

**College Avenue Presbyterian Church**  
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December 15, 2019  
 The Third Sunday of Advent

**Welcome to CAPC Oakland!**

We are a reformed, multicultural, politically purple, community of followers of Jesus seeking to live our faith seriously in word, deed and relationships in the East Bay.

If you've never celebrated with us, you can follow along using this paper or the projection on the screen. Hymnals and Bibles are in the pews. We invite you to join us for a moment of community connection afterwards with a drink and simple snack.

**CHILDREN**

We have a quiet play area for children in the front of the sanctuary with toys and coloring sheets that can be played with during services. We also have a lounge, off the entryway, where the service is broadcast if you need more space.

We invite children 3 years old to 6<sup>th</sup> grade to depart for Godly Play following our second song. You can gather your child(ren) after worship upstairs in the GP room.

**PRAYER CARDS**

You're invited to share your prayers of concern or gratitude by filling out the cards, located in the pews, and placing them in the glass vase on the table. We'll use them during today's service.

**WIFI & SOCIAL MEDIA**

2wire927 is our open wifi. The password is 7304088568. If you do social media during the service we invite you to add #capcoakland to include others.

**NESTLÉ PARKING LOT**

We're able to park in the lot behind the church. They ask us to enter and exit off of Chabot Road, using the pedestrian door there near Crossroads Trading.

CCL #1137062

**GATHERING AROUND GOD'S WORD**

**GATHERING SONG** "The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came" - *Blue Hymnal #16*

**CALL TO WORSHIP** – sung and spoken Advent Wreath Liturgy - *Insert*

**SONG OF PRAISE** "O Holy Night" - *Insert*

*Children from 2 years to 6<sup>th</sup> grade are invited to gather at the front of the sanctuary and depart for our Godly Play time. You can collect your child(ren) after the service upstairs.*

**LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD**

**ACT OF CONFESSION**

*OPENING OURSELVES TO BEING UNDONE, THAT WE MIGHT BE REDONE*

**SUNG CHORAL RESPONSE** "Countless Prayers of Faithful People" - *CAPC Choir*

**DECLARATION OF GRACE.**

*THE IN-BREAKING OF GOD'S GRACE DISRUPTS OUR HUMAN CONDITION OF SIN*

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER**

*Call and response liturgically prayed at the conclusion of sharing a prayer card* - *Deacon Janet Majors*

**Leader:** God, in your mercy.

**People:** Hear our prayer.

*To pray with someone after the service, look for today's liturgist after today's service*

**GIVING OF OUR TITHES & OFFERINGS TO EMPOWER THE WORK OF GOD IN THE CHURCH**

**OFFERTORY SONG** "Raise a Song of Gladness" - *Insert*

**LISTENING TO SCRIPTURE** Isaiah 35:1-10; Luke 1: 47-55; Matthew 11:2-11  
*Pew Bible pp. 695, 991, 943*

**SPEAKING OF FAITH** "Telling Stories" - *Monte McClain*

**RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD**

**SONG OF RESPONSE** "Canticle of the Turning" - *Insert*

**THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH**

**SENDING CALL AND RESPONSE**

**Leader:** God is good!

**Leader:** And all the time!

**People:** All the time!

**People:** God is good!

**EXHORTATION & SUNG CHORAL BENEDICTION** "The Lord Bless You And Keep You"

**PASSING THE PEACE OF GOD** "Salam almasih" or "المسيح سلام" (Arabic)

*We pass the peace weekly using languages native to the cultures of our church community as an audible sign of the Dominion of God at work towards the healing transformation of the world.*

## Thoughts on Today's Readings Isaiah 35:1-10; Luke 1:47-55; Matthew 11:2-11

In his day of national defeat by Babylon and exile to a foreign land, Isaiah faced the soul-crushing fear of having his worldview, his faith, the way he understood everything crash to the ground. How could he (and his people) handle such change? Either he could choose complicity and despair. Or he could choose a blind belief in his self-sufficiency and personal power. Yet between the denial of change and the refusal to embrace it, God was calling to middle way, a new way. It took serious the consequences of the sins of the people, which created systemic injustice, evil and failure. It also took serious the reality a person who thinks that they alone possess the truth, or have the power to change things how they want was a foolish idolater, trusting in themselves more than in God.

When all seems lost God will make the impossible not just possible, but reality. The desert will bloom. The blind will see. The deaf will hear. The lame will dance. All because of the word of God. Spoken at creation. Which created a passage in the sea when whispered over the narrow place of Egypt. A word that opened Esther's eyes to the time in which she was called to take a stand for the people of God. It was never what was anticipated and it was always infinitely more than could ever have been expected.

