

Fourth Sunday in Advent
December 18, 2022



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF FRESNO
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Rev. Dr. Norman Broadbent,
Guest Preaching

Fourth Sunday in Advent

December 18, 2022

“Calm and Bright: Love”

Prelude “Organ Works of Gordon Young” Scott Horton, organ

Welcome Rev. Dr. Norman Broadbent

Threshold Introit “One Candle Is Lit” (v. 4,)

The Fourth Advent Candle— LOVE Catherine, Kevin, Lily and Dylan Cooper

God wants us to know, even when we aren’t sure of ourselves. God wants us to experience God’s presence, even when we think we can handle life on our own. God sends us signs of God’s presence with us; all we need to do is keep our eyes open and look.

"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, 'God is with us.'"

We light these candles, the candle of watchful Hope, of proclaimed Peace, of deep everlasting Joy, and today of a presence that speaks of Love- all meant to be signs that, no matter our circumstance, we know we are not alone.

[Light all four candles of the Advent wreath.]

Four candles- see them glow brightly, so that all may know how Love is the way making our darkness bright as God’s day.

Fill us here, Holy Presence, with your Love and light, to make the world so calm and bright.

***Hymn** “Now Bless the God of Israel” #110, pew hymnal

***Unison Advent Collect** Lily Cooper, Liturgist

Come, Lord, Jesus- our choicest gift, our dearest guest: Let not our hearts be crowded rooms that have no space for you, but a quiet home of prayer and praise; where the cares of life are put aside and wide, sweet spaces are left for you as we prepare to celebrate the gift of the Christ-child embracing the earth with glory and being for us a lasting Love in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Today's Scripture Readings: Isaiah 7:10-16; Matthew 1:18-24

Lily Cooper , Liturgist

Prompting

"Highway to the Manger Zone"

An Original and slightly fractured telling of the Nativity story

Written by Kenny Schoelen, featuring Children of our Sunday School

Children's Time of Discovery—RED

***Draw the circle wide; draw it wider still. Let this be our song-
no one stands alone standing side by side, draw the circle wide.***

Gordon Light, ©1994 Common Cup Company

OneLicense.net License #A-711732

Our Fourth Sanctuary Window Is One Testifying to "No Greater Love"

Today's manger color is red, representing Love

Lord's Prayer

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.

- When invited, all in the sanctuary may bring forward with your strip of white cloth to place in the manger-

***Hymn**

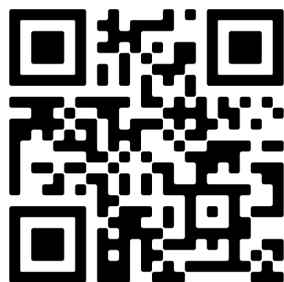
"Jesus, Our Brother, Strong and Good"

#138 pew hymnal

Church at Prayer (Prayers of Concern; Pastoral Prayer)

Rev. Dr. Broadbent

Invitation to Offering



Here at the Big Red Church, everyone counts, and every gift counts!

- ⇒ *There are two donation boxes and giving envelopes for your gifts in the Narthex (the area where an usher handed you an Order of Worship).*
- ⇒ *You can also give through the Givelify App by scanning the QR code with your smartphone camera.*
- ⇒ *BigRedChurch.org/Giving/ has more instructions, links, and information about giving to the church. Thank you for supporting and joining in the ministry of this church.*

Offertory

"Gloria for the Flutes" - A. Jordan

Scott Horton, organ

***Doxology and dedication**

***We give God but God's own, whate'er the gift may be;
All that we have is God's alone, we give it gratefully. Amen.***

***Announcements and closing thoughts**

***Hymn** "Angels We Have Heard On High" #125, pew hymnal

Benediction Rev. Dr. Broadbent

Blessing Hymn "Go Now in Peace"

**Go now in peace, never be afraid; God will go with you each hour of ev'ry day.
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true; know God will guide you in all you do.
Go now in love and show you believe. Reach out to others so all the world will see
God will be there, watching from above. Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.
Amen. Amen. Amen.**

1988, Harold Flammer Music. All rights reserved.
OneLicense.net License # A-711732

Postlude "Carillon on 'Come, All Ye Shepherds'" - G. Young Scott Horton, organ

It is our tradition to be seated for the Postlude



Dec. 24, 4:00 pm

Sanctuary

Family/All Ages Service



Dec. 24, 9:00 pm

Sanctuary

Music, Lessons, Carols, Candlelight

This Week at Big Red

Monday December 19

- ♦ 5:00pm: Yoga - Room 1

Tuesday, December 20

♦

Wednesday December 21

- ♦ 8:00am: Bible Study - Zoom
- ♦ 5:00pm: Yoga - Room 1
- ♦ 6:00pm: Blue Christmas Longest Night Service - Minturn Chapel

