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How does a weary world rejoice?

peace | The Second Week of Advent

December 10, 2023 at 10:30am
in Person & on Zoom

Welcome to CAPC Oakland!

We are a reformed, multicultural, politically purple, community of followers of Jesus. Together we seek to vigorously live our faith in our words, actions, and relationships in the East Bay.

In our community, face masks are not required, but always welcome. Masks are available in the entry.

As a community we are committed to being safe, open and real. We'd love to know you better. Use this QR Code to share your contact info or questions with our staff so we can follow up. We will not sell, share or abuse your personal info.



CHILDREN

We have Godly Play - "Sunday School" for children during our service. It's a Montessori-like approach to teaching children language to use to learn to express faith through the telling of Bible Stories. The Godly Play group and leaders leave for their arranged learning space after the 2nd song.

PRAYER CARDS

To operationalize participation in our Prayers of the People we invite you to fill out a prayer card and share it with the liturgist or to share you requests in the chat on ZOOM labeling it with 'prayer.'

WI-FI

Want Wi-Fi during our gathering?
Select our network - Capc1.
Our password is 5106583666

CCL #1137062

GATHERING AROUND GOD'S WORD BOTH IN PERSON & VIA ZOOM

- PRELUDE "Now The Heavens Start To Whisper"
- CALL TO WORSHIP
- GATHERING SONG "Gabriel's Message" - Blue Hymnal #16
- LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH - Timothy Telleen-Lawton
- SONG OF PRAISE "When Out Of Poverty Is Born" - Insert
- LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD
- HEARING SCRIPTURE Isaiah 40:1-11 & Luke 1:24-45 - Ben Bencomo - Louise Hirschman & Janet Majors
- PROCLAIMING GOD'S WORD "Connection is Fundamental" - Rev. Monte McClain
- RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD
- AFFIRMATION OF FAITH
- SONG OF RESPONSE "Comfort, Comfort You My People" - Glory to God Hymnal #87
- PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER - Marge Harvey
WE USE A CALL AND RESPONSE LITURGICALLY PRAYED AT THE CONCLUSION OF SHARING A PRAYER.
- Leader: God, in your mercy.
People: Hear our prayer.
- COLLECTION OF THE OFFERING
- OFFERING SONG "The First Nowell" - Blue Hymnal #56
- THE GIFT OF GIVING OFFERING - Gary Yee
- SENDING SONG "Love Has Come" - Glory to God Hymnal #110
- SENDING CALL AND RESPONSE
- Leader: God is good! Leader: And all the time!
People: All the time! People: God is good!
- EXHORTATION & BLESSING
- PASSING THE PEACE OF GOD "Pax Christi" - Latin
- POSTLUDE "It's The Most Wonderful Time Of The Year"

Reflections on Today's Readings Isaiah 40:1-11 & Luke 1:24-45



When we are weary, we find it hard to express joy. When we are weary, we might find it hard to share Space with others because our weariness has seemingly stolen our joy. However, is it even possible to be joy-filled by yourself? Sure, there are things we can do that will bring us joy, but what external joy is possible without others to acknowledge it? Could it be that internal joy can only be actualized in external connections? Shared joy is one way that a weary world can rejoice.

We find Elizabeth alone for five months. There is no indication in the text that explains her isolation, but speculation offers that her isolation was due to the same reasons Zechariah was silenced. Elizabeth probably had questions. Can we speculate what those questions might have been? "Does the Lord know how old I am?" "We have been wanting children for a while and NOW we are pregnant?" "The shame of being barren has caused me to be weary, so how am I supposed to rejoice with this?" We don't hear her questions, but we hear her resolve in verse 25: "This is what the Lord has done for me when he looked favorably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people."

We are not sure about Mary's travels. Mary sets out with haste to enter the house of Zechariah and greet Elizabeth. (*Zechariah probably didn't say a word.*) We don't know if she traveled alone, but we do know she went on a mission to get clarity about her own encounter with Gabriel. Creative thinking suggests that Mary did all of this on her own, in isolation, by herself, with no one to help, hurt, or hinder her mission. We don't hear her questions either. We hear her question Gabriel wondering how this can be, since she is a virgin, but we don't hear her internal dialogue during her travels. Imagination says, "Does the Lord know how young I am?" "I haven't even been married yet and NOW I am pregnant?" "The shame of being with child without being married first has caused me to be weary, so how am I supposed to rejoice with this?" We don't hear her questions, but we witness her resolve by seeing her travel to her relative.

