



December 24th, 2023 Fourth Sunday in Advent
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
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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 “O Holy Night” (Marie Grandeen and Nancy Thompson)

II. Ringing of the Bell

III. Candle Lighting Liturgy (Mary Kearns)

How does a weary world practice love?

By sending cards, and picking up the phone.

By practicing empathy, and assuming the best in others. By learning people’s stories and finding common ground.

By advocating for justice, and saving a place at the table.

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

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

IV. Welcome and Announcements – (Mary Kearns)

- Today – Fellowship following service, 7:00 p.m. Candlelight Christmas Eve Service with First Baptist and Unitarian Universalists, Sanctuary.

- Monday – Merry Christmas! Church Office Closed
- Tuesday –11:30 a.m. Music Jam practice, Room 4; Church Office Closed
- Wednesday –6:00 p.m. Scouts BSA, Koinonia Hall, Fireside; Church Office Closed
- Thursday – **NO worship breakfast this week;** Church Office Closed
- Friday – 1:00 p.m. Healing Circle, Bethany; Church Office Closed
- 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. Evening, North Valley Intergroup New Year’s Eve Party, Koinonia Hall and Fireside
- Offerings may be put in the offering plate which is near the bulletins near the entrance of the sanctuary

V. Call to Worship – (Mary Kearns)

How does a weary world rejoice?

We sing songs of hope.

We allow hope to change us, to strengthen us.

We tell the stories of what could be.

We listen for God’s word.

We resist the temptation to give up or give in.

We remember Mary’s song.

We gather for worship.

We hope.

We hope.

Against all odds, we hope.

Friends, this is the day that the Lord is still making.

Let us worship holy God.

VI. Opening Hymn – CH #149 “Angels From the Realms of Glory” (Nancy Thompson)

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 newborn King.

Shepherds, in the fields 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 newborn 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 newborn 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 newborn King.

VII. Call to Confession

Family of faith, we all know that a small group of convicted people can change the world. That's how it's always been. People like Mary, people like Zechariah, people like John the Baptist.

And yet, we rarely feel like we can be one of those people. We downplay our ability to make a difference. We choose pessimism over optimism. We sweep hope under the rug for the sake of realism. We forget the words to Mary's song.

Fortunately for us, our God carries enough hope and grace for all of us. So let us go to God in prayer. Let us speak the truth of our lives, and let that honesty change us. Friends, let us pray:

VIII. Prayer of Confession

**Holy God,
More days than not, hope feels like the rain.
We try to hold onto it with cupped hands,
but eventually, it slips right on through.
Forgive us for holding hope so loosely.
Forgive us for allowing the realities of today to
define tomorrow.
We know that this world needs people of hope,
so today we pray:
turn us into those people.
Teach us how to sing Mary's song of hope for the
world.
With open hearts we pray, amen.**

IX. First Scripture Reading 1 Samuel 2:1-10 (NRSV) (Mary Kearns)

Hannah prayed and said, "My heart exults in the Lord; my strength is exalted in my God. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in my victory. "There is no Holy One like the Lord, no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God. Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble gird on strength. Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but

those who were hungry are fat with spoil. The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn. The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. The Lord makes poor and makes rich; he brings low, he also exalts. He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and on them he has set the world. "He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness; for not by might does one prevail. The Lord! His adversaries shall be shattered; the Most High will thunder in heaven. The Lord will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king, and exalt the power of his anointed."

X. Affirmation of Faith

**We believe that hope can change the world.
We believe that God uses ordinary people, like an unwed teenage mother, for extraordinary good.
And we believe that each of these ordinary people *can* make a difference.
We know that grief, fear, and suffering abound.
We know that suffering quells joy and makes it harder to hope.
But we choose hope anyway.
In the face of hardship, we hope together.**

**We hope with God.
We hope for a better world.
This is our song.
We believe; help our unbelief.
In Christ's name we pray, amen.**

XI. Second Scripture Reading Luke 1:46-55 (NRSV) (Mary Kearns)

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 forever."

XII. Meditation – "We Sing Songs of Hope" (Rev. Jesse Kearns)

**XIII. Hymn of Invitation and Reflection – CH
#144 “O Little Town of Bethlehem” (Nancy
Thompson)**

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary,
And gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together
Proclaim the holy birth.
Your voices raise to God in praise;
And peace to all on earth.

How silently, how silently
The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The joys of highest heaven.
No ear may hear Christ coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him still,
The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in;
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our God, Emmanuel.

XIV. Moments for Mission

XV. Prayers of the People (Mary Kearns)

**XVI. Communion Song – CH # 398 “Be Known
to Us in Breaking Bread” (Nancy Thompson)**

Be known to us in breaking bread,
But do not the depart;
Savior, abide with us,
And spread thy table in our heart.

There sup with us in love divine;
Thy body and thy blood,
That living bread, that heavenly wine,
Be our immortal food.

**XVII. Institution of Communion (Georgeanne
Bennet and Kevin Zeitler, elders)**

XVIII. Partaking Communion Together

XIX. Blessing/Benediction

XX. Postlude (Nancy Thompson)

Christmas card list 2023

Thank you to those who sent Christmas cards

- * John Johnson
- * Karen Zinnel, LHP Interiors
- * Darrel & Mary Louise Hunter
- * Christian Church Foundation
- * Georgia Nelson
- * Corky LeTellier
- * Diane Engelbrite
- * Resham Kajley
- * Barbara Mann
- * Barbara Poetker

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.

- † Nancy Thompson in honor of FCC church family
- † Peggy Davidson in celebration of family
- † Nancy Morgans-Ferguson in memory of Philip and Grayce Morgans
- † Darrel Hunter in celebration of our families

- † Barbara Mann
- † Marie Grandeen
- † James and Margaret Maxwell in memory of Patricia Maxwell
- † Lori Terrell-Adrian in celebration of my family
- † Lowell & Diane Terrell in celebration of our family
- † Glen & Wanda Story in honor of all members of Wilmoth, Hansen, Braz, Story, Purdy and Clark families.

Attendance

Attendance for December 24th, 2023:

In person: 39 Online: 15 Total: 54

Credits

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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—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**

Monday—Merry Christmas! Church Office Closed**Tuesday—Church Office Closed**

- 11:30 a.m. Music Jam, Room 4

Wednesday—Church Office Closed

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

Thursday—Church Office Closed

- NO Worship Breakfast this week

Friday—Church Office Closed

- 1:00 p.m. Healing Circle Bethany

Next Sunday—New Years' 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



- **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.