



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 12/29/2024
First Sunday after Christmas
On Our Way to Bethlehem: Prussia ~ A Place of Return

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

Words for Centering

Jan Richardson

*For every one of you wandering in the darkness,
There is a beautiful inner star to guide you.*

Ringling of the Bells

Prelude

Improvisation on "What Child Is This?"

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Dr. CJ Wood

*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!*

***Christmas Carol of Celebration**

Arise, Your Light is Come

**NCH164

***Call to Worship**

Pam Tucker

Siblings in Christ, on this first Sunday after Christmas we come to worship,
aware that our journey does not end at the manger.

**Now that the festivities have quieted, we return, not to what was, but to
what can be — renewed by God's Liberating Love we have witnessed.**

On our way, we find ourselves in places of return — places where our hopes
are restored, where brokenness is mended, and where God's presence leads us
toward transformation.

**God's Liberating Love dwells among us so let us continue our journey
toward health and wholeness together. Come, let us worship God!**

Reading of the Hebrew Scriptures Psalm 148 Pam Tucker

Reading of the Christian Scriptures Matthew 2:1-12 Rev. Dr. CJ Wood
This is the spirit of God's love. **Thanks be to God.**

***Christmas Carol** We Three Kings GTG151

Prayers for God's Beloved Community Rev. Dr. CJ Wood

Anthem A La Nanita Nana Gomis, arr. Hayes

Reflecting in Community Rev. Dr. CJ Wood

Litany of Stars Rev. Dr. CJ Wood

On a day like this when look forward in what is yet to come, and so much could happen in the world, in our church between me and you let us pause, dear wanderer, and contemplate the stars.

Let us wonder what brought us here to this moment, this time, this place. Let us wonder how we would describe it what words would give us meaning. Let us find our own star words to lead us into wonder. Let us welcome the possibility. There is so much possibility isn't there - dear wanderer?

In this season of renewal, of hope delivered, of love made known and peace made possible still we seek the light: In our own lives

We are seeking the light.

In our neighborhoods,

We are seeking the light.

In our families

We are seeking the light.

In our work

We are seeking the light.

In this church and its unknown future

We are seeking the light.

In our nation

We are seeking the light.

In our world

We are seeking the light.

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of God has risen upon you. Darkness covered the Earth, and such thick darkness on the peoples; but God will rise up and glory shall appear.

May we always seek the light That will extinguish the darkness. May we rise and shine like the newborn babe receiving so many gifts.

Invitation to Generosity

Rev. Dr. CJ Wood

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

Sospiri

Elgar

***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**

Pam Tucker

God of promise and fulfillment, we dedicate these offerings as signs of our gratitude and hope. May these gifts, like the gifts of the Magi, bring joy and justice to those in need and honor your boundless love. Bless the work of our hands and hearts, that all may find their way home to your peace. Amen.

***Christmas Carol**

This Little Light of Mine

NCH524

***Benediction**

Rev. Dr. CJ Wood

Postlude

Improvisation on "Los magos que llegaron a Belén"

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. If you are visiting with us, you are invited to stay for as much or as little as you choose. 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

Roberto Hernández, Usher and Deputy Deacon

Liz Lee, Cello

Laura Martin, Director of Music

Serge Martinez, Director of Online Ministries

Pam Tucker, Worship Leader

Rev. Dr. CJ Wood, Guest Preacher

** When we refer to the red Glory to God hymnal, we use the acronym, GTG.
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.