Mary sings as she encounters her too-old-to-be-pregnant cousin, who is also with child. It's a prayer echoing that of the barren Hannah when she miraculously has a child. Mary sings of the transformation of the world by God's word. She glimpses her connection with Elizabeth, Hannah, all those who have come before and will come in the glory of what God has created and will redeem to fruition. Whom else can she praise? God alone has the words of life.

In Matthew we see John the Baptizer (the son of Mary's cousin Elizabeth) doubting that Jesus is indeed the one to bring God's saving grace. John anticipated a mass movement of repentance, a re-organizing of things in the recognition of people's need for God. He never expected that Jesus would speak of God's need for all people, who can only grasp that community if they let go, if they renounce, if they repent of the ways in which they see the world, each other, themselves and God. Jesus quotes Isaiah 35, to explain what is unexplainable.

Today we're also faced with fear of great change. Has God forsaken us? Who can save us? We too are trapped on the existential spectrum between despair and self-sufficiency. Yet God is inviting us to share in the blooming of the desert, and the dancing of the lame.

### QUESTIONS FOR THE PRACTICE OF EXAMEN & CONTEMPLATION

- **What word, phrase or image grabs your attention?**
- **How do you feel stuck, like dry land languishing in a seemingly endless drought? How is our world stuck?**
- **How or where do you see God's newness already breaking into our world?**

### ANNOUNCEMENTS & COMMUNITY NEWS

#### DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

15 Janet Majors                      31 Gianelle Beatty

#### COMMUNITY LIFE CALENDAR

**Join our Choir!** Tuesdays 5:30-6:30p, Sundays 12-1p | Contact Pete Feltman in person or by email at [petefeltman@gmail.com](mailto:petefeltman@gmail.com) The choir is singing each Sunday in Advent – warm ups at 10am.

**Celtic Prayer Group**, Wednesdays 6:45-8:15pm

**Friday Night Meal, 6-7pm** (12/20) put on by a group of CAPC Oakland women, hosted by Janet. We need folks to "host" the meal – not cook, but welcome and orient other teams. *Interested? Talk to Monte to learn more & get involved.*

**Women's Group, Saturdays 8:30am** | in the church library (meets 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays)

**The Vocabulary of Faith** | Sundays 9:30-10:15am  
*A weekly intro to learning how to read the Bible.*

**Advent e-Devotions** @ [www.montemclair.com](http://www.montemclair.com)

**Happy Half-Hour Thursdays 6-6:30pm** – wind down your week with a communal spiritual practice then grab a bit or drink along the Ave.

**Advent Family Dinner** – today – potluck and game night at church 6-8pm. Bring a dish and to share at the home of Gary Yee (125 Chadbourne Way | Oakland, 94619)

**Tastes of India** - Today after worship.

**Care-Giver Support Group** today 3-5pm | 2600 Warring St Berkeley.

**La Ceiba Coffee Holiday Pack** for sale for \$15  
A great gift idea! Find them in the café.

**The Longest Night Luminary Labyrinth Walk Saturday 12/21 @ sunset (5:00pm)**

**Christmas Sweater & Cookie Sunday** – next week - 12/22 come to worship in a sweater, ready for cookies! And to share in our change to change lives offering to empower Dalit children.

**Christmas Carol Sing-Along** 12/22 @ 2:30pm

**Christmas Eve Service**, 12/24 @ 7pm | Instant Christmas Pageant, Carols, Candles & Chocolate!

**Leadership for next week, 12/22/19:**

Counting: Louise Hirschman, Sharon Nelson

Deacon Liturgist: Janet Majors

Fellowship: The Women's Group

Godly Play: Bill Beatty (ST), Avery Haynes (DK)

Greeters: Janet Majors, Myrna Shadley

## LYRICS & WRITTEN RESPONSES FOR TODAY'S CELEBRATION

### "The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came"

*Paraphraser: Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834-1924 (alt.)  
Inspired from Luke 1:26-38, set to a Basque Carol  
Blue Hymnal #16*

1. The angel Gabriel from Heaven came,  
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame,  
"All hail," said he, "O lowly maiden Mary,"  
Most highly favored Mary, gloria!
- 2 "For know a blessed mother you shall be,  
all generations praise continually,  
your Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,"  
Most highly favored Mary, gloria!
- 3 Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,  
"To me be as it pleases God," she said,  
"My soul shall laud and magnify God's holy name."  
Most highly favored Mary, gloria!
- 4 Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born  
in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,  
and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say:  
Most highly favored Mary, gloria!

### ADVENT WREATH SPOKEN & SUNG LITURGY

*This year's Advent Wreath Litanies are written by Martha  
Spong and can be found at <https://marthaspong.com>*

**The People read the BOLD print**

One: Isaiah the Prophet announced it. The Spirit of God is with me, because I have been chosen to bring good news to the abused, to bandage the wounds of the heartbroken, and to release those who are in prisons of all kinds. I am here to proclaim a good year in God's sight, a time when things will be set right.

