



The Congregational Church of Austin, UCC,
an Open and Affirming Congregation

*Providing a nurturing, safe, and affirming community for all people to flourish
in God's love, justice, and peace!*

408 W. 23rd Street Austin, TX 78705

An Open & Affirming Congregation in the United Church of Christ
Order of Worship for 12/15/2024

Third Sunday of Advent

On our Way to Bethlehem: Nazareth ~ A Place of Our Home

** Please rise as you are able, in body or in spirit.*

Words for Centering

Dr. Maya Angelou

The ache for home lives in all of us.

The safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned.

Ringing of the Bells

Prelude

Improvisation on "Watcher, Tell Us of the Night"

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Dr. Ginny Brown Daniel

If you are visiting for the first time, we are so glad you have joined us!

Thank you for leading us in worship with your presence!

***Advent Carol of Celebration**

M. McFee, C. Bell

O Little Town of Bethlehem/We're On Our Way

O Little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie

Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.

Yet in thy dark streets shineth, the everlasting Light;

The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

We're on our way. We're on our way.

Dream of the day when joy holds sway.

With all the earth, in all our hearts.

We're on our way. This is the day. (repeat)

***Call to Worship and Lighting of the Advent Candle of Joy**

Rev. Shelby Nowland

On this third Sunday of Advent, we journey on our way to the renewal of our world.

Too often, we let fear or complacency prevent us from calling out the injustices of our time.

We light our Advent Candle of Joy to be our companion in the places that remind us of home as we wait for God's loving justice to be realized.

May God illuminate our way to a census of joy to give us courage for action, even in the midst of our waiting. Come, let us worship God.

Reading of the Hebrew Scriptures Isaiah 12:2-6 Rev. Shelby Nowland

Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid, for the Lord God is my strength and my might; the Lord has become my salvation. With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And you will say in that day: Give thanks to the Lord, call on God's name; make known God's deeds among the nations; proclaim that God's name is exalted. Sing praises to the Lord, for the Lord has done gloriously; let this be known in all the earth. Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

Reading of the Christian Scriptures Luke 1:26-33 Rev. Ginny

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Child of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.'

This is the spirit of God's love. **Thanks be to God.**

***Advent Carol** With Joy Draw Water

****NCH109**

Prayers for God's Beloved Community

Rev. Ginny

Anthem

Walk Together Children

arr. by Fettke, Grassi

Reflecting in Community

Rev. Ginny

Silence

Invitation to Generosity

Rev. Ginny

You are invited to financially give so that we can continue to serve our neighbors in Austin and throughout the world. Your generosity can be with cash, a check, or scanning the QR code to give online (see the back of this bulletin). Thank you for your generosity.

Offertory Music

Skating

V. Guaraldi

***Doxology**

Tune, Away in a Manger

*Praise God for these gifts that we offer today
And bless them for good in the world this we pray.
Praise Jesus, the Christ-Child, our Hope and our Stay,
The Spirit, our Keeper, our guide on the way.*

***Prayer of Dedication**

Rev. Shelby Nowland

God of Joy, we dedicate these offerings as a reflection of our gratitude for the homes you provide—places where love, faith, and generosity are nurtured. May these gifts carry the joy of this Advent season to those in need, reminding us all that Bethlehem's promise begins in the warmth of our own Nazareth. Bless these offerings, O God, that they may inspire joy and justice in every heart and home they touch. Amen.

***Advent Carol**

Of the Parent's Heart Begotten

NCH118

Blessing for the Parish Ministry of the Rev. Shelby Nowland

***Benediction**

Rev. Shelby Nowland

Postlude

Carol of the Bells

You are invited to be seated and listen to the postlude as our gift to you from the Divine. After the postlude, we will have a time of joys and concerns and prayer followed by a potluck lunch. Please join us! We are grateful for your presence with us today!

Welcome to the Congregational Church of Austin, UCC!

If you are visiting for the first time, we are so glad you have joined us! We invite you to join us after worship for a time of fellowship so that we can learn more about you and share more about our church with you!

Leading In Today's Service:

Rev. Dr. Ginny Brown Daniel, Interim Pastor and Teacher

Victor Cardenas, Custodian

Jonathan Geer, Piano

Amy Harris, Violin

Roberto Hernández, Usher and Deputy Deacon

Liz Lee, Cello

Laura Martin, Director of Music

Serge Martinez, Director of Online Ministries

Rev. Shelby Nowland, Worship Leader

** *When we refer to the New Century Hymnal, we use the acronym, NCH.
CCLI# is 11086713*



Invitation to Baptismal Bowl and Prayer Net During Offertory

You are invited to bring your offering forward and place in the offering plate. You are also invited to the table near the prayer net. Our baptismal bowl is there for you to dip your fingers in God's Living Water as a baptismal reminder that you are created in God's image and loved wholly just as you are! You are also invited to take a prayer ribbon (symbolizing the prayers you bring with you today) and tie it to the prayer net to remind us that God holds the collective prayers of creation together in God's love for all of creation.