

Christ Congregational United Church of Christ
A church that listens, praises God, inspires, and serves others.

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The Rev. Candace Thomas, Designated-Term Pastor
Jay Harragin, Director of Music
Graham Bryan, Musician
Graham Bryan, Liturgist

December 26th, 2021 – 10:30 a.m.
FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

Preparation for Worship

“If I cease searching, then, woe is me, I am lost.
That is how I look at it – keep going, keep going come what may.”
— Vincent van Gogh



PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Leader: Enlightened one! Burden-sharing one!

People: Helpless-as-us one! Given-for-us one!

L: Counseling one! Peace-bringing one!

P: Forever-and-ever one! Knit-us-together one!

L: The heavens are glad, fields exult, and trees sing out!

All: The earth rejoices at your coming, Holy Child of Bethlehem!

***CAROL: "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" (NCH, No. 144)**

Refrain:

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

**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 th'angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!" *[Refrain]***

**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 th'incarnate Deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel. *[Refrain]***

**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. *[Refrain]***

***THE COMMANDMENT OF JESUS (John 15:5, 12)**

"I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

***PRAYER OF INVOCATION (Unison)**

Holy One, Holy Three, Parent, Christ, and Spirit, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, We stand in awe of your greatest mystery once again: that you would come to us as one of us, full of smiles and tears, strengths and weaknesses, growing pains and griefs. A child is given indeed! A child is given that we know that heaven and earth are forever joined, that no matter what we do, no matter who we are, no matter what we feel, we are never alone. Praise be to you, Holy One, Holy Three. Amen.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Luke 2:41-52

The Boy Jesus in the Temple

Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, 'Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.' He said to them, 'Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?' But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour.

CHILDRENS MESSAGE

SPECIAL MUSIC "Variations on a French Noel" arr. David Sarandon

CHRISTMAS LITANY (Responsive)

L: Every life in its particularity is precious to God,
who came to us in a particular body, in a particular time.

P: For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all!

L: Black lives, queer lives, Indigenous lives – these are precious to God.

P: For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all!

L: Trans lives, Palestinian lives, neurodivergent lives – these are precious to God.

P: For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all!

L: Undocumented lives, disabled lives, migrant lives – these are precious to God.

P: For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all!

L: All who face oppression, discrimination, war, and tumult are precious.

P: For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all!

L: All who are burdened by mental unhealth and/or by the stigma attached to it are precious.

P: For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all!

L: All who find themselves outside of the inns of our society,
lonely and outcast are precious.

P: For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all! (cont.)

CHRISTMAS LITANY (continues)

L: All those who, like the shepherds, labor and especially those who labor during this day of celebration are precious.

P: For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all!

L: Salvation is here! Taste and see!

All: For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all!

God is with us, shout hosanna, raise a chorus, singing ever:

Praising Christ the Lord of all! Praising Christ the Lord of all!

CAROL: "I HEARD THE BELLS ON CHRISTMAS DAY"

1/ I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet the words repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

2/ I thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along th'unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

3/ And in despair I bowed my head:
"There is no peace on earth," I said,
"For hate is strong, and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good will to men."

4/ Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail,
With peace on earth, good will to men."

5/ Till, ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day
A voice, a chime, a chant sublime,
Of peace on earth, good will to men

SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYER SONG: "Away in a Manger" (verse 3)

**Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
and fit us for heaven to live with you there.**

TIME OF QUIET MEDITATION

PASTORAL PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF JESUS (Unison)

We join our hearts together as we pray:

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily
bread. Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass
against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever.
Amen.**

OFFERING INVITATION

**Glory to God in the highest heaven! God brings peace, good news, and
great joy!**

What do you have to offer back?

MUSICAL OFFERING "God of the Universe" by Graham Bryan

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (Unison)

God of peace and joy, you bind us together as if in swaddling bands of our own cloth. We are meant to be together, meant to be active participants in your great story, the story of humanity's redemption. We give these gifts with open eyes that can see, if for but a moment, strands of linen gently guiding us all toward one another. Amen.

