



**First Christian Church**  
Disciples of Christ

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# Weekly Worship

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

**Rev. Kara Hillhouse**, Interim Pastor  
**Mark W. Miller**, Director of Music Ministries  
**Elaine Parman**, Care Minister

**Week of December 24, 2023**  
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## Community Prayer

Ever faithful God, through prophets and angels, you promised to raise up a holy child who would establish a household of peace and justice. Open our hearts to receive your Son, that we may open our doors to welcome all people as sisters and brothers, and establish your household in our time.  
Amen.

“Reprinted and Revised Common Lectionary Prayers,  
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## Lighting the Advent Wreath

**One:** Then I saw a new heaven and earth, for the first heaven and earth had passed away.

**Many: Mighty gates: lift up your heads! Ancient doors: rise up high! So the glorious king can enter!**

**One:** I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven from God, and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying “Look God’s dwelling place is now among the people and God will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.”

**Many: Sing to the Lord! Bless his name! Share the news of his saving work every single day! He is coming to establish justice on the earth! He will establish justice among all people!**

**One:** There will be no more death, or mourning or crying or pain for the old order has passed away. The one seated on the throne said, “I am making all things new.”

# Sermon

From The Rev. Kara Hillhouse  
*An Invitation to a Blessing*

What impossible situation - one with NO HOPE AT ALL - have you found yourself in, where God is using you “for the good of His kingdom” and you are struggling with whether to say “no way” and run away, or to say “okay Lord, let it be according to your will”? In our text this week, we find young Mary being visited by the angel Gabriel, and hearing the news that SHE will bear the son of God. At first she was like, “no way Lord, how can this be?” But by the end of her interaction with Gabriel, she said, “let it be according to thy will.” Still, she was in a pickle. Unmarried. Pregnant. In her time and culture?! This would have been an impossible situation, one with no hope at all. And yet God, in God's infinite power and glory, uses this impossible situation to bless and help this hopeless world. So when we get into impossible situations...whatever that might look like to you...remember that God is the master of possibilities. God takes what looks to be a hopeless dead end and brings new life to it. Join us Sunday morning for the fourth Sunday of Advent worship--a time of fellowship, music, the Word and communion. Then, join us for our very special 6 pm Christmas Candlelight Service. Make this Christmas a First Christian Christmas!

*Fourth Sunday of Advent*



# Scripture Readings

## Luke 1:46b-55

And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”



## Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.” Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

# Prayers & Praises

## December 24, 2023



### In Our Church Family:

- Donna Baker
- Rhonda Ball
- Bobbi Carlin
- Mike Carlin
- William Deterding
- Joan Dietrich
- Sharon Hile
- Polly Putney
- Rae-Hope Putney
- Marvin Thurber
- Phyllis Thurber
- Jessica Vocasek

### *Our sympathy to the family of Marj Snodgrass.*

Marj passed away unexpectedly Tuesday, December 19 2023. Her service will be at FCC on Saturday, December 23rd @ 10 am . Luncheon to follow in the gym. Please keep Marj's sons Curt & Steve and their families in your prayers.

### Friends:

- Jennie & Will Ernest and family. *Tyler Goodrich, the young man missing since November 3rd is Jennie's brother.*
- Tammy Foral, *healing, patience and strength as facing many health issues. Co-worker of Sara Lugn.*
- Cedric Gibb, *healing prayers, friend of Cec Burkhart.*

### Our Timothys:

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

### In the Nebraska Region:

- Children & Youth in our Congregations

### Our Global Ministries Missionaries:

- Mission Partners in Greece

*"Thank you for the freedom we have to worship and praise you. Please protect our country from evil, injustice, and violence, and open our eyes to see each other the way you see us."*

For more information and stories about our Global Ministry partners visit [www.globalministries.org](http://www.globalministries.org)



## Song of the week

### *Love Has Come*\*

Love has come: a light in the darkness! Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies. See, all heaven has come to proclaim it; hear how their song of joy arises: Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior! Love! Love! Glory to God on high.

Love is born! Come, share in the wonder. Love is God now asleep in the hay. See the glow in the eyes of his mother; what is the name her heart is saying? Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers. Love! Love! Jesus Emmanuel.

Love has come and never will leave us! Love is life everlasting and free. Love is Jesus within and among us. Love is the peace our hearts are seeking. Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

\* Sing to the tune of *Bring A Torch, Jeanette, Isabella*