



Good News is Louder
than Fear

*Christmas Eve Service
December 24th, 2025, 7 p.m.*



First Christian Church, 295 E. Washington Ave., Chico, fccchico.com

Welcome to our Community Christmas Eve worship!

Our prayer is that you will be richly blessed through our time together this evening.

- | | | | |
|------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| I. | Prelude | <i>“O, Holy Night”</i> | Nancy Thompson & Shelley Fairchild |
| II. | Ringling of the Bell | | |
| III. | Greetings and Opening Prayer | | Rev. Jesse Kearns |
| IV. | Hymn CH #148 | <i>“O Come, All Ye Faithful”</i> | Nancy Thompson |
| V. | Call to Worship | | Tom Hill |

On this holy night, we come,
dazzled and awe-struck, ready to sing alongside the angels.

On this holy night, we come,
eager and hopeful, ready to journey alongside the shepherds.

On this holy night, we come,
quietly and tenderly, ready to worship alongside Mary.

On this holy night, we come,
singing, trusting, believing, proclaiming: good news is louder than fear.
Let us worship our good news, with-us God.

VI. Lighting of the Advent Wreath—“The Christ Candle”

Rev. Gail Hill & Grace Gerfen

In a fearful world, where do you see the presence of God?

We see God’s fingerprints all around us.

We see God in the beauty of the stars.

We see God in the love of these two faith communities that have joined as one.

We see God in the dreams we hold for a better world.

You are right. Even in a fearful world, God is here. God is all around us.

On this holy night, we light the Christ Candle as a reminder of this good news.

May this flicker of light help us remember that even in a fearful world,
God’s love is all around us.

[Light candle.]

Thanks be to God for a love like that!

Amen.

VII. Unison Prayer

Rev. Jesse Kearns

Divine Love,

Tonight we light the Christ candle. It shines on younger and older.

It shines as we sing familiar carols.

It shines on our retelling the story through Scripture and song.

It shines on our world. You are the candle tonight and on Christmas Day.

We promise to be the candle from then on as the body of Christ. Amen.

VIII. Hymn CH #144 *“O Little Town of Bethlehem”* Nancy Thompson

IX. Introduction of Theme Rev. Jesse Kearns

X. Scripture Reading Isaiah 9:2-7 Tom Hill

XI. Anthem Joshua Hegg

XII. Children’s Time *“Hope in the Dark”* Rev. Gail Hill

XIII. Children are dismissed to Room 6 for Crafts

XIV. Scripture Reading Luke 2:1-20

XV. Reflection “Three Prayers for Hope” Rev. Mary Kearns

XVI. Hymn CH #143 *“Joy to the World”* Nancy Thompson

XVII. Prayer of Illumination Rev. Jesse Kearns

God of yesterday, today and tomorrow,
we long to catch a glimpse of your Spirit.

We cup our ears to hear the sound of the angel chorus.

We turn our eyes toward the sky to see if we can find your star.

We lean forward in our seat to see if we can feel your presence in our midst.

We long to catch a glimpse of your Spirit, O God.

So on this quiet night,

on this holy night,

on this joyful night,

reveal yourself to us once more.

Speak to us through the music and the children.

Speak to us through starlight and candlelight.

Speak to us through these ancient words once again.

We long to catch a glimpse of you.
Amen.

XVIII. Musical Interlude

“Show Up”

Sanctified Art

XIX. A Prayer of the People

Rev. Jesse Kearns

Holy One,
tonight is a night for good news.
Tonight is a night for candles in the window and joyful music in the air.
Tonight is a night for family around the table, and children too excited to sleep.
Tonight is a night for Christmas caroling and storytelling.
Tonight is a night for good news.
And we are so grateful for that.
We are so grateful for the good-news moments you sprinkle throughout our days.
However, we also pray for those, both inside and outside this room, who struggle to
hear the good news
over the sound of their fear.
For despite the joy of this evening,
we are well aware that we live in a world with plenty of reasons to be afraid.
We are afraid of the divisions that rack our country.
We are afraid of messing up our relationships, or losing the ones we love.
We are afraid of climate change and of saying the wrong thing.
Everywhere we look, we have reasons to be afraid.
And if we're honest, that fear can cling to us.
So tonight, with-us God, we ask for your presence among us.
So just like the shepherds on that first Christmas,
may we hear the voice of angels.
May you fill our hearts with a holy hope.
And may we know, deep in our bones, that your good news *is* louder than fear.
And until the day when every reason to be afraid has been washed away,
we ask that you would continue to inspire courage, conviction, and hope in us.
Point our hearts toward sources of joy.
Remind us of the good news of this night, and may we always hold onto some portion
of the wonder, the
mystery, and the joy found here.

