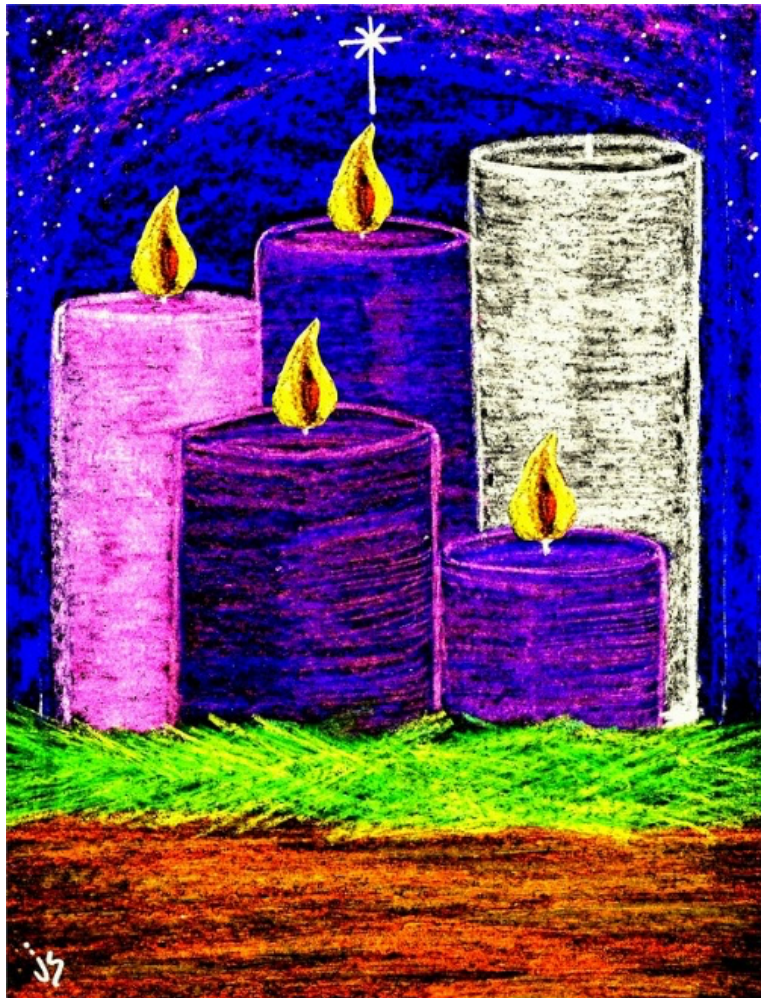


December 21, 2025 ~ 10:30 a.m.

Welcome to Worship

The Fourth Sunday in Advent



“Love draws near. Emmanuel among us”

Trinity Presbyterian Church

420 Melrose Avenue, Santa Cruz, California 95062

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(831) 423-8995

Prelude and Procession *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus* Nicki Kerns
by Susan Staples Bell

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Diane Ford

Preparation for Worship

Advent invites us to pay attention to the quiet places where God speaks—through uncertainty, risk, and trust. As we gather today, we prepare to listen for the presence of Emmanuel, God-with-us, who meets us not only in joy and clarity, but also in courage, vulnerability, and faithful love.

Introit

While We Are Waiting, Come

Choir

Call to Worship (*responsive*)

Sandy Thormann

Watchful God, in this fourth week of Advent, we draw near to the mystery of Emmanuel.

God-With-Us is present in our hopes, our fears, and our waiting.

Come, all who are weary, all who wonder, all who are making room for what you did not expect.

We come to listen, to trust, and to receive the Christ who is coming.

Let us worship the One who speaks through dreams, strengthens the hesitant, and keeps promises.

We worship with open hearts: Emmanuel, be with us.

*Hymn PH #44

O Little Town of Bethlehem, vs. 1,3,4

Lighting the Advent Candle (*responsive*)

Pete Halper and Jim Atwood

As we light the first candle, we remember Hope—

the promise that God is already at work.

As we light the second candle, we remember Peace—

the calm that comes from trusting God's presence.

As we light the third candle, we remember Joy—
not shallow happiness, but deep assurance.

