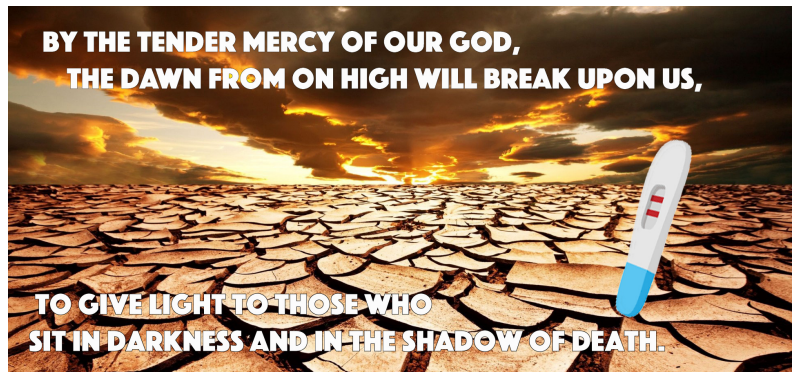


College Avenue Presbyterian Church
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December 22, 2019
 The Fourth Sunday of Advent

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 6th 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 "Jesus Name Above All Names" - *Insert*

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

SONG OF PRAISE "In Bethlehem A New Born Boy" - *Insert*

COLLECTION OF THE CHANGE TO CHANGE LIVES OFFERING DURING THE SONG OF PRAISE

Children from 2 years to 6th 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 "Rise Up Shepherd and Follow" - *CAPC Choir*

DECLARATION OF GOD'S GRACE

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

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER - *Deacon Janet Majors*

Call and response liturgically prayed at the conclusion of sharing a prayer card

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 Luke 1:57-80 & Matthew 1:18-25 *Pew Bible pp. 991, 933*

SPEAKING OF FAITH "Barren Hopes & Unplanned Pregnancies" - *Monte McClain*

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

SONG OF RESPONSE "We're on the Road to Bethlehem" - *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 Luke 1:57-80 & Matthew 1:18-25

Today's texts both tell of angelic messengers who come with a word to be spoken and heard. Who wouldn't want to have a child? And yet these two men have grown accustomed to what they have and don't have. They know what to expect from life. One is old. One is single. They live in a land occupied by the Romans, a foreign power that seeks to change their way of life and worldview. A superpower that deems everything Roman to be better. A foreign empire with the greatest army the world had ever known. It's also a time when we believe that most land was owned by a small number of absentee landowners who were quick to raise rents but slow to help their people. There is no hope for change. The prophet Isaiah had spoke repeatedly of God's future coming which would be like the desert blooming in flowers, like the blind seeing, like the lame jumping like a deer. But it seems to have just been poetic beauty, wishful thinking.

Zechariah receives the angel's proclamation of a child at his advanced age with skepticism. He basically demands proof before he'll believe this new thing. For this arrogance, he is silenced until his son, John, is born.

Our first text from the gospel of Luke is Zechariah's prophecy, his poetic response to the way in which God is interrupting the narrative of his life. In the first half of his prophecy, Zechariah looks back to their roots when God offered militaristic protection against enemies of the House of David. Luke begins his gospel story with this song (and Mary's too) which talk of a clean slate, God doing a new thing. There is a silencing of the old ways of doing and thinking. Clinging to the past must make way, for God is doing something new.

God's unfailing love and mercy break down all barriers, transform all expectations, create something new – way, way far outside of the box. Joseph learns that his soon-to-be-wife is pregnant. He's a good man, who to the best of his ability lives according to the ways of God. He'll divorce Mary quietly so as not to bring public shame upon her, and possible death by stoning. Undoubtedly, Joseph's been wondering what's going on. How could this happen to me? Where is God in this mess? The angel responds saying that the unplanned pregnancy is God's planned hope to bloom in the barrenness of the world. This baby to come is God with us. God among, in and alongside us. It's the light of God dawning upon those lost in the darkness of the seemingly never-ending night.

QUESTIONS FOR THE PRACTICE OF EXAMEN & CONTEMPLATION

- **What word, phrase or image grabs your attention?**
- **How do you feel stuck in or to the past? Or what you already know?**
- **How or where is God's unfailing love breaking down your obstinance to hold to things of the past, to not recognize or receive the new thing that God is doing?**



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

15 Janet Majors 31 Gianelle Beatty

COMMUNITY LIFE CALENDAR

Christmas Sweater & Cookie Sunday – today we're having our congregational Christmas par of sorts with sweaters and cookies. We are also collecting our annual change to change lives offering to empower Dalit, often called untouchable, children in India with an educative clothing and food through Witnessing Ministries. Learn more about their work online at www.witnessingministries.com

Join our Choir! Tuesdays 5:30-6:30p, Sunday 12-1p | Contact Pete Feltman in person or by email at petefeltman@gmail.com The choir is singing each Christmas Eve – warm up at 6:30pm.