Thursday December 22

♦

Friday December 23

- ♦ 5:00pm: Yoga - Room 1

Saturday December 24

- ♦ 4:00pm: Family Christmas Eve Service - Sanctuary
- ♦ 9:00pm: Candlelight Christmas Eve Service—Sanctuary

Sunday December 25

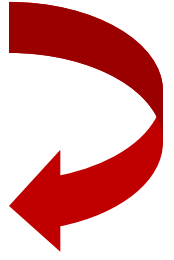
- ♦ 10:00am: Worship - Sanctuary
- ♦ 11:00am: Coffee Hour - Fellowship Hall

There will be no Roots and Branches meeting on Christmas Day Or New Year's Day

1145am **TODAY**



Naomi's House Backpack Event in the parlor



We need about 10 to 12 folks to help fill the backpacks. Please come be a part of this worthy effort to help



Blue Christmas / Longest Night Service

December 21, 7:00 pm. Minturn Chapel

Unless we have lived through December heartbroken, it may not cross our minds how hard the lead-up to Christmas can feel for people in the midst of loss, failure, or hopelessness. Depression and seasonal affected disorders also make this season difficult to fully embrace this season.

This service is designed to name, acknowledge, and create an emotional path toward a more realistic way toward Christmas.

Christmas Fund

Offering date: December 24, 2022



The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

First Congregational Church of Fresno will be providing special "Christmas Fund" offering envelopes during both Christmas Eve services as well as having a Christmas Fund option on the Givelify app through 12/25/22.

Proceeds will benefit the Veterans of the Cross and a mission of First Congregational Church