Two pregnant women meeting and sharing their experiences with one another. Chatting and hanging out. Two pregnant women, who are related but surely different from one another. One is young and one is old. One is married and one is not married yet. One is carrying the Word of God and one is carrying the one who prepares the way. They were both separate when they got news of God's plans for their lives. (*Do we know how Elizabeth got the news that her pregnancy was special since Zechariah was unable to speak?*) It is when they are connected that they experience shared joy. It is when they come out of their isolation that joy becomes the connection. If comfort is a necessity in this weary world, then rejoicing should be done in the company of others. Mary and Elizabeth have shown us joy in joining and comfort in connecting.

A Sanctified Art

—Rev. Cecelia D. Armstrong

December Birthdays

1 Barbara Epstein-Eagle	Megan Beatty
2 Annette Laverty	8 Taylor Beatty ²⁰⁰⁸
8 Cristina Ramirez-Fonua	9 Laura LaMotte
13 Lane Stahl	14 Fredora Darmstadt
15 Janet Majors	31 Giannele Beatty ²⁰¹¹

Today at & around CAPC Oakland

Post Service Sanguary Party! Join us for light snacks and the chance to connect after our service.

Letters of Love: *Everyone loves getting mail!* Pick up an addressed envelope in the back and write a note of encouragement and love to someone who could use a good word. Recipients and their situations are explained on the magnetic board.

This Week at & around CAPC Oakland

Advent Music Ensemble – rehearsal after worship.

Sunday Bible Study Before Worship • (from 9:30-10:15am). We'll discuss the text for worship each Sunday. Find text study sheets online if you want to read in advance.



Quilters Club Mondays 10a-12p, in the library.

Planning Worship for next Sunday. Tuesday at 5pm on Zoom. We're discussing Psalm 126 & Luke 1:57-66



Friday Night Meal – Fridays 6-7:00pm. Sign up online to help with set-up, serving, & clean-up! *Montclair Presbyterian is cooking.*

Women's Group: Saturday 9:30-10:30am on Zoom.

Thinking Theologically • Wrestling with the Christmas Story as history, myth, legend, or parable. Meeting on Tuesday, 12/19 to discuss the readings. *Find them on the website, or use the QR Code.*



Winter Solstice Labyrinth Walk • Thursday, December 21st from 5-7pm in the garden. Come walk and pray, with blues music in this blue time of year – and end with a s'more around the fire.

Christmas Eve Service • Sunday, 12/24 @ 7pm.

Letters for Ross Laverty • *faith in action today!* • Our deacons have organized a Christmas Card writing workshop just after worship for our incarcerated brother in faith Ross Laverty. Take a minute to wish him a Merry Christmas!

Thank You to Today's Leadership:

Music: Pete Feltman, Dave Eagle Roger Kim, Ben Kramarz
Thanks to those who helped plan & lead worship this week!
Ben Bencomo, Marge Harvey, Louise Hirschman, Janet Majors, Timothy Telleen-Lawton & Gary Yee
Video Tech: Dann Wilkens, Albert Hussian, Thom Faulkner

LYRICS & RESPONSES FOR TODAY'S CELEBRATION

We affirm that God is neither male nor female – but wholly and holy other. In doing so, we seek to empower each person to participate fully in worship, able to identify with the lyrics of songs and the words of our communal prayers through our use of gender inclusive language.

Call to Worship Opening Litany

 WRITTEN BY: REV. SARAH SPEED | SANCTIFIEDART.ORG

One: Welcome to worship.

ALL: Welcome to worship.

One: I am glad you're here.

ALL: I am glad you're here.

One: Surely God is in this space.

ALL: Surely God is in this space.

One: I see God in your face.

ALL: I see God in your face.

One: Let us worship together.

ALL: Let us worship together.