With hope, we lift our voices together to pray the words your son taught us to pray.

Saying. . .

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 debts as we forgive our debtors

And lead us not into temptation,

But deliver us from evil

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and

The glory forever, Amen.

XX. *Offering

Rev. Gail Hill & Rev. Jesse Kearns

XXI. Offertory

"What Child Is This"

Nancy Thompson

XXII. Sending Forth the Light from the Christ Candle

Rev. Gail Hill & Rev. Jesse Kearns

XXIII. Carol

"Silent Night, Holy Night"

“Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child, holy infant so tender
and mild, sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.
Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight, glories
stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing alleluia;
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!
Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love’s pure light
radiant beams from thy holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.
Silent night, holy night, wondrous star, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing, alleluia to our King;
Christ, the Savior, is born, Christ the Savior, is born.”

(Extinguish your candles before you leave the sanctuary and place them in a container in the narthex as you leave. May the Light and Love of Christ go with you into the world.)

XXIV. Benediction

Rev. Gail Hill

*Our offering this evening will go to **Uplift Boutique**, a free family resource store open to all Butte, Glenn, and Tehama County Reunified families and RFA or Kinship homes who have active placements or community families that will benefit from this resource.

1. O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful, and tri - um - phant,
 2. Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,
 3. Child, for us sin - ners poor and in the man - ger,
 4. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born for our sal - va - tion,

O come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;
 sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heaven a - bove!
 we would em - brace thee, with love and awe;
 Je - sus, to thee be all glo - ry given;

come and be - hold him, born the King of an - gels;
 Glo - ry to God, all glo - ry in the high - est;
 who would not love thee, lov - ing us so dear - ly?
 Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing;

Descant
 3. O come, O come,

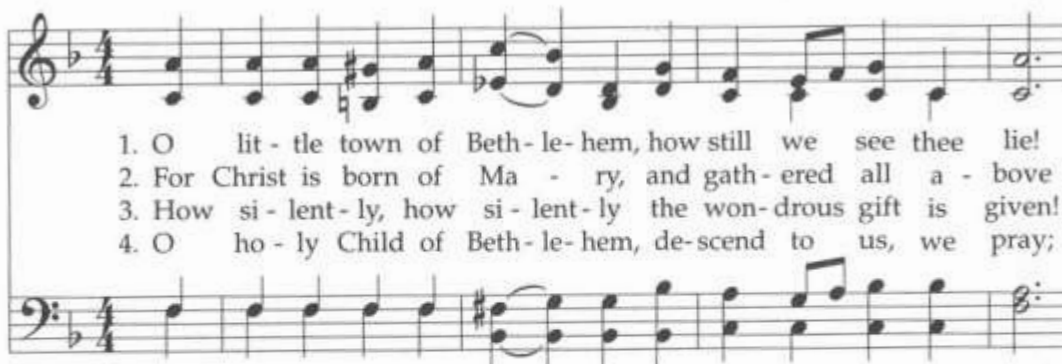
Refrain
 O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,

WORDS: John Francis Wade, 1743; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1841, and others
 MUSIC: John Francis Wade, 1743; desc. David Willcocks, 1961

