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Living in the tension
 of a weary world..



The First Sunday of Advent • December 3, 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 “Someday At Christmas” - Ben Bencomo
- CALL TO WORSHIP - Ben Bencomo
- GATHERING SONG “For The Beauty Of The Earth” - Blue Hymnal #473
- LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH - Ben Bencomo
- SONG OF PRAISE “Come Thou Long Expected Jesus” - Blue Hymnal #1
- LISTENING FOR GOD’S WORD
- HEARING SCRIPTURE Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; Luke 1:1-23 - Joy Barnes
- PROCLAIMING GOD’S WORD “The Tension of Living Faith-fully in a Weary World” - Rev. Monte McClain
- RESPONDING TO GOD’S WORD
- COMING TO THE TABLE
- AFFIRMATION OF FAITH - Ben Bencomo
- PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD’S PRAYER - Myrna Shadley
 WE USE A CALL AND RESPONSE LITURGICALLY PRAYED AT THE CONCLUSION OF SHARING A PRAYER.
 Leader: God, in your mercy. **People: Hear our prayer.**
- COMMUNION – BEING NOURISHED IN OUR JOURNEY OF FAITH
 AS WE CELEBRATE THE COMMUNION MEAL YOU ARE INVITED TO COME FORWARD TO RECEIVE BREAD AND A CUP FROM OUR SERVERS IN THE CENTER SPACE. WE WELCOME ALL WHO HUNGER FOR THE PEACE OF CHRIST
- TABLE SONG OF RESPONSE “O Holy Night” - Insert
- COLLECTION OF THE OFFERING
- OFFERING SONG “Hark The Herald Angels Sing” - Blue Hymnal #32
- THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH
- SENDING SONG “People Look East” - Blue Hymnal #12
- SENDING CALL AND RESPONSE
 Leader: God is good! Leader: And all the time!
People: All the time! People: God is good!
- EXHORTATION & BENEDICTION
- PASSING THE PEACE OF GOD “Pax Christi” - Latin
- POSTLUDE “It’s Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas”

Reflections on Today's Readings Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; Luke 1:1-23

This year we're again using a curriculum created by the theo-artists of A Sanctified Art. The series is focused on how the Gospel of Luke begins the story of Jesus. It interweaves Christ's birth with the parallel story of Elizabeth, Zechariah, and John the Baptist. As the ASA team writes, in these birth stories "told side by side, we saw the full scope of human emotions: isolation, fear, disbelief, as well as connection, trust, and joy. We acknowledged that the Christmas season is often an emotionally-charged time when we feel many things deeply—sometimes all at once. Many experience emotional dissonance in the midst of joy-filled carols and festivities."

Joy is often a companion to many other emotions. We can feel joy in addition to feeling many other things at once: grief, anticipation, anxiety, excitement, disappointment, exhaustion. Perhaps many of us live with the myth that joy is not something we deserve—or that it is wholly out of reach. But our joy is rooted in the truth that we belong to God. Can you tether yourself to that deep truth? You deserve to feel joy—fully. The world needs your joy, even if you are weary. Our joy is better when it is shared. This theme of course alludes to a line in the familiar Christmas hymn, "O Holy Night," which has an interesting history. The song was originally written by a French poet who was atheist, and the music was supplied by a Jewish composer. The hymn was later translated into English by an American Unitarian minister. In the 1800s, it became a popular hymn for Christian abolitionists due to its justice-focused language in verse 3. Like Mary's song, the hymn reminds us that justice and joy belong together. Sometimes our joy is an act of resistance.

And so, this Advent, we will hold space for our weariness and our joy. We will seek a "thrill of hope" in our hurting world. We will welcome joy—even and especially if, like the prophet Isaiah, we cry out for comfort (Isaiah 40:1). In this weary world, may we find many ways to rejoice.

As Advent begins, we start by acknowledging the weariness, grief, rage, and hopelessness we carry—and we also affirm that we are made for joy. Joy is designed to live in a full house of other emotions. We start the season with Zechariah and Elizabeth; they have battled infertility and have lived many years steadfast in their faith. Perhaps they feel the weight of hopes and dreams unattained. The angel comes to Zechariah with a promise of good news, but Zechariah can't fully receive it, and he is cast into silence for the duration of Elizabeth's pregnancy. Sometimes weariness can harden us and prevent us from living fully. We've had hard journeys. Grief has left a scar on us. This is how we show up to Advent. Let us acknowledge the ways we, too, are hardened by disbelief. Like the psalmist, let us ask, "how long?" and plead for restoration.

(adapted from ASA materials for Advent 2023)



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 Garden 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.