"Gabriel's Message"

*abine Baring-Gould © 1955 (renewed 1983)
by E. H. Freeman Ltd. | 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 lady, 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 lady, 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 lady, 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 lady, Gloria!

Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy

 WRITTEN BY: REV. SARAH SPEED | SANCTIFIEDART.ORG

One: How does a weary world practice joy?

ALL: By listening before we speak and saying sorry when we need to.

One: By advocating for justice and caring for our neighbor. By practicing Sabbath and forgiving seventy times seven.

ALL: By choosing grace over hate and opening the door for each other.

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

ALL: With God's help, may we bring peace into a weary world. Amen.

"When Out Of Poverty Is Born"

© *The Rev Kathy Galloway (Kingsfold)*

1 When out of poverty is born
a dream that will not die,
and landless, weary folk find strength
to stand with heads held high,
it's then we learn from those who wait
to greet the promised day,
"The Lord is coming; don't lose heart.
Be blest: prepare the way!"

2 When people wander far from God,
forget to share their bread,
they find their wealth an empty thing,
their spirits are not fed.
For only just and tender love
the hungry soul will stay.
And so God's prophets echo still
'Be blest: prepare the way!'

3 When God took flesh and came to earth,
the world turned upside down,
and in the strength of woman's faith
the Word of Life was born.
She knew that God would raise the low,
it pleased her to obey.
Rejoice with Mary in the call,
'Be blest: prepare the way!'

Affirmation of Faith

 WRITTEN BY: REV. SARAH SPEED | SANCTIFIEDART.ORG

**We believe that joy is a sacred gift,
existing on a plane deeper than happiness,
stemming from the truth that we belong to God.
We believe that joy is not meant for isolation.
Joy is meant to be shared,
weaving us together in laughter and in hope.**

**And when joy feels impossibly out of reach,
we believe that part of being sacred community
is leaning on one another.**

So together we say:

**I will share my joy when yours runs out.
You will share your joy when mine runs out.
And in doing so, we will both see God.
Amen.**

“Comfort, Comfort You My People”

*Glory to God Hymnal #87 | Johannes Olearius (1671)
Translator: Catherine Winkworth (1863, alt.)*

1 “Comfort, comfort now my people;
tell of peace!” So says our God.
“Comfort those who sit in darkness
mourning under sorrow’s load.
To my people now proclaim
that my pardon waits for them!
Tell them that their sins I cover,
and their warfare now is over.”

2 For the herald’s voice is crying
in the desert far and near,
calling us to true repentance,
since the reign of God is here.
O, that warning cry obey!
Now prepare for God a way.
Let the valleys rise in meeting
and the hills bow down in greeting.

3 Straight shall be what long was crooked,
and the rougher places plain.
Let your hearts be true and humble,
as befits God’s holy reign.
For the glory of the Lord
now on earth is shed abroad,
and all flesh shall see the token
that God’s word is never broken.

“The First Nowell”

Traditional English carol | Blue Hymnal #56

1. The first Nowell the angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay akeeping their sheep,
On a cold winter’s night that was so deep.

Refrain:

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel.

2 They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the east beyond them far,
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night.

3 And by the light of that same star,
Three wise men came from country far;
To seek for a King was their intent,
And to follow the star wherever it went.

4 This star drew nigh to the northwest;
O’er Bethlehem it took its rest;
And there it did both stop and stay,
Right over the place where Jesus lay.

5 Then entered in those wise men three,
Full reverently upon the knee,
And offered there, in His presence,
Their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense.

6 Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord;
That hath made Heaven and earth of naught,
And with His blood our life hath bought.

“Love Has Come” *Ken Bible | Glory to God #110*

1 Love has come, a light in the darkness!
Love explodes in the Bethlehem skies.
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it.
Hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!
Love! Love! Glory to God on high!

2. Love is born! Come share in the wonder.
Love is God now asleep in the hay.
See the glow in the eyes of His mother.
What is the name her heart is saying?
Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers.
Love! Love! Jesus, Immanuel.

3. Love has come, He never will leave us!
Love is life everlasting and free.
Love is Jesus within and among us.
Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas.
Love! Love! Praise to You, God on high!