

A Home for All

December 12, 2021



first  **congregational**
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
timeless worship + modern faith

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 12, 2021

10:00 am

For those worshipping in person, please note that we're asking no singing or humming, keep masks on, and stay distanced between households

*Christmas is built upon a beautiful and intentional paradox;
that the birth of the homeless should be celebrated in every home.*

~ G.K Chesterton

John the Baptist's good news sounds harsh, but he preaches a home for all—where inequities are banished, valleys are lifted up, and all have the resources they need for collective flourishing. Ultimately, John's message is one of joy. We are called to collectively build and repair the structures of our society; we are called to be kin-dom builders. Wherever we build, God is there. What we build should be a place with a large table and room for all.

~ Lisle Gwynn Garrity, A Sanctified Art

PRELUDE

Judy Widrig

"Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella"

Avery Neem

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Davi Weasley

RINGING THE BELL

CALL TO WORSHIP

Jennifer Green

One Voice: A voice calls out in the wilderness.

**All Voices: It sings of a home for all.
It speaks of justice and peace.**

One Voice: We could choose to ignore it.

**All Voices: We could drown out that song.
We could choose not to listen.**

One Voice: Instead, we come into this space.

**All Voices: We let the world grow quiet.
We listen.**

One Voice: A voice calls out in the wilderness. Do you hear it?

All Voices: We hear it. In listening, we worship.

One Voice: Let us light the candles of Advent and draw near to God.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH CANDLES

“Joy”

The Douglas Family

Joy is seeing people you love after months apart.

Joy is hearing, “Come on over, it has been too long!”

Joy is the stretches and giggles of a newborn child.

Joy is making it home when the journey is long.

Joy is your dog sliding to meet you at the door.

Joy is the energy of a new season.

Joy is feeling found when you thought you were lost.

So today we light the candle of joy, because the welcome God has for us is nothing short of joyful.

Rest in that good news. Let it wash over you.

Family of faith, we are close to home.

MUSICAL RESPONSE

Linda Allen

Tune: Greensleeves, words by Rev. Scott Cervas (alt.)

*We light the flames this time of year to fill our world with meaning;
Our hearts and minds are longing for the life of which you are dreaming.*

This, this, our gift we bring, our lives we share, your praise we sing.

Show us your vision, God, for hope, and peace, and caring.

MOMENT FOR STEWARDSHIP

Amelia Bacon

MUSICAL MEDITATION

“Ding Dong Merrily on High”
by Linda Scholes

Handbell Choir

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Davi Weasley

The Prayer of Jesus

*We invite you to use the language for God that is most comfortable for you:
"Our Creator," "Our Father" or "Our Mother."*

Our Creator

**who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.**

Thy kingdom come,

**thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.**

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil,

For thine is the kingdom,

and the power,

and the glory,

forever and ever. Amen.

MUSICAL MEDITATION

"The Friendly Beasts"

Avery Neem

A READING FROM SCRIPTURE

Luke 3:1-18
Common English Bible

Jennifer Green

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

Jennifer Green

One: For the Word of God in scripture,
for the Word of God among us,
for the Word of God within us:

All: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

“A Home for All”

Sharon Benton

MUSICAL MEDITATION

“Mary, Mary”
by Linda Allen

Linda Allen

*Mary, Mary, there's a strange light coming
And its coming to your window now,
And its standing at your door
And you welcome the mystery, the
God-given ecstasy, you cry,
my soul does magnify the bringer of the light*

CHORUS

*And the light's still shining,
Mary, Mary, can you see?
And the child you carried,
carries on the mystery*

*God's great promise in a young girl's body
Glory! Glory! Blessed be. Blessed be.
Glory! Glory! Blessed be. Blessed be.*

*Mary, Mary, it's your young boy teaching
And he's preaching in the temple and the
elders turn and stare*

*Mary, Mary, you know
It's the sweet unfolding
God's great mystery, there's magic in the air*

CHORUS

*Mary, Mary, it's your son who's dying
It's the world turned blind and in the
darkness there is fear
But the dark holds a promise and the
Cool earth is resting
And the sweet rain's returning
Singing Spring will soon be here*

CHORUS

*Mary, Mary, in the room you're waiting
And the rush of wings beats loudly' round
the friends all gathered here
And the fire comes dancing and the
Sweet voices singing, and the
light comes shining, there is
freedom in the air CHORUS*

INVITATION TO OFFERING

Jennifer Green

*There are several options for giving: 1) Give at our website, <https://fccb.net/giving/>.
2) .Mail checks to First Congregational Church, 2401 Cornwall Avenue, Bellingham, WA 98225. 3) Use the GivePlus app. Download from your app store, set up an account, and give!
4) Give by text. Text a dollar amount to 208-516-2657, and set up your account. You're ready for easy giving by text! 5) Give by PayPal. Our easy link is [PayPal.Me/fccbu](https://www.paypal.com/mefccbu).*

Offertory

Judy Widrig

BENEDICTION

Davi Weasley

POSTLUDE

Judy Widrig

Let us know you're here! Go to Worship Connect <http://tiny.cc/worshipconnect> to sign in.