*The world says, "Protect yourself." God says, "Do not be afraid."
Fear says, "This will cost you too much." Love says, "Trust me."*

*As we light the fourth candle, we remember Love—
the love that made room for Emmanuel, God with us.*

Come, Emmanuel, our Love and our Light.

Candlelighting Song *Light an Advent Candle* – Becky Slagle Mayo

*Advent is a time of hope, of waiting for the light
To lead us to the promised One to break the dark of night.
Light a candle, our Messiah will come.
Light a candle for the promised One.*

*Advent is a time of peace, the ancient prophets tell,
A King will be born in Bethlehem, our Lord, Emmanuel.
Light a candle, our Messiah will come.
Light a candle for the promised One.*

*Advent is a time of joy, of looking for the star,
As the wise men long ago followed from afar.
Light a candle, our Messiah will come.
Light a candle for the promised One.*

*Advent is a time of love, as we await Christ's birth,
The Prince of Peace, Emmanuel, will bring God's love to earth.
Light a candle, light a candle of hope.
Light a candle, light a candle of peace.
Light a candle, light a candle of joy.
Light a candle, light a candle of love.
Light a candle, our Messiah will come!*

Call to Prayer of Forgiveness and Healing

Sandy

Trusting in God's steadfast love, let us bring our honest hearts before God, seeking forgiveness and new life.

Prayer of Forgiveness and Healing (*unison*)

Sandy

God-With-Us, we confess that we do not always trust your ways. We cling to what feels safe, resist what we cannot control, and hesitate when love asks something of us. Forgive us for the fears that narrow our vision and the distractions that keep us from listening. As you once called Joseph to trust your promise, call us again into faith, obedience, and love. Amen.

(Time for silent prayer)

Assurance of Forgiveness and New Life (responsive)

Sandy

Hear the good news: God is faithful and merciful. In Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, God comes near—not to condemn, but to restore. By grace, you are forgiven, renewed, and invited to begin again.

Thanks be to God!

Gloria PH #23 *refrain only

Children's Message

***Passing the Peace of Christ**

"The Peace of Christ be with you." **"And also with you."**

Prayers of the People - God of Life and Hope, Hear our Prayer

Presbytery's Unity Candle: we pray for the Taiwanese American Presbyterian Church, San Jose; the Rev. Tin-Ying Lee; and Elder Jeremy Mah.

Lord's Prayer (*unison*)

Our Father 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. Amen.

Anthem

Veni, veni Emmanuel! Captivum solve Israel.

Qui gemit in exilio. Privatus Dei Filio.

Gaude, gaude, Emmanuel nascetur prote Israel.

Veni, veni E Oriens! Solare nos adveniens:

Noctis depelle nebulas, Dirasque noctis tenebras.

Gaude, gaude, Emmanuel Nascetur prote Israel.

Veni, veni Emmanuel! Oh, Emmanuel!

Translation:

Come, come Emmanuel! Release the captive Israel.

Who groans in exile. Deprived of the Son of God.

Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel will be born, protect Israel.

Come, come from the East! Sunlight coming to us:

Dispel the clouds of the night, and dispel the darkness of the night.

Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel, Protect Israel will be born.

Come, come Emmanuel! Oh, Emmanuel!

Prayer for Illumination (*unison*)

Sandy

Spirit of God, open our hearts and minds to your Word. As we listen, quiet our fears, sharpen our attention, and help us hear what you are saying to us today. By your light, lead us into trust, courage, and faithful love. Amen.

Readings

Matthew 1:18-25

Sandy

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

One: The Word of God for the People of God.

All: Thanks be to God!

Call to Offering

Diane

Offertory

Air, by Gordon Young

Nicki

*Doxology PH #591

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Christ, all people here below; Praise Holy Spirit evermore; Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.

Prayer of Dedication (*unison*)

Diane

Faithful God, we offer these gifts as signs of our trust in you. Receive them, bless them, and use them to make room for your love in this world. As we prepare to welcome Christ, may our giving reflect your generosity, our lives bear your grace, and our community witness to the hope of Emmanuel—God with us. Amen.

