

LIGHTING OUR ADVENT CANDLE OF LOVE

This morning, we light our fourth Advent Candle, love,
remembering that Jesus
loved God with all his heart, mind, soul, and strength,
loved his neighbors as himself,
loved those who persecuted him, his enemies,
and showed the greatest act of love, laying down his life for his friends.

*We light the candle of love,
to proclaim our faith
that Christ embodies
the God who is love,
and that Christ lights God's fire,
and fans God's flames,
in other human hearts,
including our own.*

*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 OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

LIFTING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS IN PRAYER

PRAYING TOGETHER AS JESUS PRAYED

 debts and debtors

RECEIVING A MUSICAL GIFT

Jesus, Our Brother, Kind and Good
Amelia Fulbright, vocals, Bill Beardall, guitar

READING AND REFLECTING

READING FROM THE BIBLE

Isaiah 65: 17-25

REFLECTING

Our ability to love others freely depends on seeing ourselves as loved.
Many of us struggle with fully accepting God's incredible and unconditional love. I don't mean at the intellectual level; mouthing the words "God loves me unconditionally and infinitely" is easy. Rather, I mean knowledge to the core of your being. Susan Stabile

I used to believe that prayer changes things, but now I know that prayer changes us, and we change things. Mother Theresa

Tell me whom you love and I will tell you who you are. Arsene Houssaye

OFFERING OURSELVES THROUGH OUR GENEROSITY

OFFERING OUR LIVES AND GIFTS IN SERVICE TO GOD

Trio *Gentle Joseph, Joseph Dear*

*PRAISING GOD

Tune: Old Hundredth

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 *No Wind at the Window* Red Hymnal 101

*OFFERING WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

*TAKING THE LIGHT INTO THE WORLD

*SENDING SONG *Dona Nobis Pacem* Red Hymnal 752
Sing first in unison, then as a round

*PARTING WITH A SONG *He Came Down, That We May Have Love*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A BIG thank you to everyone who pledged financial support for our church's 2019 ministry. If you plan on pledging, but haven't yet, **pledge forms** are available in the sanctuary.

Looking for a holiday gift for family and friends? Yourself? We have our very own calendars just in time for the holidays! These **calendars feature our gorgeous stained-glass windows** along with several other CCA-specific points of interest. Beginning with December 2018, the calendars go through March 2020. That's 16 months! This project is a deacon-sponsored fund-raiser for the church.

We will be serving our **Christmas Open Door Dinner this Christmas Day**. We'll need folks to set up in the morning, serve at 12:30, and clean up after the meal. We're typically done by 3:00. As you make your Christmas plans, please consider providing some food, or helping to set up, serve, our clean up.

This **Spring**, we will gather folks together to **read and discuss** the book, ***Climate Church, Climate World, How People of Faith Must Work for Change***, by **Jim Antal**, **Forward by Bill McKibben**. Jim Antal is the United Church of Christ's premiere advocate for addressing climate change, and he was instrumental in the UCC's historic decision to divest from the fossil fuel industry. His book addresses the urgent need to respond to climate change, and ways churches can respond. So, start reading, and await further details for discussing, and hopefully, acting.

You can make your **financial contribution** to the Congregational Church of Austin **electronically** through **Tithe.ly**. You can install the app on a smart device or contribute to CCA on the Tithe.ly website. **For more information** about Tithe.ly and how to use the service, please pick up an information sheet in the sanctuary or Fellowship Hall, or ask our Office Administrator, Donna Cravens, to send you one electronically.

UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

Coord Council, Thu, Dec 27, 7:15 pm, at Whit Bodman's

PARTICIPATING TODAY

Ushers Rene Slataper and Bill Beardall
Nursery Assistant Joy Penticuff

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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

The Youth Group meets every Sunday (except the first Sunday of the month) after church with the youth from University Christian and University Baptist, to go out for lunch and enjoy a program. Middle and High Schoolers welcome. If you would like to be on the email list for more details, please see Reuel Nash.

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.

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AUSTIN, UCC

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Rev. Tom VandeStadt Pastor
Nodie Murphy Music Director
Rev. Amelia Fulbright Labyrinth Student Ministry
Barbara Burnham Piano
Julia Ross Flute
Robin Rosson Cello
Amy Kent Sunday School Teacher
Sam Clubb Nursery Attendant
Donna Cravens Office Manager
Victor Cardenas Custodian

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AUSTIN

An Open and Affirming Church
Of The United Church of Christ



December 23, 2018
Fourth Sunday of Advent: Love

I Love You
With an Everlasting Love

GATHERING

I have loved you with an everlasting love;
therefore, I have continued in my faithfulness to you. Jeremiah 31: 3

ACCEPTING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

Trio *Sweet Little Jesus Boy* MacGimsey

GATHERING WITH SONG *Wait for the Lord*

Alternate trio alone and congregation singing three times Red Hymnal 90

GATHERING WITH PRAYER

Sisters, brothers, siblings in Christ,
with your heart, mind, and soul,
listen to what God is saying to you:
I love you, I have always loved you,
I will always love you,
not because of anything you do,
have done, or will do,
no matter who you are,
have been, or will be.
I, the God who loves, love you, my child.
I, the God who is faithful, love you, my people.

God loves me. God loves us.

Me, us, all of us, everyone, always, forever, no matter what.

May we hear this, believe this, live this, and share this.

***SINGING A HYMN** *Now Bless the God of Israel* Black Hymnal 110