

College Avenue Presbyterian Church
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The Fourth Sunday of Advent || LOVE || December 23, 2018

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

As we gather for worship you're invited to come forward and light a candle, placing it in the sand tray on the table as a sign of your hope and prayers in this Advent Season. You'll find candles on the pull-out table in the back row of our sanctuary space.

GATHERING SONG

"Jesus, Jesus, Oh What A Wonderful Child"

- insert

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH: CALL TO WORSHIP

MOMENT FOR MISSION

"Change to Change Lives"

Today we collect an annual mission offering to assist financially with the raising of Dalit (or untouchable) children in India that they might grow to discover, name and claim their existence as children of God, made in God's image. We partner with Witnessing Ministries for Christ. Engage personally with their work online at www.witnessingministries.com

SONG OF PRAISE

"The Snow Lay On The Ground"

- Blue Hymnal #57

LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD

ACT OF CONFESSION. OPENING OURSELVES TO BEING UNDONE, THAT WE MIGHT BE REDONE

SUNG RESPONSE

"While We Are Waiting Come"

- Insert

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

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

1st READING OF SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 7:14-17

Pew Bible, p. 669

CHORAL MEDITATION

"Carol of the Bells"

- CAPC Oakland Choir

2nd READING OF SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:18-25

Pew Bible, p. 933

SERMON

"God With Us"

- Rev. Monte McClain

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

SONG OF RESPONSE

"For You, O Lord, My Soul in Stillness Waits"

- insert

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

"שְׁלוֹם אֵלֵיכֶם" or "Shalom Aleikhem"

(Hebrew)

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 Scripture
Isaiah 7:14-17 & Matthew 1:18-25

Our Advent readings have dealt with the question of hope – how do we hope, and trust, in God's goodness, faithfulness and love when evil, darkness, and chaos seem ascendant in the world? We're wrestled with the vision of radical peace and how God invites us, like Esther, even when God seems absent, to be part of God's unfolding reality in the world by speaking out and acting up. Last week we heard the testimony of Isaiah and John the Baptizer calling us to surpass our narcotized idea of how God acts in the world. They proclaim that God is made manifest explicitly and implicitly, through divine action and through our actions – small and big - today.

Today we turn to the beginning act of the Christmas Story. We hear of Joseph and his response to the unfolding unplanned pregnancy that we name a miracle, and he most probably didn't. Matthew alone tells of Joseph's story (Luke in his telling focuses on Mary). The words of the angel, meant to clarify and encourage, harken back to the prophetic poetry of Isaiah 7 in which a young woman is promised to give birth to a son to be named Emmanu-el, which means "God with us" in Hebrew.

Isaiah wrote that poetry in the 7th century when God seemed to be anywhere but with his chosen people. The city was surrounded, defeat seemed imminent. In that encircling doom, he speaks of a child to come, of life continuing despite appearances, of God with and among the people even when they think themselves discarded and despised. Is this woman a virgin? Or just a maiden, as in a young woman? We usually focus on the double entendre in the word used in the scripture and the consequent veracity of the story of Mary giving birth miraculously. Was she truly a virgin? Or was she just a young maiden? Is Jesus created from divine DNA or an unwanted, or unplanned, pregnancy explained through a now-hard-to-believe miracle? But maybe our modern scientific line of thinking misses the narrative point?

Jewish tradition sees Isaiah talking about either a leader to be born or the vision that life will continue even when all seems lost because God-is-with-them, despite appearances. Wouldn't that be the same miraculous way that Joseph might imaginatively interpret the disruption of his fiancée's surprise pregnancy? Could it be that these stories intend more to invite us to a prophetic imagination rather than a history to be memorized and repeated?

Questions for the practice of Examen & Contemplation

- **What shimmers in your attention to these readings?**
- **How is God with Isaiah, Joseph? Us today?**
- **How do you need prophetic imagination to see today – your life – our vocation – more clearly?**

ANNOUNCEMENTS & COMMUNITY NEWS

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

31 Gianne Beatty (2011)

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

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

COMMUNITY LIFE CALENDAR

Sweater & Cookie Sunday today! | Traditionally we celebrate with a little more on the last Sunday before Christmas, wearing Christmas sweaters and sharing in Christmas cookies. We also collect a special offering, inviting you to bring your "change" to help change the lives of Dalit (formerly called Untouchable) children in India via the ongoing work of Witnessing Ministries of Christ.

The Vocabulary of Faith | Sundays 9:30-10:15a

Our Fourth Advent Family Dinner is tonight from 5-7 pm at the home of Bill & Beth Beatty Beatty (5653 Ocean View Drive, Oakland 94618) *Bring a potluck dish to share.*

Youth Group tonight from 7-8:30pm. We're going caroling and then to Fenton's. Check in with Monte for exact details.

