

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Rev. Dawn Garrett-Larsen, Pastor
Third Sunday of Advent
Kathy Ward, Lay Reader

December 17, 2023

Worship 9:30 AM

PRELUDE *In Dulci Jubilo* Dietrich Buxtehude

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: O Great Writer, with a sky full of stars and a world full of flowers, there should be no end to my joy.

People: And yet, instead of decorating my very being with joy, I let it slip away like loose change. Instead of singing like Mary, or dancing like David, I pass by remarkable beauty and love most days, unfazed. Forgive me.

Leader: Teach me the ways of children, who laugh and dance and sing as if joy is the very thing that keeps them alive.

People: Maybe they have joy figured out. Gratefully we pray, Amen.

*HYMN # 179 *Joy to the World*

*INVOCATION

Creator God, scripture is flooded with dream-like images: the lion lying down with the lamb, justice rolling like a mighty river, swords being beaten into plowshares, the prisoner being set free, good news to the oppressed, the whole world rejoicing. To our human ears, there are times when these words can sound like nothing more than a far-off dream, downplaying prophecy to fantasy. However, what we know is that to dream is to hope, and to hope is to imagine, and to imagine is to wonder, and to wonder is to believe, and to believe is to live and breathe for your promised day. So give us the strength to listen as we dream, O God. For deep down, we know your words are the very thing we need. Amen.

*LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever. Amen.

*GLORIA PATRI # 734

ANTHEM *Angels We Have Heard on High* arr. John Leavitt

LIGHTING OF ADVENT CANDLE OF JOY *Jim Malone & Connie Fredericks-Malone*

ADVENT CANDLE SONG

CHILDREN'S MOMENT CRECHE

HEBREW BIBLE LESSON *Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11* Pg # 653

*HYMN # 180 *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

MORNING PRAYER

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (insert)

GOSPEL LESSON *Luke 1: 47-55* Pg # 52

SERMON *Those Who Dream...Sow Joy* Rev. Dawn Garrett-Larsen

OFFERTORY *Christmas Meditation on an Old French Melody* Richard Wegner

*DOXOLOGY # 34

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

In our unworthiness, O God, may we yet bring worthy gifts to honor the Messiah. May the brokenhearted be led to enriching new celebrations. May the lowly among us come to know their true worth as persons chosen by you to do great things. By your mercy, may the hungry be fed not only with bread but also with opportunities to feed others. We give ourselves as your servants, for no gift is complete without personal commitment. Thank you, God, for expecting great things of us. Our spirits rejoice in the coming of our Savior. Amen.

*HYMN # 185 *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *He Whom Shepherds Once Came Praising* Wilbur Held

***Please stand if you are able.**

Call to Worship and Invocation reprinted from Sanctified Arts by Sarah Are; Prayer of Dedication reprinted from Fresh Winds of the Spirit, Book 2 by Lavon Bayler

*Greeters This Morning: Lorena Garmezy, Tom Harradine, Judy Patchen
Ushers This Morning: Jim Hilton, Cheryl Bootes, Carla DeMeco, Barb Davis
Live Stream This Morning: Matt Berry
Coffee Hour Host: Trustees*



If you are visiting with us, welcome!

Please fill out a green card and place it in the offering plate.

If you would like to use our hearing assistance system please see an usher.

Happy Birthday

- 18 Judy White ~ Elliott Morgan
- 19 Nancy Parsons
- 20 Jim DeMay ~ Thomas Rice
- 21 Alice Berry
- 22 Debbie Jackson

Prayer List

Molly Bailey's mother; Connie Barrett; Carol Birx (friend of the Casellas Family); **Guy Burns, Marjorie Case; Hector Casellas** (Dan's father); **Cheryl** (Jennifer Maxfield's sister-in-law); **Marilyn Clary, Abby Coons** (Carl & JoAnn Reed's friend); **Carol & Kent** (Karen's friends); **Cathy Coots; Glenn & Karen DeHond; Scarlett Emerson** (Elaine Hilton's sister); **Max Grossman** (George Herren's friend); **Carin Herren; Anne Jensen** (friend of Jim & Connie Fredericks-Malone); **John** (Lin's nephew); **Ron & Lu Krahl; Michelle List;** (friend of Joann Reed); **Dennis Maxfield; Paul** (Dennis Maxfield's brother); **Frank McAlpin** (Patrick McAlpin's father); **Joan Piorkowski,** Paul Piorkowski's mother; **Okke Postma; Chris Pritchard** (Rick & Cindy Mullen and George Herren's friend); **Helen Rudolph** (Kurt's Mom); **Alexander Saxby** (Son-in-law of Phil and Kathi Nevin); **Judy Silvestrone** (Kathy Postma's sister), **Pat Smith; Dr. Steven Smith & Family** (Jessica & Dan Casellas' friends); **Barb Stahl; Josh Yeo** (Barb Stahl's friend); **Jason Zeller** (Kathy Ward's son); **Jim Ziegler; all those who struggle with poverty and homelessness, especially those who receive food and gas card support**

Calendar

Sun Dec 17	11:45	Christmas Eve Rehearsal
Tue Dec 19	8:00	Men's Group
Thurs Dec 21	7:00	Longest Night Service in the Chapel
Sun Dec 24	9:00	Choir
	10:30	Worship In Person & Live Stream, Sunday School
	5:00	Christmas Eve Service