First Congregational Church of Fresno

2131 N. Van Ness Blvd., Fresno, CA 93704 | (559) 227-8489

Office Hours: Monday – Friday

9:00 am – 3:30 pm

Guest Preaching

Rev. Dr. Norman Broadbent

Music Director/Organist

Scott Horton

Caretaker/ Event Coordinator

Pat Morales

Accountant

Penny Leas Peterson

Office Administrator

Kymberly Lindsey

Office@bigredchurch.org

Custodian

Gregory Chavarria

Technicians

Karisa Garza

Brad Jenkins

Assisting in Today's Service

Organist: Scott Horton

Liturgist: Lily Cooper

Advent Candle Lighters: Kevin, Catherine, Lily and Dylan Cooper

Ushers: Harold Householder, Lester Leas and Richard VanWyhe

Technician: Karisa Garza

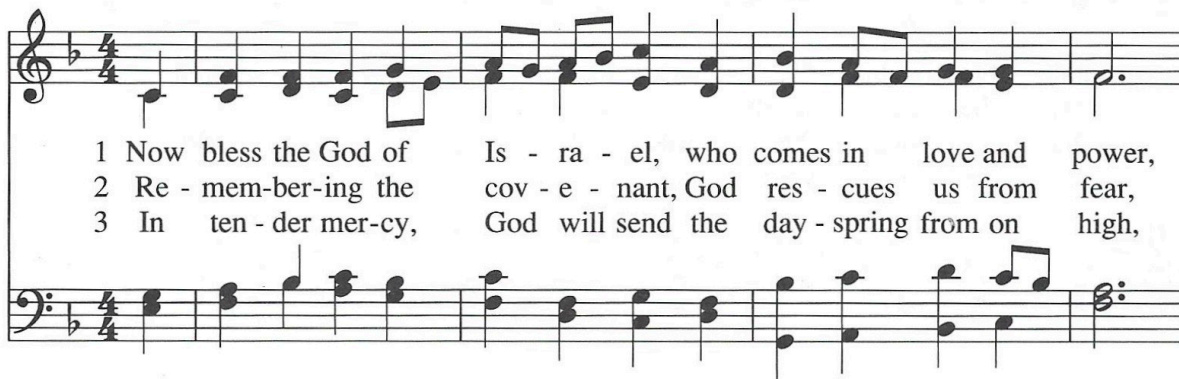
Coffee Hour: Church Life

FCCF Open and Affirming Statement

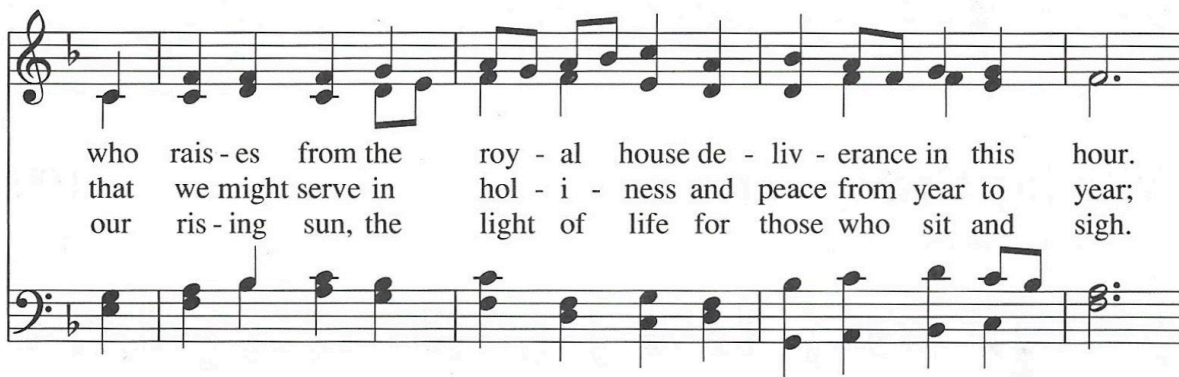
We believe that all people are sacred creations of a loving God. We affirm the diversity that exists among us. We strive to answer the call of Christ by extending his love, compassion and acceptance to everyone. In this spirit, we open our family of faith to people of every religious background, sexual orientation, family composition, physical and mental ability, race, age and gender.

As Christians, we experience God's reconciling love. In response we stand with those who suffer discrimination, isolation and alienation. We welcome all people to participate fully in our church's life and ministry. We celebrate the variety of talents and perspectives which flow into our spiritual community, continuing to enrich us in ways we could not have predicted or envisioned.

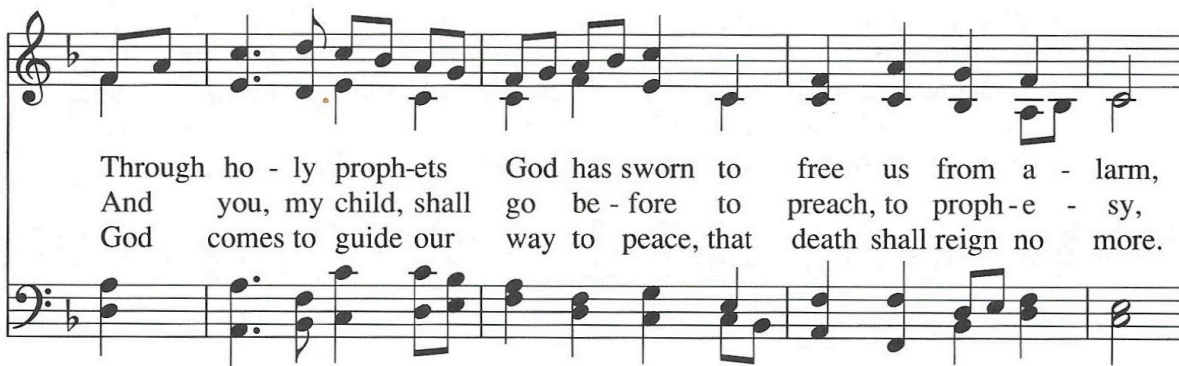
Now Bless the God of Israel

*Luke 1:68-79; Ps. 18:1-3; Isa. 9:2-7**Ruth Duck, 1985*


1 Now bless the God of Is - ra - el, who comes in love and power,
 2 Re - mem-ber-ing the cov - e - nant, God res - cues us from fear,
 3 In ten - der mer-cy, God will send the day - spring from on high,



who rais - es from the roy - al house de - liv - erance in this hour.
 that we might serve in hol - i - ness and peace from year to year;
 our ris - ing sun, the light of life for those who sit and sigh.



Through ho - ly proph-ets God has sworn to free us from a - larm,
 And you, my child, shall go be - fore to preach, to proph - e - sy,
 God comes to guide our way to peace, that death shall reign no more.



to save us from the heav-y hand of all who wish us harm.
 that all may know the ten - der love, the grace of God most high.
 Sing prais-es to the Ho - ly One! O wor - ship and a - dore!

This text by United Church of Christ clergywoman Ruth Duck is a paraphrase of the "Benedictus," which is often sung at morning prayer. She came to appreciate daily prayer while studying at the University of Notre Dame.