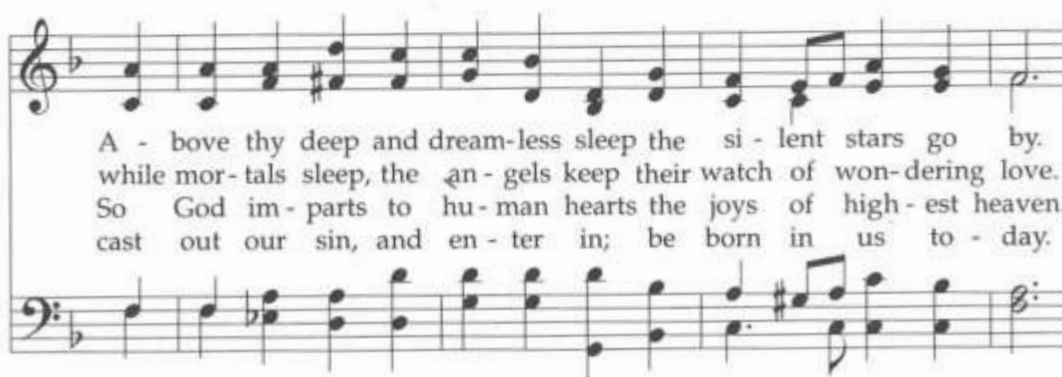
ADESTE FIDELES
 Irr. w. refrain

144

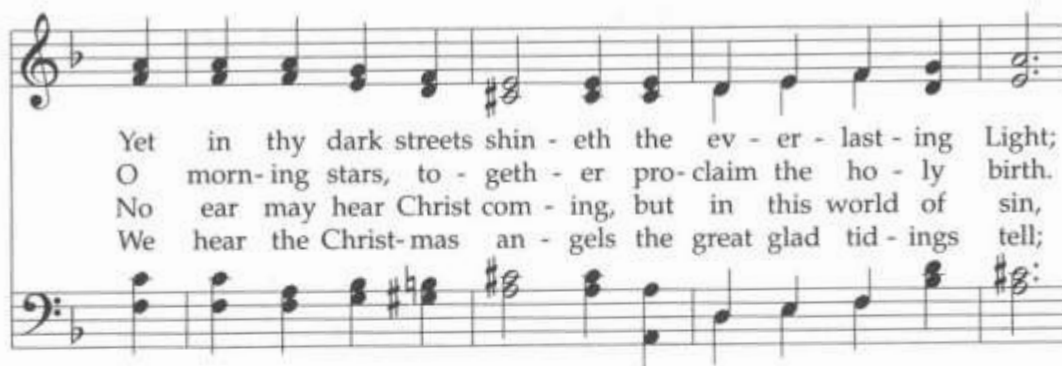
O Little Town of Bethlehem



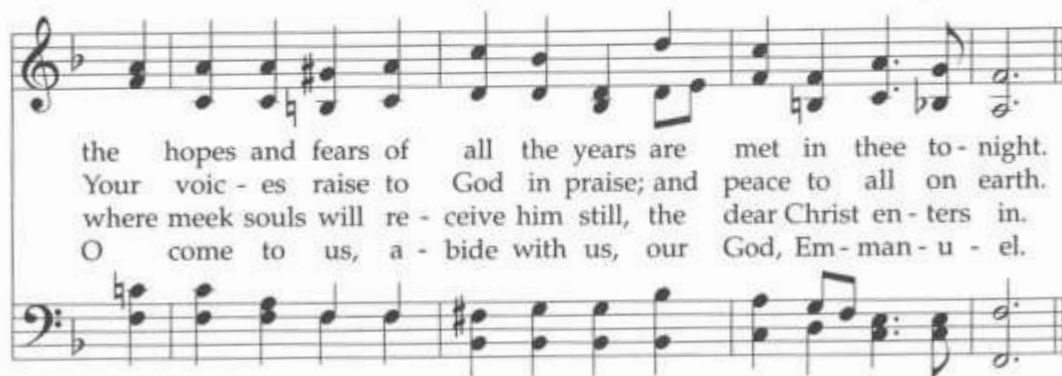
1. O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
 2. For Christ is born of Ma - ry, and gath - ered all a - bove
 3. How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is given!
 4. O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream - less sleep the si - lent stars go by.
 while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - dering love.
 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the joys of high - est heaven.
 cast out our sin, and en - ter in; be born in us to - day.



Yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing Light;
 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth.
 No ear may hear Christ com - ing, but in this world of sin,
 We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;



the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
 Your voic - es raise to God in praise; and peace to all on earth.
 where meek souls will re - ceive him still, the dear Christ en - ters in.
 O come to us, a - bide with us, our God, Em - man - u - el.

