

Seeking Sanctuary

December 19, 2021



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

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 19, 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*

After receiving the angel's extraordinary news, Mary retreats to Elizabeth and Zechariah's home to digest her new calling. She seeks refuge—physical safety and emotional protection. She receives a safe haven, a home for her heart to soon sing praise. Sanctuary and safe space is so crucial for everyone, especially the mother of Christ while she prepares to become a home for God.

Sanctuary is anywhere God's love dwells freely and abundantly.

~ Lisle Gwynn Garrity, A Sanctified Art

PRELUDE

“Preludium” from Violin Sonata No 1
by J. S. Bach

Adrian Kelly

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sharon Benton

RINGING THE BELL

CALL TO WORSHIP

Janet Ott

One Voice: We are seeking—
All Voices: **deeper faith,
a place to belong,
the feeling that God is here in this room.**

One Voice: We are seeking—
All Voices: **joy that overflows,
the movement of the Spirit,
a hand to hold, when alone in the dark.**

One Voice: We are seeking—
All Voices: **the freedom to be,
the courage to love,
the conviction to act in the face of injustice.**

One Voice: We are seeking, but here in this space,
All Voices: **We are found.**

One Voice: Take a deep breath. This is your sanctuary.
All Voices: **God is here. We are found.**

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH CANDLES “Love” Larry, Mary Jo, & Kim Menninga

God’s love is like an open door.

God’s love is the streetlight that guides us home.

God’s love is a warm bed to fall into.

God’s love is a table with room for you.

God’s love is a crackling fireplace.

God’s love is the sun that streams through the windows.

God’s love is the roof over our heads and the floor beneath our feet.

God’s love is a home for you and me, for neighbors and strangers, for family and friends, for enemies and partners.

God’s love is a home for all.

Today we light the candle of love to remind us of this truth.

May it burn brightly in this space and even brighter in our hearts.

MUSICAL RESPONSE

Scott Ward

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 MISSION

Christmas Fund Offering

Kate Eifrig

MUSICAL MEDITATION

“Waiting”
by Pepper Choplin

One Accord

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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

String Quartet

Adrian Kelly; Elaine Woods; Mia Kelly; Darlene Mathias

A READING FROM SCRIPTURE

Luke 1:39-55

Janet Ott

Common English Bible

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

Janet Ott

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.**

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Ted Huffman

SERMON

“Seeking Sanctuary”

Sharon Benton

MUSICAL MEDITATION

“Chosen Home”
Text by Anna Strickland

Scott Ward

INVITATION TO OFFERING

Janet Ott

*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

String Quartet

BENEDICTION

Davi Weasley

POSTLUDE

String Quartet

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

ADVENT 2021

11.28 HOMESICK
12.5 LAYING THE FOUNDATION
12.12 A HOME FOR ALL
12.19 SEEKING SANCTUARY
12.24 INVITED HOME - 5 PM
12.24 BY CANDLELIGHT - 11:30 PM
12.26 CHOSEN HOME

Hybrid Services-
In Person and on Facebook

More info at www.fccb.net

Cover Image: Dances for Joy by Hannah Garrity. Inspired by Luke 1:39-45 (Mary goes to Elizabeth) | Paper lace with watercolor

Artist Statement: As I worked through the creative process for this image, I was talking to my mother and showing her my inspiration board: images of babies in the womb, spinning or cuddling. She said that John dancing for joy in his mother's womb is one of her favorite biblical images.

The central story of the text emerges as John dances with joy in his mother's womb of this world. Around him the patterns of his baptisms flow outward into the miracles of Jesus, woven into the flow of landforms and waters on the map.

Comparison is the thief of joy, my cousin tells me. God's children need us to dance for joy when we encounter one another. Where in my daily routines can I remove the facade of perfection, or break through it, and embrace the tangible reality of a beautiful and wonderful, earthy joy?

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

TODAY'S ADVENT CONVERSATION is a Christmas pageant in which all may choose to take part. All ages are welcome to stay after worship and find a costume (or wear your own!).

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE: The office is closed **Monday, December 27** for the Christmas holiday and **Monday, January 3** for the New Year Holiday.

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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