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# How does a weary world rejoice?

*joy | The Third Week of Advent*

December 17, 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 “In Bethlehem A Newborn Boy”
- CALL TO WORSHIP
- GATHERING SONG “Joy To The World” - *Blue Hymnal #40*
- LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH
- SONG OF PRAISE “Lo How A Rose E'er Blooming” - *Blue Hymnal #48*
- LISTENING FOR GOD’S WORD
- HEARING SCRIPTURE Psalm 126 & Luke 1:57-66 - *Art Paull*
- PROCLAIMING GOD’S WORD “Awe-Inspiring” - *Rev. Monte McClain*
- RESPONDING TO GOD’S WORD
- AFFIRMATION OF FAITH
- SONG OF RESPONSE “In The Bleak Midwinter” - *Blue Hymnal #36*
- PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD’S PRAYER  
 TODAY WE’RE OFFERING OUR PRAYERS LIKE ZECHARIAH – IN BOTH SILENCE AND ALSO IN SONG. YOU CAN SING ALONG TO HAPPY CHRISTMAS (WAR IS OVER) AND ALSO COME FORWARD AND LIGHT A CANDLES, PLACING IT IN THE SAND TRAY ON THE TABLE.
- COLLECTION OF THE OFFERING
- OFFERING SONG “O Little Town Of Bethlehem” - *Blue Hymnal #43*
- SENDING SONG “You Shall Go Out With Joy” - *Glory to God Hymnal #80*
- 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 CHRIST “Pax Christi” - *Latin*
- POSTLUDE “Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas”

## Reflections on Today's Readings Psalm 126 & Luke 1:57-66



The Psalms are a collection of 150 poems, songs, and prayers written over hundreds of years by a multitude of authors, and finally compiled into what we have today in our Bibles. They are the prayers and worship songs of ancient Israel, given to God, then given back to us in the scriptures. Our reading today is part of the collection of the Psalms of Ascents (120-134). It seems to be written after the return from exile in Babylon for the poet talks of the deliverance of Israel as has already happened. But within the poem-prayer is conversation about this deliverance from the dry desert into a land of lush harvest as not yet complete. It acknowledges the hard fact that being saved by God in a stunning way doesn't necessarily always result in a trouble-free life. It articulates the tension of human life: we can experience joy despite hardship, and even in the midst of uncertainty.

Luke tells us of Elizabeth's giving birth to a son: John. He is named not according to tradition for his father; but given a different name. It's when this deviation from custom takes place that Zechariah is suddenly able to speak again. *Remember that he's been struck dumb as he couldn't accept (or maybe tolerate?) God doing something out of the box (Luke 1:18-20).* Could it be that Zechariah had prayed and longed for a child for so long, that hearing it becoming reality was just too impossible for him to believe? Somehow his 9 month forced silent retreat leads him from disappointment in God to a new place of appreciation and awe of what God is doing now and in the days to come. His journey seems to rhyme with the paradox of Psalm 126 where the parched desert is flooded with torrents of rain water and then brings forth life and harvest where before there was only sand and absence.

Zechariah can only respond to his awe and amazement by singing. We'll read his song next week (Luke 1:67-79 – what we call *the Benedictus*). When are you most amazed or in awe of God and life? At sunsets? Seeing children? Sitting with loved ones? When you serve someone else? How do you respond when you're overcome with awe, and amazed at the beauty of life and the loving faithfulness of God?

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & EXAMEN:

- What engaged, enraged, or surprised you in the text?
- When have you recently been amazed – or in awe – of God's love or the simple complexity of creation?; or an experience similar to parched desert land becoming a garden bed of new life and fruit? How did you respond?
- For you what's the difference between joy and happiness? Many talk of this year – and next (2024) as times of great uncertainty, anxiety and weariness. How do you experience joy even in such uncertainty? How might we share that message of joy and hope with others both now, and in this next year?
- What invitation do you hear the Spirit of God speaking to you – or to us, as a church – to act, speak, be, or change, through this word of scripture?

## December Birthdays

15 Janet Majors

31 Gianelle Beatty 2011

### Today at & around CAPC Oakland

**Post Service Sanctuary 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. Rooted in Luke 1:46-55 and 1:67-80.

**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. Come help set things up starting at 4pm.

**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.

**Next Sunday is Christmas Sweater Sunday!** Wear your favorite or most ugly one (your choice) to our gathering, followed by a Christmas Cookie buffet!

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

**Holiday Cards for our Musicians and Staff** • Take a minute to wish them Merry Christmas and to express your gratitude for them. On the table in the back of the sanctuary today.

**Pick up a daily Advent Devotional** in the entry.


### Thank You to Today's Leadership:

Liturgists: Art Paull, Ben Bencomo  
Music: Pete Feltman, Dave Eagle Roger Kim, Ben Kramarz, Kate Rose.  
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: Our God can part the sea.

**ALL: God can bring water from a rock, and provide bread in the desert.**

Our God can walk on water.

**ALL: The LORD can heal the sick, and turn water into wine.**

Our God sets the stars in the sky.

**ALL: God hears our voice when we cry, and is closer than our own breath.**

One: There is nothing our God cannot do.

**ALL: Let us stand in awe.**

**Let us worship God with wonder.**

### “Joy To The World”

*Author: Isaac Watts (1719)*

*Glory to God #134*

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her king;  
let every heart prepare him room,  
and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!  
Let all their songs employ,  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

3 No more let sins and sorrows grow,  
nor thorns infest the ground;  
he comes to make his blessings flow  
far as the curse is found,  
far as the curse is found,  
far as, far as the curse is found.

