



**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 12/22/2024

Fourth Sunday of Advent

On our Way to Bethlehem: Bethlehem ~ A Place of Humility

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

Words for Centering

Sister Joan Chittister

*Jesus came to us as a child
So that we might come to understand
Not only that nothing we do is insignificant,
But that every small thing we do has within it
The power to change the world.*

Ringling of the Bells

Prelude

Improvisation on "Gentle Joseph, Joseph Dear"

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 O Little Town of Bethlehem (vs 2)/**

We're On Our Way

M. McFee, C. Bell

*O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our fear, and draw us near; be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.*

*We're on our way. We're on our way. Dream of the day when love holds sway.
With all the earth, in all our hearts. We're on our way. This is the day.*

***Call to Worship and Lighting of the Advent Candle of Love** Liz Nash

On this fourth 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 Love to be our companion in our places of humility for God's loving justice to be realized.

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

Reading of the Hebrew Scriptures Micah 5:2-5a Liz Nash

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of their kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed her flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord their God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and she shall be the one of peace.

Reading of the Christian Scriptures Luke 2:1-6 Rev. Ginny

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child.

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

*** Advent Carol When Mary and Joseph Sought Safety and Shelter** C.W.Gillette

Prayers for God's Beloved Community Rev. Ginny

Anthem Go to the Manger Parker and Sterling

Reflecting in Community The Dangerous Safety of Bethlehem 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

Bring a Torch Jeanette Isabella

Arr. E Rocherolle

*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

Liz Nash

God of Love, as we journey to Bethlehem, we remember migrants fleeing danger, searching for safety and hope, and we bring these gifts with humble hearts. Bless these offerings to be signs of Your love, born in unexpected places, bringing refuge, compassion, and justice to those in need. May our giving prepare the way for Your peace to dwell among us, wherever the journey leads. Amen.

*Advent Carol

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

NCH116

*Benediction

Scherzino on a French Carol

Arr. D. Paxton

Postlude

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
Amy Harris, Violin
Roberto Hernández, Usher and Deputy Deacon
Liz Lee, Cello
Laura Martin, Director of Music
Serge Martinez, Director of Online Ministries
Rev. Dr. Liz Nash, 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.