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Cover Image: "Gather Us In" by Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity, inspired by Zephaniah 3:14-2 Digital painting with collage. *Much of Zephaniah's prophecy is an exacerbated lament. He believes the only way forward is for Yahweh to destroy everything. Too much has been corrupted, too much has fallen apart. But then, in chapter three, his message takes an unexpected turn—he turns toward restoration and unabated joy. This joy comes from God, who renews and calms us with love, rejoicing over us with singing. It comes from those who are vulnerable and shamed being gathered back in, restoring the whole community.*

Perhaps the path toward creating a home for all requires some deconstruction. Some of our structures are rotting. Some of our institutions are compromised. Some of our rituals need repair. And yet, nothing is beyond redemption. Collective belonging gives way for collective joy—joy that is free and full. God's love will find a way to renew us and gather us in.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

TODAY'S ADVENT CONVERSATION: The Mission and Justice Board invites you to stay for a "stand-up" conversation in the narthex or on Zoom immediately after worship. The purpose of the conversation will be to share the good ideas waiting in each of us to address the needs of those experiencing homelessness and to begin to think about how as a community we can make a longer-term impact. Use the Connection Calendar to access the Zoom link.

WORSHIP:

- **Sundays, 10:00 am**—Worship on Facebook Live, our #BiggerBalcony

WAYS TO CONNECT: For more information about these and other groups and activities, contact office@fccb.net.

- **Monday**
 - ◆ Poetry Writing Group: **1st & 3rd Mondays, 7:00 pm**
 - ◆ Happy Hour: **1st & 3rd Mondays, 7:30-8:30 pm**
- **Tuesday**
 - ◆ Advent Study, **9:30 am**
- **Wednesday**
 - ◆ Adult Forum: **weekly, 7:00 pm**
- **Thursday**
 - ◆ Evening Book Club, **6:30 pm weekly**
- **Friday**
 - ◆ Afternoon Coffee Group: **2nd & 4th Friday, at 1:00 pm**
 - ◆ Knitting Group, **Fridays, 10:00 am**
 - ◆ Spirit Group (Exploring Prayer), **Fridays, 6:30 pm**
- **Saturday**
 - ◆ Creative Connections, **1st Saturdays, 10:00 am**
- **Sunday**
 - ◆ Advent Conversations **Sundays, 11:15 am**
 - ◆ Youth Group, **Sundays, 12:00 noon**

To stay up to date, follow us on social media, subscribe to our Friday Email, or check in with our Full Circle Blog, <https://www.fccb.net/blog/>.

Open and Affirming (ONA): As an Open and Affirming congregation believing in a loving God, all people are welcome in this church without regard to gender, race, ethnicity, economic or social status, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

We Try To Use Language which will help people feel included in our worship. Since not everyone is comfortable with the same language, we invite you to amend the words of the service as we sing and pray if they do not adequately express your faith. We invite you to assist us in creating new expressions of our common faith and life together.

Technical Support: If you need help streaming our worship services or connecting in other ways, please let us know.

APPOINTMENTS WITH PASTORAL STAFF

Pastoral staff are available by appointment virtually or in person, with masks. Contact them by email or call the pastoral care line, 360-733-4255

Sharon: sharon@fccb.net

Davi: davi@fccb.net

You can also email our Office Manager Cydne at office@fccb.net and she'll pass your message on.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH United Church of Christ

An Open & Affirming Congregation

2401 Cornwall Avenue, Bellingham, WA 98225

Church Office: 360-734-3720

24/7 Emergency Pastoral Care: 360-733-4255

office@fccb.net • www.fccb.net

Facebook: facebook.com/fccbucc

Twitter: @BhamUCC

Office Hours: 9:00 am-5:00 pm

LEAD PASTOR: Sharon Benton

PASTOR FOR YOUTH, YOUNG ADULTS,

& MISSION: Davi Weasley

INTERIM MINISTERS OF FAITH FORMATION:

Ted & Susan Huffman

MINISTER OF MUSIC: Lucy Bledig

ORGANIST: Judy Widrig

WORSHIP MEDIA COORDINATOR:

Skyler Spain

NURSERY ATTENDANT: Lisa Harbine

ACCOUNTANT: Erin Kennedy

OFFICE MANAGER: Cydne Cochran

CUSTODIAN/MAINTENANCE: Kurt Aagard

FAITH COMMUNITY NURSE:

Alanna Steele

HEALTH MINISTER: Carol Nicolay

MODERATOR: Bill Henkel

VICE MODERATOR: Beth Tyne

PAST MODERATOR: Caryl Dunavan

CLERK: Janet Malley

TREASURER: Laurie Hoyt

HISTORIAN: Stacy Miller

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