In Defense of Kindness Book Club – Thursday 12/6 at 11am on Zoom. We're discussing pp. 85-111.

Session Meeting - Thursday 7:00pm on Zoom

Friday Night Meal – Fridays 6-7:00pm. Sign up online to help with set-up, serving, and clean-up! *3 Crosses Ministry 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.

Our New Roof • Our contractors begin removing remove our old roof, & installing the new one, as well as install the *stansions* (bases) for the solar panels tomorrow 12/4. This should take 2 weeks to finish.

Thank You to Today's Leadership:

Music: Pete Feltman, Dave Eagle Roger Kim, Ben Kramaz
And a special welcome to our new musicians – Kate Rose (fiddle) and Jane Mendonca (piano)!
Video Tech: Dann Wilkens, Albert Hussian

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

Prayer by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.

One: In God's house, we can be joyful.

ALL: We can be grateful.

We can be hopeful.

One: In God's house, we can be weary.

ALL: We can be anxious.

We can be grieving.

One: In God's house, we can be honest—

**ALL: inspired or tired,
delighted or doubtful,**

**connected or curious,
and everything in between.**

One: This is God's house.

You are welcome exactly as you are.

ALL: Let us worship our loving God.

“For The Beauty Of The Earth”

Follitt Sandford Pierpoint (1864)

The Blue Hymnal #473 | Glory to God #14

1. For the beauty of the earth
for the glory of the skies
For the love which from our birth
over and around us lies

Refrain

Lord of all to Thee we raise,
this our hymn of grateful praise

2. For the wonder of each hour
of the day and of the night
Hill and vale and tree and flower
sun and moon and stars of light

3. For the joy of ear and eye,
for the heart and mind's delight
For the mystic harmony
linking sense to sound and sight

4. For the joy of human love
brother, sister, parent child
Friends on earth and friends above
for all gentle thoughts and mild

5. For Thyself best gift divine,
to the world so freely given
For that great, great love of thine,
peace on earth and joy in heaven

Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy

Prayer by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.

One: How does a weary world hope?

**ALL: By telling stories of hope,
by lighting candles in the night,
and planting seeds in the winter that
will bloom in the spring.**

One: By praying for children as they grow,
And picking up trash on the sidewalk.

**ALL: By insisting that small acts
can make a difference.**

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

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

“Come Thou Long Expected Jesus”

Charles Wesley

The Blue Hymnal #2, Glory to God #82

1. Come thou long expected Jesus
Born to set thy people free
From our fears and sins release us
Let us find our rest in Thee
Israel's strength and consolation
Hope of all the earth thou art
Dear desire of every nation
Joy of every longing heart

2. Born thy people to deliver
Born a child and yet a king
Born to reign in us forever
Now thy gracious kingdom bring
By Thine own eternal spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone
By Thine all sufficient merit
Raise us to thy glorious throne

Affirmation of Faith

Prayer by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.

ALL:

**We believe in a God who hears our prayers,
who knows the shape and form of our weariness.**

**We believe in a God
who wants joy and delight for us,
not just survival and existence.**

**We believe in a God
who looks ahead,
who is not done dreaming for the world—
a God who sends hope in the form
of people and change,
movements and Spirit.**

**And so we return to this space.
We bring our joy and our weariness
like two sides of the same coin,
and we trust that God is already at work.
Yes, we believe in a God
who hears our prayers.
Thanks be to God for a love like that.
Amen.**

“O Holy Night”

*Translator: John S. Dwight; Author: Placide Cappeau (1847)
The Celebration Hymnal #285*

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!

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!

“Hark The Herald Angels Sing”

*Alterer: George Whitefield; Author: Charles Wesley (1739)
The Presbyterian Hymnal #32*

1 Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King:
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain:

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King"

2 Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of the virgin's womb:
veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail the incarnate Deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel.

3 Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth.

“People Look East”

Eleanor Farjeon (1928)

The Blue Hymnal #12 | Glory to God #105

1. People, look east. The time is near
Of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
Trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the guest, is on the way.

2. Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,
One more seed is planted there:
Give up your strength the seed to nourish,
That in course the flower may flourish.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the rose, is on the way.

3. Birds, though you long have ceased to build,
Guard the nest that must be filled.
Even the hour when wings are frozen
God for fledging time has chosen.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the bird, is on the way.

4. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim,
one more light the bowl shall brim,
shining beyond the frosty weather,
Bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Star, is on the way.

5. Angels, announce with shouts of mirth
Christ who brings new life to earth.
Set every peak and valley humming
With the word, the Lord is coming.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Lord, is on the way.