



# First Christian Church

Disciples of Christ

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## Weekly Worship

love all • live spiritually • rejoice in hope • show hospitality

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**Week of December 25th, 2022**



During Sunday worship in the season of Advent we will be using material from our Advent devotional "Be Ready" page 42. It is our hope that as you light your own Advent Candles you will use the same material and feel connected with us as we do the same during Sunday worship.

### Call to Worship

Feel free to follow along with our Call to Worship from today's live-streamed worship service.

One: Wonder of wonders, God has come to us!

Many: Not as a judge, but a Savior, not in power, but as a servant.

One: Wonder of wonders, God comes to us!

Many: Not in silence, but in the Word made flesh; not in the shadows, but bringing Light.

One: Wonder of wonders!

All: God is with us!

Public Worship will be held at 10:30 am Sunday morning.  
If you are not quite ready to join us for public worship, we invite you to follow along with this printed service.

### Community Prayer

O God of Light and Life, we give you thanks that you shine light into all the dark places in our lives and in our world. Like John the Baptist, help us herald the Good News of your arrival. Enable us to trust in your light even when we fear that the darkness may overcome us. Help us remember that it only takes a little light to overcome the world's darkness.

AMEN

# Reflection

“The Light Shines in the Darkness”

## *Meditation for Christmas Day*

During my trip to the Grand Canyon last year my friend and I were shocked when we stepped outside and saw no sign of lighting. We had been in the area a couple of days, but we had not been out of our cabin after dark. Later we would learn that the Grand Canyon area is considered a “dark sky” area. Fortunately, I brought my folding white cane and my friend trusts my travel skills, so we made it back to our cabin safely. I guess it could be called an example of “the blind leading the blind.” Of course one of the attractions for those of us visiting the area is the fact that this is a dark sky part of our country. Most of us who live in or near a city rarely have those moments of “dark sky.” Street lights and all the other forms of artificial lighting bleed out the sky and make star gazing quite difficult if not impossible. It frustrates me that I cannot see the stars here in the city. Thankfully, on the last night of our Grand Canyon trip we finally had a cloudless and clear night. In my opinion it was magical! It was one of the few times in my life when I could see the star filled sky. My friend and I sat outside for over an hour just soaking in the view. It was truly amazing to see the glories of the universe. It renewed my wonder at the words from our Gospel lesson today, “the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.” Even a small amount of light shone in a dark room can illuminate it. Even a few stars can light up the night sky.

The author of our Gospel lesson today used the images of light and darkness throughout this part of the Bible. Part of this had to do with the author’s education and the dominance of Stoic philosophy. But, I suspect the attraction to the dichotomy of light and darkness had something to do with the omnipresence of those qualities. The author writing this Gospel and those who initially heard and later read these words would have resonated with these contrasting images. At the end of the first century when this Gospel was written was a dark time for many. Sadly, as we have moved down the centuries we can still appreciate this powerful image today. For many of us these are dark times. Whether we look at the world around us or turn the light on our personal lives, I suspect many of us may at times feel

overwhelmed by the darkness that seems to surround us. For me this has been a particularly challenging time. I have faced a number of health challenges capped off by contracting COVID right before Christmas! Every pastor’s nightmare. Thankfully, here at FCC we are blessed with amazing leadership that has stepped up for the challenge. It has been a difficult decision for me to step back from my pastoral duties and spend some intentional time in rest and renewal. The next few months will be filled with prayer and reflection as I discern the path forward. In many ways it is a dark time for me and for us all as we discern the path forward.

Like those hearing these powerful words from the Gospel, we too are urged to embrace them as well. Although the times seem dark now, we know that the light of God shines in the darkness. As the author so beautifully put it “the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.” The author lifted up several ways in which the light shone in the darkness. The light came into the world through the Incarnation. The light shone in the darkness through the life and ministry of John the Baptist who prepared the path of the light. So, the invitation to us is to do the same. How might we herald the coming of the light in our darkened lives and world? All of you here at FCC have been the light in my darkness. Your love and compassion throughout the many challenges of my life over the past few years. My various surgeries, the death of my Mom and my ongoing health struggles. You have often been more compassionate to me than I could be to myself. God’s light also shines through your love and compassion for one another. God’s light shines as we reach out to those in need in our neighborhood and community. As collections are taken for the students and families of McPhee Elementary School and many in our faith community support our refugee family God’s light shines brightly. There are so many other ways in which God’s light shines through all of you.

