



## Gingerbread House Making

Sun, Dec 5 • after worship service

Join in the fun! Please email Cathy Nishizaki (cathyjnish@gmail.com) by Dec 1 to sign up for a house. \$10 per house. You can pay on event day. In addition, participants are asked to donate a canned good, diapers (baby and adult), baby food, or cat/dog food that will be donated to the South Sacramento Interfaith Program (SSIP). Please observe our Covid protocols and wear a mask during this fun event.



## The Celebration of Worship

November 28, 2021 • 1st Sunday of Advent

Pastor:	Rev. Dr. Sarah Nave
Worship Leader:	Christine Umeda
Pianist:	Haruko Sakakibara
Japanese Reader:	Michael Wright
Advent Candle Lighting:	Irene Uno

**Prelude** Haruko Sakakibara

**Welcome/Announcements** Rev. Dr. Sarah Nave

**Advent Candle Lighting** Irene Uno

Today is the first Sunday in the season of Advent. Advent means “coming,” and in this season we prepare for the coming of Christ. As the days grow shorter and the nights longer, we who are people of faith turn to symbols such as candles, evergreens and wreaths to proclaim our belief in the unquenchable light of God shining in Jesus.

This morning we light the first candle in the Advent wreath, the candle of Hope. (*Light the first candle now!*) Hope is like light shining in a dark place. With the lighting of this candle, we celebrate the hope that we have in Jesus Christ as we pray for a world of love and peace. Let’s pray: Reader: Dear God, We continue to hope in your promise that Christ will come again to fill our lives and all the world with love, joy and peace.

**All: Thank you God for the light of hope. As we prepare for Christ’s coming this holy season, help us share your hope with others. Amen.**

### \*Introit

**All: Make us one, Lord, make us one. Holy Spirit make us one. Let Your love flow so the world will know, we are one in You.**

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*\* Those who can, please rise*

## Call to Worship

Christine Umeda

Leader: People of Advent, lift up your hopes. In all seasons of life, God approaches us, God is always with us.

**People: In this season of waiting, Jesus reminds us that Bethlehem is the beginning our discipleship, not the end of the journey.**

**Unison: In this season of Advent anticipation and hope, may God's Spirit open our hearts to the coming of Emmanuel, God-with-us.**

## \*Opening Hymn: "Lift Up Your Heads Ye Mighty Gates"

**Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates; behold the King of glory waits;  
the King of kings is drawing near;  
the Savior of the world is here.**

**Fling wide the portals of your heart; make it a temple, set apart  
from earthly use for heaven's employ,  
adorned with prayer and love and joy.**

**Redeemer, come! I open wide my heart to thee; here, Lord, abide.  
Let me thy inner presence feel; thy grace and love in me reveal.**

## Invitation to Confession

Christine Umeda

Leader: When we pause to look at our lives, we find a lot that doesn't measure up to God's intentions for us. This holy season, the circular Advent wreath with no beginning and no end, reminds us of God's endless mercy toward us. Let's admit the places we need God's healing and wholeness as we ask God for forgiveness.

## \*Response: "Shalom"

**Sha rom, sha rom, mata a u hi ma de. Sha rom, sha rom, Kami no mi megumi.**

*(Peace, peace, until we meet again. Peace, peace, may we be blessed with grace from God.)*

**Sha rom, sha rom, mata a u hi ma de. Sha rom, sha rom, yuta kani, yuta kani, yuta kani.**

*(Peace, peace, until we meet again. Peace, peace, abundantly, abundantly, abundantly.)*

## In Appreciation:

Greeters  
Online Greeter  
Parking  
Sound System  
Zoom Moderator:

Carla Hart, Cathy Nishizaki  
May Lee  
Gary Younglove  
Jonathan Sakakibara  
Lois Van Beers

**The Lord's Prayer**

**All: Our Parent Who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your 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 Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

**\*Sending Hymn: "O Little Town of Bethlehem"**

**O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;  
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**

**For Christ is born of Mary and, gathered all above,  
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.  
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,  
and praises sing to God the king and peace to all on earth.**

**How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.  
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,  
where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.**

**O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;  
Cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us; abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!**

**\*Benediction**

**\*Confession Prayer**

Leader: Holy God of Advent, in these days when our hearts tremble with stress and fear and what-ifs, come to us. In this season when our hearts are filled with worry, not wonder, come to us.

