

College Avenue Presbyterian Church
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How does a weary world rejoice?

Christmastide
We Root Ourselves in Ritual

December 31, 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 “Jesus, Jesus O What A Wonderful Child”
- WORDS OF WELCOME
- GATHERING SONG “I Wonder As I Wander” - *Insert*
- CALL TO WORSHIP - *Janet Majors*
- SONG OF PRAISE “It Came Upon The Midnight Clear” - *Blue Hymnal #38*
- LISTENING FOR GOD’S WORD
- HEARING SCRIPTURE Luke 2:21-38 - *Susan ten Bosch*
- PROCLAIMING GOD’S WORD “Rituals and Ruts” - *Rev. Monte McClain*
- RESPONDING TO GOD’S WORD
- AFFIRMATION OF FAITH - *Janet Majors*
- SONG OF RESPONSE “Who Would Think That What Was Needed” - *Glory to God #138*
- 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 “Infant Holy, Infant Lowly”
- SENDING SONG “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice” - *Blue Hymnal #28*
- 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 CHRIST “Salam almasih” | سلام المسيح - *Arabic*
- POSTLUDE “Auld Lang Syne”

You can give electronically using this QR Code



Reflections on Today's Readings

Luke 2:21-38

After eight days have passed, Mary and Joseph circumcise their child and give him the name Jesus. They return to the temple in Jerusalem to enact the sacred birth rituals of their culture and tradition. While they are doing what is customary, the unexpected occurs. A man named Simeon is led by the Spirit into the temple to proclaim Jesus as the "light of revelation." Then, a prophet named Anna suddenly approaches them; she praises God and speaks about Jesus to everyone longing for redemption. Rituals mark sacred turning points in our lives. They can help us make meaning of celebrations, losses, and transitions. As new parents to Jesus, Mary and Joseph could feel weary for what lies ahead, but perhaps these sacred rituals—and those who bear witness to them—bolster them and give them courage for the journey. How do our sacred rituals root us and help us live into new chapters with courage?

In a New York Times article, David Brooks writes: "Rituals provide comfort because they remind us we're not alone. Billions of people have done this before as part of the timeless passages of life. Rituals also comfort because they concretize spiritual experiences."¹ While joy is not necessarily a prominent emotion named in this story, we might imagine that Mary and Joseph are bolstered by the community that surrounds them as they dedicate their child. In this ritual act, they are connected to their ancestors of the past. Through the words of the prophets Simeon and Anna, they are connected to those in the future. As they internalize the fullness of Jesus' calling, they are not alone. Consider all the ways rituals can connect us—to those in the past, present, and future, as well as to the community who bears witness to the ritual. What rituals foster deeper connection?²

Today is New Year's Eve Day. A moment filled with many cultural and family rituals, ranging from special meals (like black eyed peas or tamales) to wearing white or polka dots, or making resolutions. These rituals and traditions help to remind us, like baptism, communion, and memorial services, who we are and how we are together. Some of these are universally shared by people who follow Jesus some are unique to our community such as "letters of love," chocolate kisses at Christmas, giant post-it notes. What rituals of our shared community life speak most to you?

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & EXAMEN:

- What engaged, enraged, or surprised you in the text?
- What do I (or we) want & need to let go of & leave in 2023?
- What doesn't serve me (or us) well to carry into 2024?
- Are there things to leave in 2023, things to shake off and stop carrying around?
- What is it there to pick up and live into for 2024?
- Where & how will we share our voices and power for good, justice and peace- for ourselves & for others?

¹ "There Should Be More Rituals! The small acts that keep a society together" by David Brooks. The New York Times. April 22, 2019. [nytimes.com/2019/04/22/opinion/rituals-meaning.html?](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/22/opinion/rituals-meaning.html?)

² *redacted from a commentary written by Rev. Cecelia D. Armstrong for A Sanctified Art.



January Birthdays

8 Bill Bryant	10 Thom Faulkner
18 Gary Yee	20 Daniel Geary
25 Joy Barnes	29 Bill Beatty

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

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.

Friday Night Meal – Fridays 6-7:00pm.

Sign up online to help with set-up, serving, & clean-up! *A team of Trinity Fellowship of Berkeley is cooking.*



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

Next Sunday •• Meeting of the Congregation • Sunday, December 7th to elect new elders and deacons, and receive our 2024 budget.

Upcoming Book Series • We're thinking of offering an upcoming book series on *The Second Mountain: The Quest for a Moral Life In The Second Mountain* by David Brooks. It explores the four commitments that define a life of meaning and purpose: to a spouse and family, to a vocation, to a philosophy or faith, and to a community. And wrestles with how we navigate that in the second-half of life. (post 40/50). If you'd be interested in this book group talk to Monte

Upcoming Bible Study • Tuesday nights on Zoom we'll be working through the Psalms. Marge Harvey,

Say thank you and goodbye to Roger Kim – today is his last day playing with us on Sundays!

