – 2:30 p.m. String Ensemble, Chapel
- Tuesday – 11:30 a.m. Music Jam practice, Room 4; 7:00 p.m. Church Board meeting, Zoom
- Wednesday – 6:00 p.m. Scouts BSA, Koinonia Hall, Fireside
- Thursday – Living the Questions Bible Study, Room 6 and on Zoom
- Sunday – 8:30 a.m. Sacred Grounds Room 6 and Zoom; 10:00 a.m. Worship in sanctuary, Zoom, and FaceBook Live; Fellowship in K-Hall following the service.
- Offerings may be put in the offering plate which is near the bulletins near the entrance of the sanctuary

V. Call to Worship – (Bill Peterson)

In God's house, we can be joyful.

We can be grateful.

We can be hopeful.

In God's house, we can be weary.

We can be anxious.

We can be grieving.

In God's house, we can be honest—

**inspired or tired,
delighted or doubtful,
connected or curious,
and everything in between.**

This is God's house. You are welcome exactly as you are.

Let us worship our loving God.

VI. Opening Hymn –CH# 138 “Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn” (Joshua Hegg)

Awake! Awake and greet the new morn,
for angels herald its dawning.
sing out your joy, for soon he is born,
behold! the Child of our longing.
Come as a baby weak and poor,
to bring all hearts together,
he opens wide the heav'nly door,
and lives now inside us forever.

In deepest night his coming shall be,
when all the world is despairing,
as morning light so quiet and free,
so warm and gentle and caring.
Then shall the silent join in song,
The tired shall leap in wonder,
the weak be raised above the strong,
and weapons be broken asunder.

Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night,
though dark the winter and cheerless,
the rising sun shall crown you with light,
be strong and loving and fearless;
Love be our song and love our prayer,
and love, our endless story,
may God fill ev'ry day we share,
and bring us at last into glory.

VII. Call to Confession

Friends, in today's scripture passage, a man named Zechariah is given good news from God and his response is to ask, "How can this be?"

Have any of you ever felt that way when receiving good news?

It can be hard to receive good news when we don't expect it.

It can be hard to accept God's grace and God's love when we think we don't deserve it.

But friends, scripture tells us over and over again of a loving, generous, and gracious God. So may we come to the prayer of confession today, not with fear, but with an awe so deep that we ask ourselves, "How can this be?"

Let us pray:

VIII. Prayer of Confession

Gracious God, we are weary.

For weary bodies that ache and cry out, we pray:

Forgive us for pushing ourselves too hard.

Reminds us that we deserve Sabbath rest.

For weary minds that feel overwhelmed and saturated with news, we pray:

Forgive us for creating so many distractions.

Remind us that in the quiet, we can hear you.

For weary hearts that long to feel the joy of this season, we pray:

Forgive us for being impatient with ourselves.

Remind us that healing takes time, and that joy and grief can coexist.

For the weary edges of our faith that struggle to hold onto hope,

Forgive us. Remind us of Zechariah and Elizabeth.

Remind us that your good news knows no bounds. Amen.

IX. Affirmation of Faith

We believe in a God who hears our prayers, who knows the shape and form of our weariness.

We believe in a God who wants joy and delight for us,

**not just survival and existence.
We believe in a God who looks ahead,
who is not done dreaming for the world—
a God who sends hope in the form of people and
change,
movements and Spirit.
And so we return to this space.
We bring our joy and our weariness
like two sides of the same coin,
and we trust that God is already at work.
Yes, we believe in a God who hears our prayers.
Thanks be to God for a love like that.
Amen.**

X. Children Fourth Grade and Under Dismissed for Sunday School

XI. Scripture Reading Luke 1:1-23 (NRSV)

Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.

In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years. Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense. Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the

Lord.” Zechariah said to the angel, “How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years.” The angel replied, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur.” Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah, and wondered at his delay in the sanctuary. When he did come out, he could not speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept motioning to them and remained unable to speak. When his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

XII. Sermon – “We Acknowledge Our Weariness” (Rev. Jesse Kearns)

XIII. Hymn of Invitation and Reflection – CH# 119 “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” (Joshua Hegg)

O come O come Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death’s deep shadows put to flight.

Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!
O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,
And order all things, far and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And cause us in her ways to go.
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Desire of nations, bind
All peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife and quarrels cease;
Fill the whole world with heaven’s peace.

Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

XIV. Moments for Mission

XV. Prayers of the People

**XVI. Communion Song – CH #134 “Emmanuel,
Emmanuel” x2 (Joshua Hegg)**

Emmanuel, Emmanuel,
His name is called Emmanuel.
God with us,
Revealed in us,
His name is called, Emmanuel.

Emmanuel, Emmanuel,
His name is called Emmanuel.
God with us,
Revealed in us,
His name is called, Emmanuel.