***Hymn:** PH #12 *People Look East*, vs. 1,3,4

***Blessing and Charge**

***Amen** *The Lord Bless You and Keep You*, by Peter Lutkin Choir

***Postlude** *The Heavens Are Telling*, by Beethoven Nicki

***We invite all to stand in body or in spirit.**

PH - Presbyterian Hymnal; GH - Gather Hymnal;

GTG - Glory to God Hymnal

Special Thanks to Our “Sunday Saints”

Pastor: Rev. Diane Ford

Music Director: Nicki Kerns

Lector: Sandy Thormann

Greeter: Russ Hobbs

Usher: Pete Halper

Coffee Hour: Tim & Mayre Vincent, Dan & Vickie Rutan

Lighting of the Candles: Peter Halper and Jim Atwood

Audio/Video/Zoom Techs: Sejin Oh and Ellen Bauerle

Announcements

Welcome to Trinity Presbyterian Church Are you new today? We look forward to getting to know you. Please fill out a visitor welcome card and place it in the offering plate during the Call to Offering. After worship, join us for coffee/refreshments in the Fellowship Hall. We're glad you're here!



Christmas Joy Offering. We are collecting Trinity's contributions to this special offering. Please mail your check or use the envelopes provided at church to drop in the offering plates. **Thank you** for joining the thousands of congregations and special ministries of the PCUSA in this support of students of color, and church workers in need.

December 21: Longest Night: Service of Hope 5:30 pm in the Fireside Room. Struggling with the Holidays? Not everyone feels merry in December. Pastor Diane and Yoga Instructor Marcee Meinhardt lead this service designed especially for those carrying sadness, loss, or weariness during the holidays. The service will include candlelight, music, somatic breath work, readings, and prayer. We'll honor the darkness and remember that light still finds us. Come as you are; all are welcome.

December 24: Our Christmas Eve Service will take place at 5:30 pm. Participants retell the story of the birth of Christ in song and scripture. We proclaim the light and love of God's eternal heart as we spread candlelight among the congregation, and walk out into the world with the traditional carol, *Silent Night*. The service runs about 45 minutes, and is child-friendly!

Please continue to remember these people and situations in your prayers.

- Victims of Antisemitic Attack in Sydney, Australia: reconciliation and peace.
- John Christie: patience and discernment regarding career pathways.
- Jim, Kim Johnston's friend: hospitalized with pneumonia.
- Victims of Gun Violence at Brown University, Rhode Island: understanding and justice.
- Marilyn, Dan Rutan's friend: recurrence of cancer
- Santa Cruz Symphony Musicians: gratitude for their talents and the blessings of music.
- Caroline's friends in Tanzania: safety and well-being.
- Guest musicians: grateful for their participation in worship.
- Westminster Presbyterian Church: thankful for its ministry to the unhoused.
- Donald Kerns: grateful to be home after extended work assignment.
- Sally, Nancy Cheney's friend: living with dementia.
- Geraldine, Nicki Kerns sister: under treatment for stage 3 heart failure.
- Nancy Cheney's sister Jean: grateful for her presence in worship.
- Nicki Kerns brother-in-law: recovering from aorta surgery.



Trinity Presbyterian Church
CHRIST-CENTERED and MISSION-DRIVEN:
An OPEN AND AFFIRMING COMMUNITY OF FAITH
trinitypressc.org (831) 423-8995 Facebook Instagram
Office Hours: Tuesday -Thursday 10:00 - 2:00 ❖ Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.



The Christmas Poinsettias are Dedicated by...

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Charlene Barnes | in memory of Dr. Bob Scott, Hazel Nutt, and the Darling Family; and in honor of our Church Family |
| Michael & Barbara Christie | in memory of Betsy Williams & Bob Williams |
| Eschen-Pipes Family | in Memory of Charles, Martha, & Bette Pipes, Cindy P. Arnst, and Jim and Mollie Eschen |
| Kim Johnston | in memory of the Johnston Family |
| Jeff & Patti Lawton | in memory of Dr. & Mrs. Earl Lawton, and Robert & Ann Ferguson |
| Dan & Vickie Rutan | in memory of Bill & Joey Bear, and Mary Jane Rutan |
| Sandra Thormann | in memory of Jerry & Martha Thormann, Irene & Peter Wilt, and Sharon Weld |
| Larry & Lorraine Vilardo | in honor of Great Grandson, Wells Dawon |
| Karen Wichelmann | in memory of Tom Wichelmann, and in honor of the Sebeldina Family |
| Richard & Roberta Zakarian | in memory of Jerry Lambert |