



December 17th, 2023 Third Sunday in Advent

Guest Preacher Rev. Kacey Alexander

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](mailto:chicodisciples@gmail.com)

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**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 practice joy?

**By dancing, and throwing birthday parties.**

By hanging Christmas lights, and holding sleepy babies. By singing loudly, and looking for good news.

**By telling the story of Jesus, and showing up for our community.**

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

**With God’s help, may we bring joy into a weary world. Amen.**

## IV. Welcome and Announcements – (Jesse Kearns)

- Today – Fellowship following service
- Monday – 2:30 p.m. String Ensemble, Chapel; 7:00 p.m. Faith in Films, Room 6
- Tuesday – 11:30 a.m. Music Jam practice, Room 4; 2:00 p.m. WICS, Fireside; 7:00 p.m. Elders, Zoom
- Wednesday – 6:00 p.m. Scouts BSA, Koinonia Hall, Fireside; 7:00 p.m. Faith in Films, Room 6

- Thursday – 8:30 a.m. Worship Breakfast, Cozy Diner
- 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. 7:00 p.m. Candlelight Christmas Eve Service with First Baptist and Unitarian Universalists, Sanctuary.
- Offerings may be put in the offering plate which is near the bulletins near the entrance of the sanctuary

## V. Call to Worship – (Jesse Kearns)

Our God can part the sea.

**God can bring water from a rock, and provide bread in the desert.**

Our God can walk on water.

**God can heal the sick, and turn water into wine.**

Our God sets the stars in the sky.

**God hears our voice when we cry, and is closer than our own breath.**

There is nothing our God cannot do.

**Let us stand in awe. Let us worship God with wonder.**

## VI. Opening Hymn –CH# 70 “God of the Sparrow God of the Whale” (Joshua Hegg)

God of the sparrow God of the whale

God of the swirling stars

How does the creature say Awe

How does the creature say Praise

God of the earthquake God of the storm

God of the trumpet blast

How does the creature cry Woe

How does the creature cry Save

God of the rainbow God of the cross

God of the empty grave

How does the creature say Grace

How does the creature say Thanks

God of the hungry God of the sick

God of the prodigal

How does the creature say Care

How does the creature say Life

God of the neighbor God of the foe

God of the pruning hook

How does the creature say Love

How does the creature say Peace

God of the ages, God near at hand  
God of the loving heart  
How do your children say Joy  
How do your children say Home

## VII. Call to Confession

If you spend any time with a child, you will quickly notice that children see the world differently.  
For a child, a ladybug is a miracle.  
A pine tree is a wonder.  
Curiosity is a love language, and water is not only for survival, but for joy.  
As adults, we forget this language of awe and wonder, and when we do, we distance ourselves from God.  
In confession, we have the opportunity to close that distance.  
So let us return to God with hearts wide open.  
Let us return to God in prayer.  
Join me in the prayer of confession:

## VIII. Prayer of Confession

**Holy God,**  
**Somewhere in our childhood we face pressure to outgrow awe.**  
**We turn into adults who obsess over data and facts.**

**We praise those who have answers, and assume that wonder is an answerless game.**  
**Forgive us for closing that door to you.**  
**Remind us that the kingdom of God belongs to children.**  
**Teach us the ways of awe and wonder, so that like Zechariah,**  
**when we find ourselves speechless, our first words will be words of praise.**  
**With hearts open wide, we pray, amen.**

## IX. Affirmation of Faith

We believe in a God who knows our names,  
**who counts the hairs on our heads, and carries the dreams in our hearts.**  
We believe that God's fingerprints are all over creation,  
**and that God is forever speaking to us in a million different ways.**  
We believe that awe and wonder,  
**goosebumps and laughter, telling stories and paying attention,**  
are all ways that we can say thank you to our creating, sustaining, and loving God.  
**Therefore we commit ourselves to moving through this world with eyes wide open, with porous hearts, and grateful spirits.**

We commit ourselves to living lives of awe, wonder,  
and gratitude,

**trusting that these things will forever draw us  
deeper into God's loving arms.**

We believe.

**We stand in awe.**

**Thanks be to God!**

## **X. Children Fourth Grade and Under Dismissed for Sunday School**

### **XI. Scripture Reading Luke 1:57-66 (NRSV)**

Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. But his mother said, "No; he is to be called John." They said to her, "None of your relatives has this name." Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And all of them were amazed. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. All who heard them pondered them and

said, "What then will this child become?" For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him.

### **XII. Sermon – "We Prepare to be Amazed" (Rev. Kacey Alexander)**

### **XIII. Hymn of Invitation and Reflection – CH# 619 "My Life Flows On" (Joshua Hegg)**

My life flows on in endless song;  
above earth's lamentation,  
I hear the clear, though far off hymn  
that hails a new creation.

No storm can shake my inmost calm  
while to that Rock I'm clinging.  
Since love is Lord of heav'n and earth,  
how can I keep from singing?

Through all the tumult and the strife,  
I hear that music ringing.  
It finds an echo in my soul.  
How can I keep from singing?

No storm can shake my inmost calm  
while to that Rock I'm clinging.  
Since love is Lord of heav'n and earth,  
how can I keep from singing?