4 He rules the world with truth and grace,  
and makes the nations prove.

*Continued next column...*

the glories of his righteousness  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders, wonders of his love.

### Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy

 WRITTEN BY: REV. SARAH SPEED | SANCTIFIEDART.ORG

One: How does a weary world practice joy?

**ALL: By dancing, and throwing birthday parties.**

One: By hanging Christmas lights,  
and holding sleepy babies.

By singing loudly, and looking for good news.

**ALL: By telling the story of Jesus, and showing up for our community.**

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

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

### “Lo How A Rose E'er Blooming”

*Translator: Theodore Baker*

*Tune: ES IST EIN ROS*

*The Blue Hymnal #48 | Glory to God #129*

1 Lo, how a rose e'er blooming  
From tender stem hath sprung.  
Of Jesse's lineage coming,  
By faithful prophets sung.  
It came a floweret bright,  
Amid the cold of winter,  
When half spent was the night.

2 Isaiah 'twas foretold it,  
The rose I have in mind,  
With Mary we behold it,  
The virgin mother kind.  
To show God's love aright  
She bore for us a Savior,  
When half spent was the night.

3 This flower, whose fragrance tender  
with sweetness fills the air,  
dispels with glorious splendor  
the darkness everywhere.  
Enfleshed, yet very God,  
from sin and death he saves us  
and lightens every load.

## Affirmation of Faith

 WRITTEN BY: REV. SARAH SPEED | SANCTIFIEDART.ORG

We believe in a God who knows our names,  
**who counts the hairs on our heads,  
and carries the dreams in our hearts.**

We believe that God's fingerprints are all over  
creation,  
**and that God is forever speaking to us  
in a million different ways.**

We believe that awe and wonder,  
**goosebumps and laughter,  
telling stories and paying attention,**  
are all ways that we can say thank you  
to our creating, sustaining, and loving God.

**Therefore we commit ourselves to moving  
through this world  
with eyes wide open,  
with porous hearts,  
and grateful spirits.**

We commit ourselves to living lives of awe,  
wonder, and gratitude,  
**trusting that these things will forever draw us  
deeper into God's loving arms.**

We believe.  
**We stand in awe.  
Thanks be to God!**

### **"In The Bleak Midwinter"**

*Christina Georgina Rossetti (c. 1872)  
The Blue Hymnal #36 | Glory to God #144*

1 In the bleak midwinter,  
frosty wind made moan;  
earth stood hard as iron,  
water like a stone;  
snow had fallen,  
snow on snow, snow on snow,  
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.

2 Our God, heaven cannot hold him,  
nor earth sustain;  
heaven and earth shall flee away  
when he comes to reign:  
in the bleak midwinter  
a stable place sufficed  
the Lord God incarnate, Jesus Christ.

3 Angels and archangels  
may have gathered there;  
cherubim and seraphim  
thronged the air;  
but his mother only,  
in her maiden bliss,  
worshiped the beloved with a kiss.

4 What can I give him,  
poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd,  
I would bring a lamb;  
if I were a wise man,  
I would do my part;  
yet what I can I give him:  
give my heart.

**"Happy Xmas (War Is Over)"** *John Lennon; lyrics adapted  
by Monte McClain to include parts of the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55)  
Sung as our community prayer time....while we sing you can come  
up and light a candle on the table.*

1. So this is Christmas  
And what have you done?  
Another year over  
And a new one just begun

1.2. And so this is Christmas  
I hope you have fun  
The near and the dear ones  
The old and the young

*Chorus*  
A very Merry Christmas  
And a happy New Year  
Let's hope it's a good one  
Without any fear

2. And so this is Christmas (War is over!)  
For weak and for strong (If you want it)  
For rich and the poor ones (War is over!)  
The road is so long (Now!)

3. And so happy Christmas (War is over!)  
For black, brown, and white (If you want it)–  
For blue states and red states (War is over!) –  
Let's stop all the fight (Now!)

4. And so this is Christmas (War is over!)  
God works through us (If you want it)  
For peace and for justice (War is over!)  
The road is so long (Now!)

*Continued on the next page...*

5. God brings down rulers (War is over!)  
And lifts up the meek. (If you want it)  
Fills the hungry with good things (War is over!)  
Sends the rich emptied out. (Now!)

Chorus  
A very Merry Christmas  
And a happy New Year  
Let's hope it's a good one  
Without any fear

1. And so this is Christmas (War is over!)  
And what have we done? (If you want it)  
Another year over (War is over!)  
And a new one just begun (Now!)  
And so happy Christmas (War is over!)  
We hope you have fun (If you want it)  
The near and the dear ones (War is over!)  
The old and the young (Now!)

Chorus  
A very Merry Christmas  
And a happy New Year  
Let's hope it's a good one  
Without any fear

War is over, if you want it  
War is over, now!

### **"You Shall Go Out With Joy"**

*Steffi Karen Rubin (1975) | Glory to God #80*

You shall go out with joy  
And be led forth with peace  
The mountains and the hills  
Will break forth before you  
There'll be shouts of joy  
And all the trees of the field  
Will clap, will clap their hands

And all the trees of the field  
Will clap their hands  
The trees of the field  
Will clap their hands  
The trees of the field  
Will clap their hands  
While you go out with joy

### **"O Little Town Of Bethlehem"**

*Phillips Brooks (1868) | The Blue Hymnal #43*

1 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.

2 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!  
And praises sing to God the King,  
And peace to men on earth!

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

4 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 Lord Emmanuel!