Choir Practice | Christmas Eve at 6:30pm to warm up for the service.

Christmas Eve Celebration 12/24 @ 7:00pm with carols, candles, a kid's impromptu pageant & chocolate!

There is no Friday Night Meal this week

Letter Ministry | Encourage another with a hand-written note. Find cards on the back wall!

La Ceiba Coffee Raffle – Tickets are \$1 you could win a prize worth \$90 of coffee & Guatemalan goods! Talk to Myrna Shadley. Raffle is today 1pm.

Deacons Hygiene Bags | We're creating bags we all can distribute to those we encounter on the street. We're aiming for needed daily things such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, hand wipes, dental floss, etc. *Talk to Ben Bencomo for more info.*

Thank you to Today's Leadership

Fellowship: The Women's Group (*Thank you!*)

Reader: Myrna Shadley

Godly Play: Ellen Brylawski (ST); Radman Beatty (DK)

Leadership for next week, 12/30/18:

Fellowship: Linda Davis; Louise Hirschman

Godly Play: Children remain in worship during the

LYRICS & WRITTEN RESPONSES FOR TODAY'S ADVENT CELEBRATION

"Jesus, Jesus, Oh What A Wonderful Child"

*African-American Spiritual,
Glory to God #126*

Jesus, Jesus, oh, what a wonderful child.
Jesus, Jesus, so holy, meek, and mild;
new life, new hope the child will bring.
Listen to the angels sing,
"Glory, glory, glory," let the heavens ring!

"The Snow Lay on the Ground"

*Anglo-Irish carol; Unknown source, 19th cent.
Blue Hymnal #126*

1 The snow lay on the ground,
The stars shone bright,
When Christ our Lord was born
On Christmas night.
Venite adoremus Dominum;
Venite adoremus Dominum.

Refrain:

Venite adoremus Dominum;
Venite adoremus Dominum;
Venite adoremus Dominum;
Venite adoremus Dominum;

2 'Twas Mary maid, so young and strong,
Who welcomed here the Christchild with a song
She laid Him in a stall
At Bethlehem;
The ass and oxen shared
The roof with them.

3 Saint Joseph, too, was by
To tend the Child;
To guard him, and protect
His mother mild;
The angels hovered round,
And sung this song,
Venite adoremus Dominum.

4 And thus that manger poor
Became a throne;
For He Whom Mary bore
Was God the Son.
O come, then, let us join
The heavenly host,
To praise the Father, Son,
And Holy Ghost.
And Holy Ghost.

CALL TO WORSHIP RESPONSIVE READING

*Today's reading comes from Psalm 23
(NRSV Translation).*

One: The Lord is my shepherd,
I shall not want.

**ALL: God makes me lie down
in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.
The Lord leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.**

One: Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;

**ALL: for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.**

One: You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

**ALL: Surely goodness and mercy
shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
my whole life long.**

ACT OF CONFESSION READING

"Joy to the World" is a popular Christmas carol with words by English writer Isaac Watts. They're based on Psalm 98, 96:11-12 and Genesis 3:17-18. The song was first published in 1719. As of the late 20th century, "Joy to the World" was the most-published Christmas hymn in North America.

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

Raise A Song Of Gladness"

*Author: Taizé Community (1978)
Glory to God Hymnal #155*

Raise a song of gladness, peoples of the earth.
Christ has come, bringing peace, joy to ev'ry heart.
Alleluia, alleluia, joy to ev'ry heart!
Alleluia, alleluia, joy to ev'ry heart!

"While We Are Waiting Come"

*Claire Cloninger | © Copyright 1986 Word Music
Glory to God Hymnal #92*

1. While we are waiting, come;
while we are waiting, come.
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel,
while we are waiting come.

2. With power and glory, come;
With power and glory, come.
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel,
while we are waiting come.

3. Come, Savior, quickly come;
Come, Savior, quickly come.
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel,
while we are waiting come.

"Joseph Heard the Troubling News"

Biblical Reference: Matthew 1:18-25

Tune: 14th century carol ("Gentle Mary Laid Her Child")

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www.carolynshymns.com

1. Joseph heard the troubling news:
Mary was expecting!
What should he, a just man, do?
He sought God's directing.
Joseph thought to send her home —
leave her, without blaming;
Then an angel in a dream
spoke of joy, proclaiming:

2. "Go, take Mary as your wife;
Joseph, don't you fear it —
God has formed a precious life
by the Holy Spirit!
Mary soon will bear a son;
you shall name him Jesus.
When the prophet spoke of him,
he said, "God is with us!"

3. God of love, we too may face
times of doubt and trouble.
May we know your daily grace,
even when we struggle.
Just as Joseph answered, "Yes!"
with new dedication,
We rejoice, for we've been blessed
by your incarnation.