



# *We Are Not Alone*

**Rev. Jesse Kearns, Pastor**

**December 18th, 2022—Fourth Sunday of Advent**



**FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH CHICO  
(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)**

**AGREE TO DIFFER • RESOLVE TO LOVE • UNITE TO SERVE**

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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 – (Joshua Hegg)**

## **II. Welcome and Announcements/Moments for Mission– (Mary Kearns)**

- Today – Fellowship following service.
- Monday - 5:00 p.m. String Ensemble rehearsal in chapel.
- Tuesday –11:00 a.m. Music jam in Room 4; 7:00 p.m. Elder's Meeting on Zoom. No WICS meeting today.
- Wednesday –7:00 p.m. Boy Scouts in K-Hall and Fireside.
- Thursday –No Bible Study until January.
- Friday - CHURCH CLOSED THROUGH JANUARY 2, staff on vacation. 1:00 p.m. Healing Circle, Bethany
- Saturday – 7:00 p.m. Ecumenical Christmas Eve service with First Baptist Church, Chico Friends Meeting, and the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Chico. Service held at UU Fellowship in Chico on 1289 Filbert Ave. and on their Zoom room.
- Sunday – 8:30 a.m. Sacred Grounds; 10:00 a.m. Worship in sanctuary, Zoom and FaceBook Live; Fellowship in K-Hall following the service.

### III. Opening Hymn – CH #149 “Angels from the Realms of Glory” (Joshua Hegg)

Angels, from the realms of glory,  
wing your flight o’er all the earth;  
you who sang creation’s story,  
now proclaim Messiah’s birth:  
Come and worship, come and worship,  
worship Christ, the new-born King.

Shepherds in the field abiding,  
watching o’er your flocks by night,  
God with us is now residing,  
yonder shines the infant light:  
Come and worship, come and worship,  
worship Christ, the new-born King.

Sages, leave your contemplations  
brighter visions beam afar;  
seek the great Desire of nations;  
you have seen the natal star:  
Come and worship, come and worship,  
worship Christ, the new-born King.

Saints before the altar bending,  
watching long in hope and fear,  
suddenly the Lord, descending,  
here among us shall appear:  
Come and worship, come and worship,  
worship Christ, the new-born King.

### IV. Call to Confession and Words of Forgiveness – (Mary Kearns)

One of the greatest gifts and challenges of faith is that we cannot be Christian alone.

We need one another.

We need one another to grow.

We need one another to love.

And we need one another to see God more clearly. So together, let us lift our voices in unison. Let us lean into the ties that bind and pray to our merciful God.

**God of today and tomorrow, when Mary was pregnant and afraid, she ran to her cousin Elizabeth’s house. Elizabeth threw open the door with joy and showered blessings upon her. How often do we have that same opportunity? How often do we leave the door locked, the curtains drawn, and the lights off? How often do we shower critique or judgment instead of blessings and joy? Gracious God, forgive us for our wrongs. We want to see you when we see our neighbor. Amen.**

Friends, this is what I know— God delights in us. God throws open the door, just like Elizabeth, and says, “Come on home. There is room for you here!” And in that moment, we are blessed. In that moment,

we are forgiven. In that moment, we are seen, healed,  
and welcomed home.

So rest in this good news: you are saved by grace.

Let us respond together, using the words from Mary's  
song:

**My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness  
of his servant,  
Surely, from now on all generations will call  
me blessed.**

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

### **VI. Luke 1:39-58 NRSV – (Mary Kearns)**

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a  
Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the  
house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When  
Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her  
womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit  
and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among  
women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And  
why has this happened to me, that the mother of my  
Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound  
of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy.  
And blessed is she who believed that there would be a

fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

And Mary said,

'My soul magnifies the Lord,

and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his  
servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me  
blessed;

for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.

His mercy is for those who fear him

from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their  
hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from their  
thrones,

and lifted up the lowly;

he has filled the hungry with good things,

and sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel,

in remembrance of his mercy,

according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

And Mary remained with her for about three months  
and then returned to her home.

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.

**VII. Sermon - “We Are Not Alone” (Jesse Kearns)**

**VIII. Song of Invitation – CH #170 “How Great our Joy” (Joshua Hegg)**

While by the sheep we watched at night,  
lo, there appeared an angel bright:  
How great our joy! Great our joy!  
Joy, joy, joy! Joy, joy, joy!  
Glory to God who reigns on high!  
Glory to God who reigns on high!

Born is the Child, in manger small,  
whom God has sent to save us all.  
How great our joy! Great our joy!  
Joy, joy, joy! Joy, joy, joy!  
Glory to God who reigns on high!  
Glory to God who reigns on high!

Go you this night, and you shall find  
the Savior born for humankind.  
How great our joy! Great our joy!  
Joy, joy, joy! Joy, joy, joy!  
Glory to God who reigns on high!  
Glory to God who reigns on high!

Jesus, the gift from heav’n above  
fills all our hearts with joy and love.  
How great our joy! Great our joy!  
Joy, joy, joy! Joy, joy, joy!  
Glory to God who reigns on high!  
Glory to God who reigns on high!

**IX. An Affirmation of Faith**

**We believe that creation is inextricably linked.  
We belong to one another in an undeniable way.  
We are bone of bone and flesh of flesh, life  
breathed into dust.  
We believe that God invites us to live into that  
truth—  
to love without abandon,  
to see the good in one another,  
to trust that all belong to God.  
We know that this life of connection is easier said  
than done,  
which is why we gather in this space, week after  
week,  
generation after generation, to be reminded:  
We see God in each other.  
This we believe. Amen.**

**X. Prayers of the People (Mary Kearns)**

## **XI. Communion Song CH #161 “I Wonder as I Wander” (Joshua Hegg)**

I wonder as I wander, out under the sky,  
how Jesus the Savior did come for to die  
for poor ordinary people like you and like I;  
I wonder as I wander, out under the sky.