**People: God of grace and truth, in Jesus Christ You came to us as light shining in darkness. We confess that we have not always welcomed the light, but have turned from it. We live in arrogance and denial, as though we have no need of grace. Forgive us.**

**All: God, we know we have disappointed Your hopes and harmed others through our words and actions. Renew us, that we may be awake and alert, watching for the glorious return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.**

*Time for silent reflection and confession*

**Assurance of God's Grace**

Leader: God has promised that the day of our salvation is near. As we are watchful in prayer and faithful in showing kindness and doing justice, God's peace and hope will strengthen and sustain us.

**All: We believe the good news of the gospel. In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!**

**\*Response to God's Forgiveness**

**All: Glory be to Creator, and to the Christ, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end, Amen, Amen.**

**Passing of the Peace**

Leader: The peace of Lord be with you always.

**All: And also with you.**

**Musical Offering**

"Little Star" by Jill Gallina

**Children's Message**

**\*Hymn: “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”**

**O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine  
advent here;  
disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death’s dark shadows  
put to flight.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;  
Bid envy, strife, and discord cease; fill the whole world with  
heaven’s peace.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**Unison Prayer Of Guidance**

Christine Umeda

**All: Now may the words of our mouth, the meditation of our hearts,  
the interpretation of our minds, and the response of our hands be  
acceptable to You, our Lord and our Redeemer. In Christ’s name  
we pray. Amen.**

**Japanese Reading: Psalm 42: 1-3, 5**

Michael Wright

As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for You, O God.  
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and  
behold the face of God? My tears have been my food day and night,  
while people say to me continually, “Where is your God?”  
Why are you in despair, O my soul, and why are you restless within me?  
Hope in God; for I will again praise God, my help and my God.”

**1<sup>st</sup> Scripture Reading: Isaiah 40:3-5**

Christine Umeda

A voice cries out:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the  
desert a highway for our God.  
Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low;  
the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.  
Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it  
together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

**2<sup>nd</sup> Scripture Reading: Luke 3:1-14**

Rev. Dr. Sarah Nave

In the fifteenth year of the rule of Caesar Tiberius—it was while  
Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea; and Herod, ruler of Galilee; John,  
Zachariah’s son, out in the desert at the time, received a message from  
God. He went all through the country around the Jordan River preaching  
a baptism of life-change leading to forgiveness of sins, as described in  
the words of Isaiah the prophet.

When crowds of people came out for baptism because it was the  
popular thing to do, John exploded: “Brood of snakes! What do you  
think you’re doing slithering down here to the river? Do you think a little  
water on your snakeskins is going to deflect God’s judgment? It’s your  
life that must change, not your skin. And don’t think you can pull rank by  
claiming Abraham as ‘father.’ Being a child of Abraham is neither here  
nor there—children of Abraham are a dime a dozen. God can make  
children from stones if he wants. What counts is your life. Is it green and  
flourishing? Because if it’s deadwood, it goes on the fire.”

The crowd asked him, “Then what are we supposed to do?” “If you  
have two coats, give one away,” he said. “Do the same with your food.”  
Tax men also came to be baptized and said, “Teacher, what should we  
do?” He told them, “No more extortion—collect only what is required  
by law.” Soldiers asked him, “And what should we do?” He told them,  
“No harassment, no blackmail—and be content with your rations.

**Sermon**

Rev. Dr. Sarah Nave

“All I Want for Christmas Is ... Hope”

**Musical Offering**

Haruko Sakakibara

*Time for silent reflection*

**Opportunity To Present Offerings**

Christine Umeda

**\*Doxology**

Christine Umeda

**All: Praise God from Whom all blessings flow; praise God all  
creatures here below. Praise God above, ye heavenly host; Creator,  
Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

**\*Prayer of Dedication**

Christine Umeda