Celtic Prayer Group, Wednesdays 6:45-8:15p

Friday Night Meal, 6-7pm (12/27) put on by Monte & Kristy McClain. They need help to help cook and serve. *Interested? Talk to Monte to learn more & get involved.*

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

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

Advent e-Devotions @ www.montemcclain.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. *Starts up again January 9th.*

Advent Family Dinner – today – potluck and game night at church 6-8pm. Bring a dish and share at the home of David Kittams [560 San Louis Road; Berkeley, 94707] (510) 524-4348 Pick up a yellow flyer, with map, in the entryway.

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

Christmas Carol Sing-Along 12/22 @ 2:30pm Come sing and enjoy the music and season.

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

Leadership for next week, 12/29/19:

Counting: Lina Foltz, Richard Harvey
Deacon Liturgist: Janet Majors
Fellowship: Joy & Al Barnes
Godly Play: Beth Beatty (ST), Elaine Price (DI)
Greeters: Joy Barnes, David Kittams

LYRICS & WRITTEN RESPONSES FOR TODAY'S CELEBRATION

“Jesus Name Above All Names”

Author: Naida Hearn (1974)

1. Jesus, name above all names
Beautiful Savior, Glorious Lord
Emmanuel, God is with us
Blessed Redeemer, Living Word

3. Light three candles to watch for Messiah:
let the light banish darkness.
Lift your heads add lift high the gateway
For the King of glory.

4. Light four candles to watch for Messiah:
let the light banish darkness.
He is coming; tell the glad tidings.
Let your lights be shining.

ADVENT WREATH SPOKEN & SUNG LITURGY

This year's Advent Wreath Litanies are written by Martha Spong and can be found at <https://marthaspong.com> (based on Psalm 89:19-23) The People read the BOLD print

One: The Psalmist received a vision from God, who said,
I have put a crown on the head of a new king, a
mighty one chosen and anointed with oil.

**ALL: My hand will always be with him; my arm will
strengthen him.**

One: My faithfulness and steadfast love will be with the
one I've chosen.

**ALL: We wait for God's love coming to us. The day of
God's joy is soon coming. We live in God's
peace and hope as we light these candles.**

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

“In Bethlehem A NewBorn Boy

Rosamond E. Herklots (1969, alt.)

Glory to God #153 purple

1. In Bethlehem a newborn boy was hailed
with song of praise and joy.
Then warning came of danger near:
King Herod's troops would soon appear.

2. The soldiers sought the child in vain:
not yet was he to share our pain;
but down the ages rings the cry
of those who saw their children die.

3. Still rage the fires of hate today,
and innocents the price must pay,
while aching hearts in every land
cry out, “We cannot understand!”

4. Lord Jesus, through our night of loss
shines out the wonder of your cross,
the love that cannot cease to bear
our human anguish everywhere.

5. May that great love our lives control
and conquer hate in every soul, till,
pledge to build and not destroy,
we share your pain and find your joy.

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.

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Prayer of Confession

Today's prayer is adapted from an Advent 4 prayer posted on rev-o-lution.org

ALL: We confess to You, God of our Ancestors, that we are still searching for the same things our ancestors sought You for: protection, guidance, love and assurance. We still long to know that we will live in eternity with You, that You will see us through whatever troubles lie ahead. We still are waiting for peace to come and for Your kingdom, Your reign, Your beloved community to overtake us so that we will fight no more, struggle no more. And we confess that the feelings of hope and joy and peace that we have right now may fade in another month. We are still people of chronological time. Help us to move to Kairos time, to know that Advent is the season we are all expectantly waiting in, no matter what time of year. May we continue to participate in the coming of Your beloved community, Your reign on earth as it in heaven, knowing that You have already come, and are at work in each of us now. In the name of Christ, who was born, and who is coming again, 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!

Declaration of God's Grace

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

God has assured us through the prophets that restoration will come. God has assured us through Christ that resurrection is at hand. God has assured us through the Holy Spirit that new life begins now. Go, be full of the Spirit, know Jesus Christ as Savior, and believe that God's love is with you always, because it is. Simply be. Simply love. Simply go with God and share the Good News. Amen.

"We're on the Road to Bethlehem"

New words by Rev. Talitha Amadea Aho (associate pastor of Montclair Presbyterian Church, Oakland) sung to "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen"

We're on the road to Bethlehem,
that long and winding way, preparing for the Savior
who comes on Christmas Day.
As heart a glow with gladness,
we wait and hope and pray,

Refrain:

O Get ready, for God is one the way,
coming to stay,
O get ready, for God is on the way.

2. With Mary and with Joseph,
the baby coming soon, we watch them knock on
every door, but people say "no room!"
The angels, over Bethlehem are practicing their tune:

3. The shepherd, watching in the fields,
may close their weary eyes, but soon the host of
heaven will wake them by surprise.
The magi start to follow that star in the skies:

4. We're on the road to Bethlehem,
we're all making our way, to find the King of Kings
lying humble in the hay. The prophets called us
long ago, we hear them still today: