

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

And his name shall be called Emmanuel,
which means, "God with us."

*Emmanuel, we celebrate your presence in our world,
you are here with us, for us,
in the very depths of our lives,
in the midst of our relationships.*

With us, for us,
you inspire our imaginations and strengthen our resolve,
that we may envision just and peaceful ways to live,
that we may speak and act with prophetic love.

With us, for us,
you call us and empower us
to shine the light of hope, peace, joy and love,
to be a people who liberate, heal and reconcile your world.

*Emmanuel, we light your candle this day,
bless us with your light that shines upon us and within us.*

*SINGING LIKE ANGELS

Jesus, Jesus, oh, what a wonderful child.
Jesus, Jesus, so holy, meek, and mild;
new life, new *hope/peace/joy/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 *To Us Is Born Immanuel*

Praetorius/Trustler

READING AND REFLECTING

READING FROM THE BIBLE

John 1: 1-10; 14

REFLECTING

The other name of God is beauty. The heart is the tabernacle of divine beauty.
John O'Donohue

For beauty is the cause of harmony, of sympathy, of community. Beauty unites all things and is the source of all things. It is the great creating cause which bestirs the world and holds all things in existence by the longing inside them to have beauty.
Pseudo-Dionysius

I did not have to ask my heart what it wanted
because of all the desires I have ever known,
just one did I cling to
for it was the essence of all desire:
to know beauty.

St. John of the Cross

OFFERING OURSELVES THROUGH OUR GENEROSITY

OFFERING OUR LIVES AND GIFTS IN SERVICE TO GOD

Trio *Scherzino on a French Carol*

Paxton

*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 *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

Black Hymnal 160

*OFFERING WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT

*TAKING THE LIGHT INTO THE WORLD

*SENDING SONG *See the Little Baby*

Black Hymnal 147

*PARTING WITH A SONG *See the Little Baby*

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.

Our **Adult Education** class is reading and reflecting on race, mass incarceration, and criminal justice and injustice. If you'd like to participate, the group meets at 10 am in the 2nd floor Sunday School room.

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**.

Huston-Tillotson University will host a **Memorial Service for Dr. Joe McMillan** on **Saturday, January 13, at 11:00 am**. We will remember and honor Joe's life during our Sunday worship service on **Sunday, January 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.

Our church's **Annual Meeting** will take place after worship on **Sunday, January 28, 2017**. We will review our 2017 ministry, look ahead to 2018, and pass our budget for 2018.

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 Keith and Darcy Beresheim
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
Nodie Murphy	Music Director
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 31, 2017
First Sunday of Christmas



GATHERING

You can stifle all adventure
for a century or so.
Smother hope before it's risen,
watch it wizen like a gourd.
But you cannot imprison
the Word of the Lord.
No, you cannot imprison
the Word of the Lord.

Lee Pieper

ACCEPTING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

Trio Improvisation on *Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light*

***GATHERING WITH SONG** *There are angels hov'ring 'round*
There are angels hov'ring round
To carry the tidings home
And Jesus bids us come

*GATHERING AS CHRIST'S DISCIPLES

In this eternal beginning, this forever unfolding now,
The Word is with God, and the Word is God.

*All is now coming into being through the Word. Outside the word,
nothing is coming into being. Outside the Word, nothing exists.*

Life is coming into being through the Word,
and life is the light shining in all people.

*Life's light is shining in the darkness,
and the darkness is not overcoming it.*

***SINGING A HYMN** *What Child Is This*

Red Hymnal 140