WORDS: Phillips Brooks, 1868, alt.
 MUSIC: Lewis H. Redner, 1868

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ST. LOUIS
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Joy to the World

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1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -
 2. Joy to the world, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their
 3. He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the

ceive her King; let ev - ery heart pre - pare him room,
 songs em - ploy; while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
 na - tions prove the glo - ries of his right - eous - ness,

and heaven and na - ture sing, and heaven and na - ture
 re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing
 and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his

And heaven and na - ture sing, and
 Re - peat the sound - ing joy, re -
 And won - ders of his love, and

sing, and heaven, and heaven and na - ture sing.
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.
 heaven and na - ture sing,
 peat the sound - ing joy,
 won - ders of his love,

WORDS: Isaac Watts, 1719

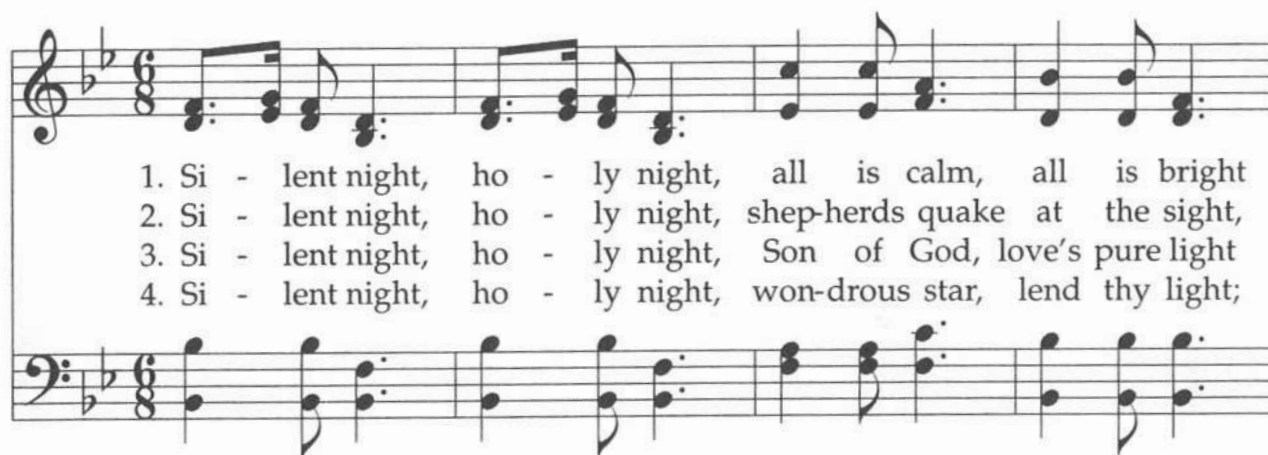
MUSIC: Attr. George Frederick Handel, 1741; arr. Lowell Mason, 1848

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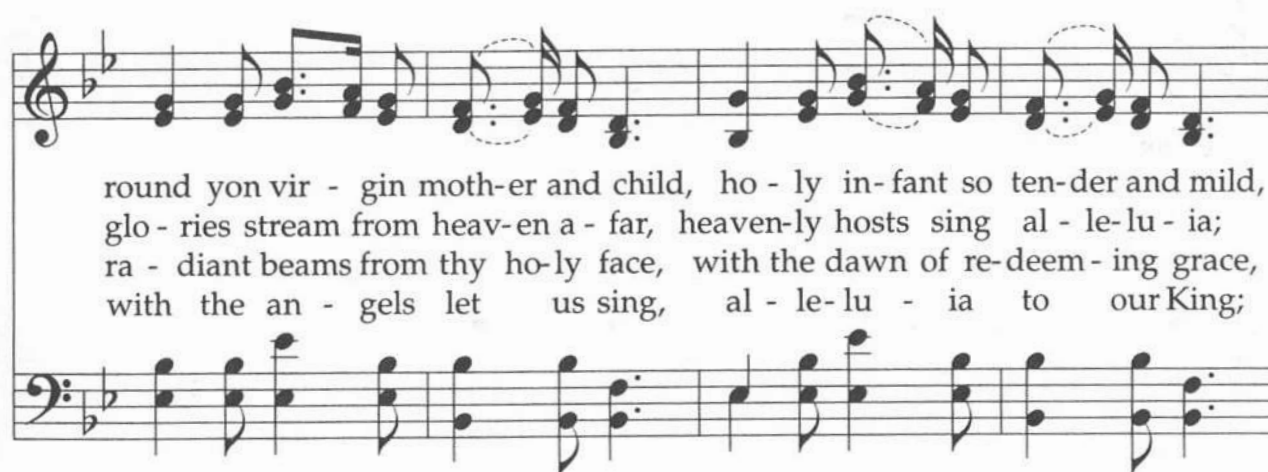
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Silent Night, Holy Night