Thank You to Today's Leadership:

LITURGIST & READER: Janet Majors, Susan ten Bosch
MUSIC: Pete Feltman, Dave Eagle, Roger Kim, Ben Kramarz,
PRAYER LITURGIST: Marge Harvey,
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.

“I Wonder As I Wander”

Traditional Appalachian carol


1 I wonder as I wander, out under the sky,
How Jesus the Savior did come for to die
For poor orn'ry people like you and like I:
I wonder as I wander, out under the sky.

2 When Mary birthed Jesus, 'twas in a cow's stall,
With wise men and farmers and shepherds and all.
But high from God's heaven a star's light did fall,
The promise of ages it then did recall.

3 If Jesus had wanted for any wee thing,
A star in the sky or a bird on the wing,
Or all of God's angels in heav'n for to sing,
He surely could have it, 'cause He was the King.

4 I wonder as I wander, out under the sky,
How Jesus the Savior did come for to die
For poor orn'ry people like you and like I;
I wonder as I wander, out under the sky.

Call to Worship Opening Litany

 WRITTEN BY: REV. SARAH SPEED | SANCTIFIEDART.ORG

One: Every year we celebrate Christmas.

ALL: Every month we break bread.

One: Every week we gather for worship.

ALL: Every day we count our blessings.

One: Every minute God is near.

ALL: Yes, every minute God is near.

One: These are the rituals of our faith.

ALL: Let us worship Holy God.

“It Came Upon The Midnight Clear”

Author: Edmund H. Sears (1849) | Blue Hymnal #38

1 It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold;
"Peace on the earth, good will to all, ...

From heaven's all gracious King":
The world in solemn stillness lay,
To hear the angels sing.

2 Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing,
And ever o'er its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.

3 And ye, beneath life's crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way
With painful steps and slow,
Look now! for glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing;
O rest beside the weary road,
And hear the angels sing.

4 For lo, the days are hastening on,
By prophet bards foretold,
When with the ever circling years
Comes round the age of gold;
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world send back the song
Which now the angels sing.

Affirmation of Faith

 WRITTEN BY: REV. SARAH SPEED | SANCTIFIEDART.ORG

**We believe that faith is a journey
marked by rituals and rhythms.**

We come to worship.

We confess our sins.

We pass the peace.

We offer grace.

We hear the Word.

We baptize children.

We break the bread.

**And we tell the story
of a loving God.**

**And through these sacred rituals,
we are reminded:**

we are not alone.

God is near,

and we have work to do.

May this belief

shape the rhythm of our lives.

Amen.

“Who Would Think That What Was Needed”

John Bell | Glory to God #138

©1987 WGRG, Iona Community, , Glasgow, Scotland

1. Who would think that what was needed
To transform and save the earth
Might not be a plan or army,
Proud in purpose, proved in worth?
Who would think, despite derision,
That a child should lead the way?
God surprises earth with heaven,
Coming here on Christmas Day.

2. Shepherds watch and wise men wonder,
Monarchs scorn and angels sing;
Such a place as none would reckon
Hosts a holy helpless thing;
Stable beasts and by-passed strangers
Watch a baby laid in hay:
God surprises earth with heaven
Coming here on Christmas Day.

3. Centuries of skill and science
Span the past from which we move,
Yet experience questions whether,
With such progress, we improve.
While the human lot we ponder,
Lest our hopes and humour fray,
God surprises earth with heaven
Coming here on Christmas Day.

“Infant Holy, Infant Lowly”

Author (attributed to): Piotrowi Skardze;

Paraphraser: Edith M. G. Reed (1921)

Polish Carol

Blue Hymnal #37

1 Infant holy, Infant lowly,
for His bed a cattle stall;
Oxen lowing, little knowing
Christ the Babe is Lord of all.
Swift are winging Angels singing,
Noels ringing, Tidings bringing:
Christ the Babe is Lord of all.

Continued in the next column...

2 Flocks were sleeping; Shepherds keeping
Vigil till the morning new.

Saw the glory, heard the story,
Tidings of a Gospel true.

Thus rejoicing, Free from sorrow,
Praises voicing Greet the morrow:

Christ the Babe was born for you. that your lullaby
would stir your own Child's passion?

“Good Christian Friends Rejoice”

Latin Title: In dulci jubilo

*Source: German/Latin, medieval; Latin Hymn, 14th cent.
Blue Hymnal #28*

1 Good Christian friends, rejoice
With heart, and soul, and voice;
Give ye heed to what we say:
Jesus Christ is born today;
Ox and ass before Him bow,
And He is in the manger now.
Christ is born today!
Christ is born today!

2 Good Christian friends, rejoice,
With heart, and soul and voice;
Now ye hear of endless bliss:
Jesus Christ was born for this!
He hath opened heaven's door,
And we are blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this!
Christ was born for this!

3 Good Christian friends, rejoice,
With heart and soul and voice;
Now ye need not fear the grave:
Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all,
To gain the everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save!
Christ was born to save!