On this Christmas Day may each of us know the joy of the light shining even into the deepest darkness and overcoming it. Even the smallest flicker of light can make all the difference!

AMEN

# Scripture Reading

## Isaiah 52:6-10

Therefore my people shall know my name;  
therefore on that day they shall know that it  
is I who speak; here am I.

How beautiful upon the mountains  
are the feet of the messenger who  
announces peace,

who brings good news,

who announces salvation,

who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'

Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices,  
together they sing for joy;

for in plain sight they see

the return of the Lord to Zion.

Break forth together into singing,

you ruins of Jerusalem;

for the Lord has comforted his people,

he has redeemed Jerusalem.

The Lord has bared his holy arm

before the eyes of all the nations;

and all the ends of the earth shall see

the salvation of our God.

## John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the  
Word was with God, and the Word was  
God. He was in the beginning with God. All  
things came into being through him, and  
without him not one thing came into being.

What has come into being in him was  
life, and the life was the light of all  
people. The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose  
name was John. He came as a witness to  
testify to the light, so that all might believe  
through him. He himself was not the light,  
but he came to testify to the light. The true  
light, which enlightens everyone, was  
coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came  
into being through him; yet the world did  
not know him. He came to what was his  
own, and his own people did not accept  
him. But to all who received him, who  
believed in his name, he gave power to  
become children of God, who were born,  
not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of  
the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived  
among us, and we have seen his glory, the  
glory as of a father's only son, full of grace  
and truth.

# Prayers & Praises

## December 25th, 2022

### In Our Church Family:

- Marvin Thurber
- William Deterding
- Vic Burgess
- Jessica Vocasek
- Relda Lathrop
- Susan Pallas-Duncan
- Donna Baker
- Polly Putney
- Lois Frogge
- Joan Dietrich
- Mildred Brockemeyer
- Bobbi Carlin

### Relatives:

- Friends and Family of *Vic Burgess*
- Laurie Aufdemberge, *with breast cancer,*  
*sister of Kristi Bowker*

### Friends:

- Cedric Gibb, *healing prayers, friend of Cec Burkhart*
- Carson Mousel, *grandson of Bob and Eileen Kunz,*  
*from Mildred Brockemeyer*

### Our Timothy's:

- Bruce Frogge *at Cypress Creek CC in Spring, TX*
- Glenda Dietrich Moore, *Creative Arts Ministry in*  
*Lincoln, NE*

### In the Nebraska Region:

- Seminarians and those training for Ministry

### Our Global Ministries Missionaries:

- Jeff Wright, *serving in Israel/Palestine*

Find more information and stories about our  
Global Ministry partners at

[www.globalministries.org](http://www.globalministries.org)



# Song of the Week

## Go, Tell it on the Mountain

Text: John W. Work II, 1940

Go, tell it on the mountain,  
over the hills and everywhere;  
go, tell it on the mountain  
that Jesus Christ is born!

While shepherds kept their watching  
o'er silent flocks by night,  
behold, throughout the heavens  
there shone a holy light.

Go, tell it on the mountain,  
over the hills and everywhere;  
go, tell it on the mountain  
that Jesus Christ is born!

The shepherds feared and trembled  
when lo! above the earth  
rang out the angel chorus  
that hailed our Savior's birth.

Go, tell it on the mountain,  
over the hills and everywhere;  
go, tell it on the mountain  
that Jesus Christ is born!

Down in a lowly manger  
the humble Christ was born,  
and God sent us salvation  
that blessed Christmas morn.

Go, tell it on the mountain,  
over the hills and everywhere;  
go, tell it on the mountain  
that Jesus Christ is born!