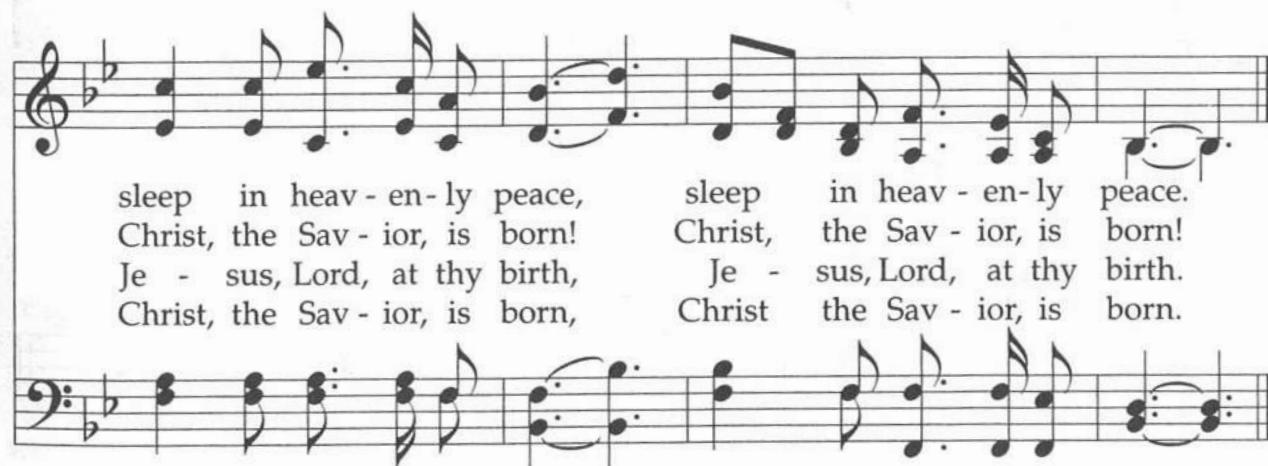
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1. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, all is calm, all is bright
 2. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, shep-herds quake at the sight,
 3. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, Son of God, love's pure light
 4. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, won-drous star, lend thy light;



round yon vir - gin moth-er and child, ho - ly in-fant so ten-der and mild,
 glo - ries stream from heav-en a - far, heav-en-ly hosts sing al - le-lu - ia;
 ra - diant beams from thy ho-ly face, with the dawn of re-deem - ing grace,
 with the an - gels let us sing, al - le-lu - ia to our King;



sleep in heav - en - ly peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
 Christ, the Sav - ior, is born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!
 Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.
 Christ, the Sav - ior, is born, Christ the Sav - ior, is born.

WORDS: Joseph Mohr, 1818; tr. John F. Young, 1863
 MUSIC: Franz Gruber, 1818

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THE STORY OF OUR SERVICE

The ecumenical candlelight Christmas Eve service started in 2011 when the pastors of New Vision United Church of Christ and First Christian Church decided to hold a joint service. In 2015, First Baptist Church came on board. In 2017, the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship joined in for this special celebration. In 2020, we had gathered via Zoom during the COVID shutdown, then in 2021, we met both in person and on Zoom, and decided we would continue to offer the service via Zoom and Facebook Live for those who are unable to attend live.

Participants:

- Rev. Gail Hill, Pastor of Chico First Baptist Church
- Rev. Jesse Kearns, Pastor of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- Tom Hill, Deacon, Chico First Baptist Church
- Grace Gerfen, member, Chico First Baptist Church
- Rev. Mary Kearns, Chaplain, First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- Joshua Hegg, pianist, First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- Nancy Thompson, pianist, First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- Shelley Fairchild, musician, First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Credits

- Graphic: “Good, New” by Carmelle Beaugelin Caldwell | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org
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