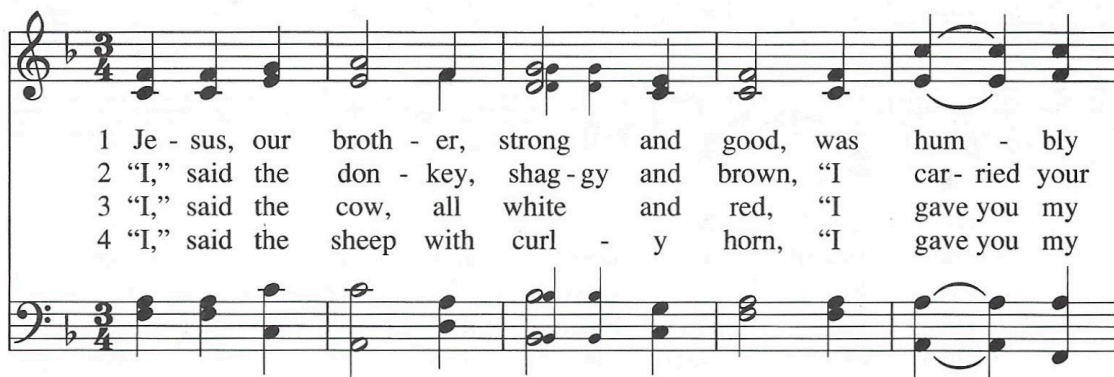
*Tune: FOREST GREEN C.M.D.
 Traditional English melody
 Harm. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906*

Jesus, Our Brother, Strong and Good

138

French carol, 12th century
Transl. anon.

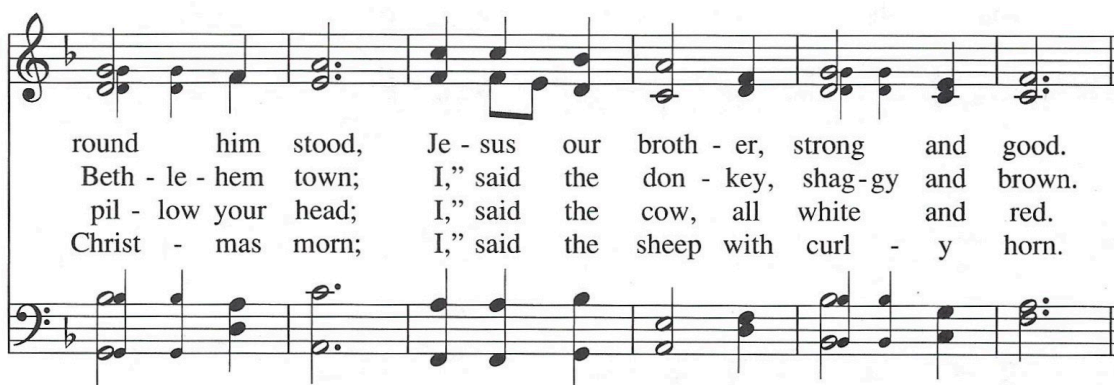
Luke 2:1-7; Matt. 1:23



1 Je - sus, our broth - er, strong and good, was hum - bly
2 "I," said the don - key, shag - gy and brown, "I car - ried your
3 "I," said the cow, all white and red, "I gave you my
4 "I," said the sheep with curl - y horn, "I gave you my



born in a sta - ble rude, and the friend - ly beasts a -
moth - er up - hill and down, I car - ried your moth - er to
man - ger for your bed, I gave my hay to
wool for a blan - ket warm, you wore my coat on



round him stood, Je - sus our broth - er, strong and good.
Beth - le - hem town; I," said the don - key, shag - gy and brown.
pil - low your head; I," said the cow, all white and red.
Christ - mas morn; I," said the sheep with curl - y horn.

- 5 "I," said the dove, from the raf - ters high,
"I cooed you to sleep that you should
not cry,
we cooed you to sleep, my love and I;
I," said the dove, from the raf - ters high.
- 6 Thus all the beasts, by some good spell,
in the sta - ble dark were glad to tell
of the gifts they gave Em - man - u - el,
the gifts they gave Em - man - u - el.

Little is known of either the origins of this French text or its translation. The melody comes from a medieval French cathedral festival recognizing the role of the donkey in the flight into Egypt.

Tune: ORIENTIS PARTIBUS 7.7.7.7.
French melody, early 13th century
Harm. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906

Luke 2:15

Traditional French carol

Transl. st. 1-3, "Crown of Jesus Music II," 1862; alt.
St. 4, "Carols Old and Carols New," Boston, 1916; alt.

1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
2 Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see Christ whose birth the an - gels sing;
4 See the babe in man - ger laid whom the choirs of an - gels praise;

And the moun - tains in re - ply, ech - o back their joy - ous strains.
Say what may the tid - ings be, which in - spire your heaven - ly song.
Come a - dore on bend - ed knee, God, our world now en - ter - ing.
Mar - y, Jo - seph, lend your aid, while our hearts in love we raise.

Refrain

Glo - ri - a

in ex - cel - sis De - o, Glo - ri - a

ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.