What though my joys and comforts die?  
I know my Savior liveth.  
What though the darkness gather round?  
Songs in the night he giveth.

No storm can shake my inmost calm  
while to that Rock I'm clinging.  
Since love is Lord of heav'n and earth,  
how can I keep from singing?

The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart,  
a fountain ever springing!  
All things are mine since I am his!  
How can I keep from singing?

No storm can shake my inmost calm  
while to that Rock I'm clinging.  
Since love is Lord of heav'n and earth,  
how can I keep from singing?

#### **XIV. Moments for Mission**

#### **XV. Prayers of the People**

#### **XVI. Communion Song – “With Joy Draw Water” (Joshua Hegg) Please the Next Page for Music**

With joy draw water from the spring;  
salvation's living well.  
The Holy One is in your midst;  
Glad praises sing and tell!

A shoot has sprung from Jesse's tree;  
Of God the chosen One.  
A branch of knowledge and of truth;  
A gift of love has come!

With love the poor will be received;  
The proud will turn aside;  
And faithfulness will be a path,  
And righteousness the guide!

The wolf shall lie down with the lamb;  
The calf and lion play.  
God's peace shall dwell within the land;  
A child shall show the way!

With joy draw water from the spring;  
Salvation's living well.  
The Holy One is in your midst;  
Glad praises sing and tell!



# With Joy Draw Water

109

Anne McKinstry, 1986, 1993

Isa. 11:1-10; 12:2-6

1 With joy draw wa - ter from the spring; sal - va - tion's liv - ing well.  
 2 A shoot has sprung from Jes - se's tree; of God the cho - sen One.  
 3 With love the poor will be re - ceived; the proud will turn a - side;  
 4 The wolf shall lie down with the lamb; the calf and li - on play.  
 5 With joy draw wa - ter from the spring; sal - va - tion's liv - ing well.

The Ho - ly One is in your midst; glad prais - es sing and tell!  
 A branch of knowl - edge and of truth; a gift of love has come!  
 And faith - ful - ness will be a path, and righ - teous - ness the guide!  
 God's peace shall dwell with - in the land; a child shall show the way!  
 The Ho - ly One is in your midst; glad prais - es sing and tell!

*This text combines images from two Advent readings from the book of Isaiah, including the passage anticipating the reign of peace. The author, Anne McKinstry, has served as a writer-in-residence at Otis United Church of Christ in Massachusetts.*

Tune: ST. COLUMBA altered to 8.6.8.6.  
*Irish traditional melody*  
Harm. Charles V. Stanford, 1906

New Century Hymnal

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**XVII. Institution of Communion (Nancy Morgans-Ferguson, Bobbi Robinson, 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. Today is the last day to order Christmas Flowers.**

## Attendance

### Attendance for December 10th, 2023:

In person: 47

Online: 11

Total: 58

## Credits

- Bulletin Graphic: "What Wonder Turns Into" by Lisle Gwynn Garrity | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org
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- "My Life Flows On" Words and Music: Robert Lowry, 1869, alt. Hymns
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ABIDE WITH US

when we gather to  
discover friendship and faith  
in summer camps

ABIDE WITH US

when we welcome a new pastor  
to our congregation

ABIDE WITH US

when we nurture one who feels called to serve you in ministry

ABIDE WITH US

when we seek to break down barriers of race, gender,  
and sexual identity

ABIDE WITH US

when we hold one another accountable and ethical

ABIDE WITH US

when we engage in mission together

ABIDE WITH US

when we gather for assemblies and celebrations

“OH, COME TO US, ABIDE WITH US, OUR LORD EMMANUEL.”

*Your Christmas offering equips our Regional church to provide an abiding presence in summer camp settings, congregational life, and leadership gatherings. Your gift enables our shared ministry to give support to Elders, Sunday School teachers, youth group sponsors, worship leaders, seminarians, and pastors. With your gift, connections are made between congregations and among Disciples across our Regional geography and around the world.*

*You are invited to make a gift to equip our  
Region's presence with your congregation.*



CHRISTMAS OFFERING

*2023 Special Day Offering of Disciples Mission Fund  
supporting the ministries of our Regional church*



# ABIDE WITH US



CHRISTMAS OFFERING

*A Special Day Offering of Disciples Mission Fund  
supporting the ministries of our Regional church*



**This Sunday—Guest Preacher Rev. Kacey Alexander;  
Third Sunday in Advent; Last day to order Christmas  
Flowers**

- 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

**Monday**

- 2:30 p.m. String Ensemble, Chapel
- 7:00 p.m. Faith in Films, Room 6

**Tuesday**

- 11:30 a.m. Music Jam, Room 4
- 2:00 p.m. WICS, **Fireside**
- 7:00 p.m. Elders Meeting, Zoom

**Wednesday**

- 6:00 p.m. Scouts BSA, Koinonia Hall, Fireside
- 7:00 p.m. Faith in Films, Room 6

**Thursday**

- 8:30 a.m. Worship Breakfast, Cozy Diner

**Next Sunday—Fourth Sunday in Advent; Christmas  
Eve**

- 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
- **7:00 p.m. Joint Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with First Baptist and Unitarian Universalist, 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](http://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.