**ALL: I am here to comfort the grieving and to dress them for happy times instead of sad ones.**

One: The people who are healed and comforted will be like strong trees, upright and loyal to God. They will be like a forest planted to show God's glory. They will rebuild the world and show everyone God's power.

**ALL: We wait for the day of God's joy, and live in God's peace and hope, as we light these**

*WE'LL SING AS WE LIGHT THE CANDLES...*

### "Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah"

*Wayne L. Wold (1984) | Yiddish folk tune  
Glory to God #85 | | Inspired from Psalm 23:2; 24:7-10;  
Isaiah 40:1-11; Matthew 25:1-13*

1. Light one candle to watch for Messiah;  
let the light banish darkness.  
He shall bring salvation to Israel,  
God fulfills the promise.
2. Light two candles to watch for Messiah;  
let the light banish darkness.  
He shall feed the flock like a shepherd,  
gently lead them homeward.
3. Light three candles to watch for Messiah;  
let the light banish darkness.  
Lift your heads and lift high the gateway  
For the King of glory.

**All: Loving God, come and shine your light  
in the world!**

### "O Holy Night!"

*Placide Cappeau (1847) wrote the poem "Minuit  
Chrétiens"*

*Translated from French by John S. Dwight  
tune Name CANTIQUE DE NOEL  
composed by Adolphe Adam*

1. O, holy night! the stars are brightly shining;  
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth.  
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,  
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.  
A thrill of hope - the weary world rejoices,  
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!  
Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!  
O night divine, O night when Christ was born!  
O night, O holy night, O night divine!

*Continued on the back of this page...*

## candles.

2. Led by the light of faith serenely beaming,  
With glowing hearts by His cradle we stand.  
So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming,  
Here came the Wise Men from Orient land.  
The King of kings lay thus in lowly manger,  
In all our trials born to be our Friend.  
He knows our need — to our weakness is no stranger.  
Behold your King, before Him lowly bend!  
Behold your King, before Him lowly bend!

3. Truly He taught us to love one another;  
His law is love and His gospel is peace.  
Chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother,  
And in His name all oppression shall cease.  
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we;  
Let all within us praise His holy name.  
Christ is the Lord! O praise His name forever!  
His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim!  
His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim!

### Prayer of Confession

*Today's prayer is adapted from an Advent 3 prayer posted on rev-o-lution.org*

**ALL: Mighty One, we confess before You  
that Your ways of justice are hard for us.  
It calls us to look at the needs of others and what  
we have. It causes us to check our privilege and to  
remove ourselves from the center.  
It moves us to bring those on the margins in.  
We confess that often we do not want to do this.  
We want to hang on to our privilege,  
remain in the center of power,  
hold on to our possessions.  
Help us to let it go.  
Help us to trust in You.  
Help us to move into Your ways  
of justice, love, mercy, and peace.  
In the name of Christ our Savior we pray. Amen.**

### “Raise a Song of Gladness”

*Taizé Community (1978)  
Language: English; Latin  
Glory to God Hymnal #155*

Raise a song of gladness, peoples of the earth.  
Christ has come, bringing peace, joy to every heart.  
Alleluia, alleluia, joy to every heart!  
Alleluia, alleluia, joy to every heart!

### My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout” (Canticle of the Turning)

*Author: Rory Cooney, Glory to God Hymnal #100*

1. My soul cries out with a joyful shout  
that the God of my heart is great  
And my spirit sings of the wondrous things  
that you bring to the ones who wait  
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight  
and my weakness you did not spurn  
So from east to west shall my name be blessed,  
could the world be about to turn

#### *chorus*

My heart shall sing of the day you bring  
Let the fires of your justice burn  
Wipe away all tears For the dawn draws near  
And the world is about to turn

2. Though I am small, my God, my all  
You work great things in me  
And Your mercy will last from the depths of the past  
to the end of the age to be  
Your very name puts the proud to shame  
and to those who would for you yearn  
You will show Your might, put the strong to flight  
for the world is about to turn

3. From the halls of power to the fortress tower  
not a stone will be left on stone  
Let the king beware for your justice tears  
every tyrant from his throne  
The hungry poor shall weep no more  
for the food they can never earn  
There are tables spread, every mouth be fed  
for the world is about to turn

4. Though the nations rage from age to age  
we remember who holds us fast  
God's mercy must deliver us  
from the conqueror's crushing grasp  
This saving word that our forebears heard  
is a promise which holds us bound  
Til' the spear and rod can be crushed by God  
who is turning the world around