**XVII. Institution of Communion (Peggy
Davidson, Kevin Zeitler, elders)**

XVIII. Partaking Communion Together

XIX. Blessing/Benediction

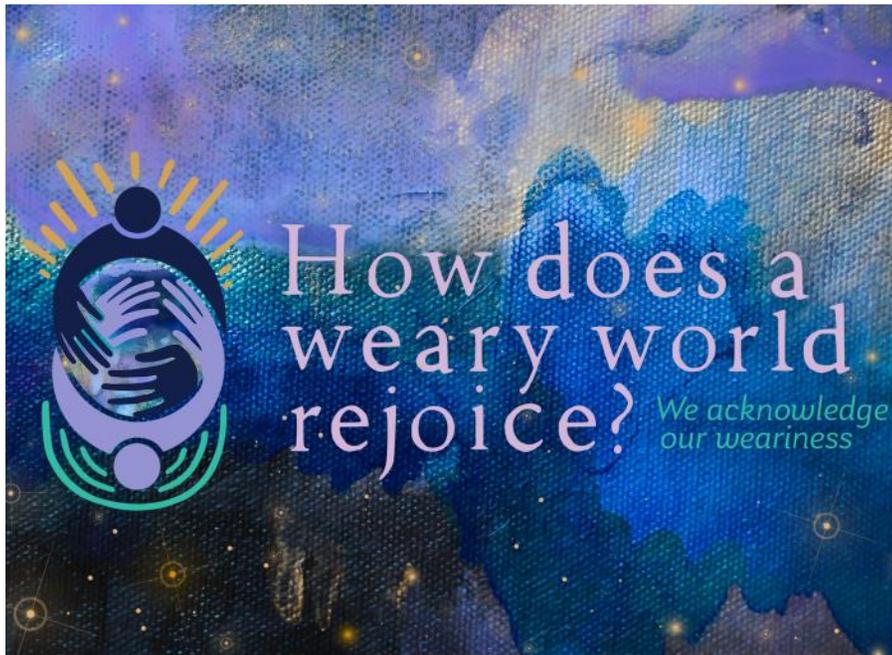
XX. Postlude (Joshua Hegg)



- **Christmas Flowers** Once again, we will be decorating the Sanctuary and chapel with poinsettias and holiday flowers. Envelopes are in the pew racks.

**The cost is \$12. The last day to order is
December 17th.**

- **Advent Devotionals! Limited paper copies are now in the Sanctuary!** We will be using Sanctified Art’s Advent Devotional “How Does A Weary World Rejoice?” that will have art, poetry, and reflections for Advent in Luke’s Gospel. The devotional is 30 pages so we are trying to print only as many as we need. **If you would like one and there aren’t any left, please let the church office know (chicodisciples@gmail.com or 530-343-3727) and we’ll print one just for you!** Our friends at A Sanctified Art have provided a special e-reader version of this year’s Advent devotional, which you can access on your computer and mobile devices—email the church office and we’ll send you the link!



Attendance

Attendance for November 26th, 2023:

In person: 43 Online: 0 Offline: 0 Total: 43

Credits

- Bulletin Graphic: “Annunciation to Zechariah” by Lauren Wright Pittman | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org
- “Sing it True” by Can Olgun and the [Chapel Church Band](#) at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, with lyrics by Rev. Sarah Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org
- “Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn” Words and Music: Marty Haugen, 1983. © 1983 GIA Publications, Inc.
- “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” Words: Latin hymn (12th century); st. 1-2 tr. John Mason Neale, 1851; st. 3-4 tr. Henry Sloan Coffin, 1916. Music: French melody (15th century); arr. And harm. Thomas Helmore, 1854. CCLI Song #31982. Words: Public Domain; Music: Public Domain
- “Emmanuel, Emmanuel” Words and Music: Bob McGee, 1976. © 1976 C. A. Music (a div. of Christian Artists Corp.) all rights reserved. Used by permission. CCLI # 12949.
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This Sunday—First Sunday in Advent; Hanging of the Greens

- 8:30 a.m. Sacred Grounds Adult Faith Formation Christian Education, Room 6 and on [Zoom](#)
- 10:00 a.m. Worship in Sanctuary and Worship Streamed Live on [Zoom](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Fellowship hosted by Elders, with candy cane hunt and gift bags for children, Koinonia Hall
- 1:00 p.m. Iglesia de Cristo Agua Viva, Sanctuary

Monday

- 2:30 p.m. String Ensemble, Chapel

Tuesday

- 11:30 a.m. Music Jam, Room 4
- 7:00 p.m. Church Board Meeting, Zoom

Wednesday

- 6:00 p.m. Scouts BSA, Koinonia Hall, Fireside

Thursday

- 6:30 p.m. Living the Questions Bible Study, Room 6 and on [Zoom](#)

Next Sunday—Second Sunday in Advent

- 8:30 a.m. Sacred Grounds Adult Faith Formation Christian Education, Room 6 and on [Zoom](#)
- 10:00 a.m. Worship in Sanctuary and Worship Streamed Live on [Zoom](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Fellowship, Koinonia Hall
- 1:00 p.m. Iglesia de Cristo Agua Viva, Sanctuary

Some FAQs for Visitors

- **What is Communion?** Communion is a part of each Sunday morning where we remember the last meal that Jesus ate with the disciples by eating bread and drinking grape juice.
- **May I receive Communion?** Yes! Everyone is invited to receive -- we have no barrier to participating in communion.
- **What's a "Doxology"?** Some Sundays we will sing a "doxology" (literally "saying of glory") after we receive the offering. It is a prayer written in 1674 and is popular in Protestant Churches -- plus, we love the words.
- **Do we say the Lord's Prayer together?** We do pray the Lord's Prayer together occasionally on Sunday mornings during the prayer time.
- **What else should I know?** We'd love to share more of our loving and inclusive community with you. At FCC, you'll find all generations worshipping together and participating in church activities. We have activities for kids and youth, and we love to share in community together.
- **Visit our website to donate online, subscribe to our mailing lists, and learn more about us!** www.fccchico.com
- **Masks:** Masks are recommended but not required. Adult and child size masks are available in the Sanctuary as well as hand sanitizer.