HYMN: "CAROL OUR CHRISTMAS"

(No. 141, NCH)

**1/ Carol our Christmas, an upside-down Christmas:
snow is not falling and trees are not bare.
Carol the summer, and welcome the Christ Child,
warm in our sunshine and sweetness of air.**

**2/ Sing of the gold and the green and the sparkle,
water and river and lure of the beach.
Sing in the happiness of open spaces,
sing a nativity summer can reach!**

**3/ Shepherds and mustersers move over hillside,
finding, not angels, but sheep to be shorn;
Wise ones make journeys, whatever the season,
searching for sign of the truth to be born.**

**4/ Right-side-up Christmas belongs to the universe,
made in the moment a woman gives birth;
Hope is the Jesus gift, love is the offering,
everywhere, anywhere, here on the earth.**

MESSAGE

***CLOSING HYMN: "Go Tell It On The Mountain" (No. 154, NCH)**

Refrain:

**Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hill and everywhere.
Go tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born!**

**1/ While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
Behold throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light. *[Refrain]***

**2/ The shepherds feared and trembled
when lo! above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Savior's birth. *[Refrain]***

**3/ Down in a lowly manger
the humble Christ was born,
And God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn. *[Refrain]***

***COMMISSION (*Unison*)**

Given-for-us one! Peace-bringing one!

Forever-and-ever one! Knit-us-together one!

The heavens are glad, fields exult, and trees sing out!

The earth rejoices at your coming, Holy Child of Bethlehem!

Send us out with joy to announce your presence:

Glory to God in the Highest, and to all people, Peace.

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE



Welcome to Everyone!

Whoever or whatever brought you to our Garden Chapel or our Facebook on-line worship service this morning, we believe that the Spirit of God had a hand in you joining us. We hope that you feel the Holy Spirit in our service of prayer and praise. At Christ Congregational Church we strive to love one another as God has loved us and welcome one another as Christ has welcomed us. Therefore, we are an Open and Affirming church, loving and welcoming all people in all of God's variety; including racial, ethnic, and economic diversity, gender diversity and expression, sexual orientation, and physical and mental abilities.

We are continuing to practice pandemic protocols here at CCC by returning to worship outdoors in the Garden Chapel today and for the foreseeable future. Face masks are required, social distancing is encouraged, and hand sanitizer is available. You may choose to sit on a rock (bring a cushion!) or on a chair.

The altar flowers are given by Pastor Candy in loving memory of her mother Alma Zimmerman on her birthday today.

NEXT SUNDAY we will begin the New Year by celebrating the sacrament of Holy Communion. Plan to join us in person in the Garden Chapel or at home on Facebook.

We will be starting a new Prayer List in January. Please let Miriam, our Administrative Assistant, know if there are names you'd like added. She may be reached at mmgoodnews@gmail.com or call her at 305-325-9381. Thanks be to God for prayers answered and for comfort given.

PRAYER LIST

***Deena Chamberlin, The Rev. David Christensen, Carol Christensen,
Joan Hansen, Anita Smith, Maggie McDowell,
Don and Peggy Olson & Family, Sonya Williams, Marlene Shulman,
Jen Wood, the Seara Family, the Bess Family, Duyen Le, Tricia,
Carolyn Campbell, Gloria Jean Richardson, and J.J. Ketzle.***

JOYS AND CONCERNS – Please let Pastor Candy know of any joys or concerns you would like lifted up in worship before Sunday morning at 10 a.m. Call or text Pastor Candy at 925-640-9289; or send an email to cccpastor@att.net

ZOOM BIBLE STUDY led by Pastor Candy is offered each Monday from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. We are using the LISTEN UP! Bible study, part 2 which you may download for free. [ZOOM](#) Meeting ID: 825 4768 5992

For Pastoral Care Needs, please call *Pastor Candy* at 925-640-9289 or you may call or leave a message at the Church Office, 305-235-9381.

**CALENDAR
DECEMBER 26, 2021 TO JANUARY 2, 2022**

SUN. DEC. 26TH	10:30 AM	WORSHIP (SANCTUARY & FACEBOOK LIVE)
MON. DEC. 28TH	6:30 PM	BIBLE STUDY
SUN. JAN. 2ND	10:30 AM	WORSHIP (SANCTUARY & FACEBOOK LIVE)

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