

LIGHTING OUR ADVENT CANDLE OF LOVE

This morning we light our fourth Advent Candle,
the candle of love.

As we light the candle of love, we remember that Jesus teaches us
to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength,
to love our neighbors as we love ourselves,
and to love our enemies and those who persecute us.

*We light our Advent candle of love,
knowing that love comes from God,
and that all who sincerely love God,
and love other people,
know God,
because God is love.*

*May the flame burning on the candle of love
be the flame that burns in our hearts:
the light of Christ's love,
the light that liberates, heals and reconciles this world.*

*SINGING LIKE ANGELS

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

PRAYING FOR OURSELVES, ONE ANOTHER, AND THE WORLD

REFLECTING SILENTLY UPON OUR LIVES

SHARING FROM THE DEPTHS OF OUR LIVES

OPENING OURSELVES IN PRAYER

PRAYING AS JESUS PRAYED (debts and debtors)

RECEIVING OUR CHOIR'S GIFT *Jesus Christ, the Apple Tree* arr. Wagner

READING AND REFLECTING

READING FROM THE BIBLE

Jeremiah 31: 1-9 and Luke 1: 67-79

REFLECTING

What makes a house grand
Ain't the roof or the doors
If there's love in a house
It's a palace for sure
Without love
It ain't nothing but a house
A house where nobody lives
Without love it ain't nothing
But a house, a house where
Nobody lives.

Tom Waits

Love is a rose but you better not pick it
It only grows while it's on the vine
A handful of thorns and you'll know you've missed it
You lose your love when you say the word 'mine.'

Neil Young

OFFERING OURSELVES THROUGH OUR GENEROSITY

OFFERING OUR LIVES AND GIFTS IN SERVICE TO GOD

Pianist

*PRAISING GOD

tune *Old Hundreth*

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise God all creatures here below.
Praise God for all that love has done. Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.

*DEDICATING OUR LIVES AND POSSESSIONS TO GOD

DEPARTING TO PRACTICE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

*SINGING A HYMN *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming* Red Hymnal 131

*OFFERING WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT

*TAKING THE LIGHT INTO THE WORLD

*SENDING SONG *Dona Nobis Pacem* Insert

*PARTING WITH A SONG *Sing a Different Song*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

In response to the rise of Islamophobia in our nation, our church is participating in the **Interfaith Action for Human Rights** banner project by hanging a banner that says, "We Stand With Our Muslim Neighbors."

The **rainbow stole** on the pulpit is in support of the struggle of all **LGBTQ** people for equity and justice, and for a life that is free from prejudice, intimidation, and violence.

A Joyful thanks to our Joyful Noise Orchestra:

Fran Briggs	clarinet
Rambie Briggs	accordion
Edgar Cavazos	guitar
Chencho Flores	accordion
Jonathan Geer	piano
Norma Hawes	guitar
Roberto Hernandez	jingle bells
Katie Lemley	cello
Nodie Murphy	flute
Andy Ross	oboe
David Ross	recorder
Sara Ross	viola

We will once again celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ with our **Christmas Open Door Dinner on Christmas day**. A brief service at 12:00 noon will be followed by a full-course Christmas dinner at 12:30.

The **Vision Team** will be hosting a **meeting after church on Sunday, January 7**, to offer an **interim report** on the results from the house meetings on spirituality and mission. The house meetings for the third round of the process, dealing with our church's resources for ministry, will be held January 16-21.

On **January 14, after worship**, the Deacons will host an **orientation** for people who're new to our church. This is a good way to learn more about our church and denomination, and to get to know folks a bit better.

UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

Deacons, Tue, Jan 2, 7:15pm, Joy Penticuff's
Trustees, Wed, Jan 3, 7:15 pm, Gail Christeson's
Coord Council, Tue, Jan 9, 6:30 pm, John Goff's

PARTICIPATING TODAY

Ushers Jaime Hadley and Bill Beardall
Fellowship Hosts Board of Deacons

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The **Adult Christian Education Group** meets Sundays at 10:00 am on the 2nd floor.

Middle School and High School Students remain in the service the first Sunday of each month; other Sundays their Sunday School begins after the Choral Anthem.

Elementary Sunday School is held during the 11:00 am service, immediately following "Time with Children." The children will be escorted from the Sanctuary to the 2nd floor Christian Education room, and can be picked up from there after the service.

Infant and Toddler Care is available throughout the service in the Nursery. Child care begins at 9:15 am for the parents of children attending choir practice or the Adult Christian Education Group.

Children's bulletins and crayons are available on the table in the back of the Sanctuary.

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AUSTIN, UCC

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Rev. Thomas J VandeStadt	Pastor
Norma Hawes	Music Director
Rev. Van Herd	Adult Christian Education
Rev. Amelia Fulbright	Labyrinth Student Ministry
Jonathan Geer	Piano
Amy Harris	Violin
Tony Rogers	Cello
Amy Rivera	Sunday School Teacher
Sam Clubb	Nursery Attendant
Kathy Whatley	Interim Office Emerita
Victor Cardenas	Custodian

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AUSTIN

an Open and Affirming Church
of The United Church of Christ

December 24, 2017

Third Sunday of Advent: Love



GATHERING

Love lives in persons not ideas. Love is not a concept but a powerful, transforming energy that heals, reconciles, unites, and makes whole. Love draws together— heart to heart, center to center. Love is not what God does; love is what God is. Love is the Godness of God. Iliia Delio

MAKING A JOYFUL NOISE *A Christmas Medley* Joyful Noise Orchestra

WELCOMING ONE ANOTHER AND SHARING OUR ANNOUNCEMENTS

ACCEPTING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

Joyful Noise Orchestra *Wexford Carol*

***GATHERING WITH SONG** *Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah* Insert

***GATHERING AS CHRIST'S DISCIPLES**

Drawn together
by the light of Christ's love,
let us enjoy communion
with God and one another.

*With hearts tender yet bold,
may our love extend beyond
the safe circle of our community,
reaching out to strangers,
people we typically ignore,
even those we dislike or fear.*

This is the way of Christ's love.

*The light that shines in the darkness
the power that transforms us and the world.*

***SINGING A HYMN** *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*

Red Hymnal 228