When Mary birthed Jesus, ‘twas in a cow’s stall  
with wise men and farmers and shepherd and all.  
but high from God’s heaven a star’s light did fall,  
the promise of ages it did then recall.

If Jesus had wanted for any wee thing,  
a star in the sky, or a bird on the wing,  
or all of God's angels in heaven for to sing,  
he surely could have it, ‘cause he was the King.

I wonder as I wander, out under the sky,  
how Jesus the Savior did come for to die  
for poor ordinary people like you and like I;  
I wonder as I wander, out under the sky.

## **XII. Institution of Communion (Max Erwin and Barbara Poetker, elders)**

## **XIII. Partaking Communion Together**

## **XIV. Blessing/Benediction**

## **XV. Postlude – “It Came Upon a Midnight Clear” (Joshua Hegg)**



## **Christmas Special Offering**

Repeat the Sounding Joy!

Repeat the sounding joy

Of children and youth at camp

Repeat the sounding joy

Of congregations welcoming their new pastor

Repeat the sounding joy

Of congregations welcoming neighbors

Repeat the sounding joy

Of racial divisions bridged

Repeat the sounding joy

Of conflict resolved

Repeat the sounding joy

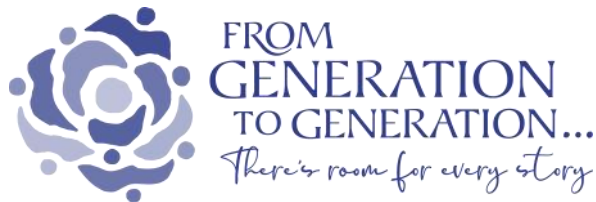
Of relationships made near and far

Your Christmas offering equips our Region to echo the joy heard in summer camp settings, congregational life, seminary classrooms, and leadership gatherings. Your gift enables our Region to give support to Elders, Sunday School teachers, youth group sponsors, worship leaders, seminarians, and pastors so that joy resounds. With your gift, connections are made between congregations and among Disciples throughout this Region and around the world. You are invited to make a gift to the Christmas Offering to repeat the sounding joy across our church. Thank you.

These offerings will be taken on December 11th and 18th, and offering envelopes will be in the bulletins on those dates. You can also donate online at [fccchico.com](http://fccchico.com) and specify it is for the Christmas Special Offering or at <https://disciplesmissionfund.org/special-offerings/thanksgiving/>

## Advent

- Sanctified Art has a **free Spotify playlist** for the season [here](#).



## CHRISTMAS CARDS



### Christmas Cards

Thank you to those who sent Christmas cards

- ❖ Anne Zung Lee Tsong
- ❖ Barbara Mann
- ❖ Monica Myers Greenberg, Vice President, Mountain West Zone, Christian Church Foundation
- ❖ Karen Zinniel, LHP Interiors
- ❖ Corky LeTellier
- ❖ Tom Shilfflet
- ❖ Carolyn Driscoll

## Christmas Flowers

The flowers that adorn the Sanctuary have been given to proclaim the Gift of Love that came on

Christmas, and in joyful celebration, memory or honor of those who have enriched our lives.

- ❖ Connie Wakefield, in honor of Audi Van Ornum, in honor of Jane Bisset, and in honor of Church Administrative Assistant, Briony
- ❖ Marie Grandeen
- ❖ Cantwells





- ✧ Bobbi Robinson
- ✧ Lori Terrell-Adrian in celebration of her family
- ✧ Peggy Davidson, in memory of loved ones and in honor of family
- ✧ Judy Brillhart in honor of those who can't come to church
- ✧ Shirley Thill in memory of Anne Shifflet
- ✧ Nancy Thompson
- ✧ Kathy Moran in celebration of her children and grandchildren



## ANNUAL REPORT

### Annual Reports

It's getting to be that time of year again. All Annual Reports are due January 15th. Who needs to turn in a report? The Ministry Circle Coordinators, Moderator, Treasurer, and Fun Timers. Please turn in your one-page summary report on paper

or by email ([chicodisciples@gmail.com](mailto:chicodisciples@gmail.com)) to the church office. Call Briony at 343-3727 if you have any questions. Don't forget to turn in your keys if appropriate (if you are no longer a church leader, for example)!



### Credits

- Advent Resources from [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org)
- "Dance of the Soul" by Hannah Garrity | A Sanctified Art LLC | [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org)
- "Angels, from the Realms of Glory" Words: James Montgomery, 1816. Music Henry T. Smart, 1867. Words and Music Public Domain. CCLI# 31669.
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## December 18th-25th, 2022 **CALENDAR**

### **This Sunday—Fourth Sunday of Advent**

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

### **Monday**

- 5:00 p.m. Advent Rehearsals, Chapel

### **Tuesday**

- 11:00 a.m. Music Jam, Room 4
- No WICS meeting
- 7:00 p.m. Elders, Zoom

### **Wednesday**

- 6:00 p.m. Boy Scouts Troop 2 Koinonia Hall, Fireside

### **Thursday**

- No Bible Study until January

### **Friday—Church Office Closed through January 2nd**

- 1:00 p.m. Healing Circle, Bethany

### **Saturday—Christmas Eve**

- 7:00 p.m. Ecumenical Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 1289 Filbert Ave, and on [their zoom](#). Their website is [uuchico.org](#)

### **Next Sunday—Christmas Day**

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

## **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.