

Orinda Community Church  
An Open and Affirming Congregation of the  
United Church of Christ  
Reverend Elizabeth Robinson, Pastor

**Christmas Eve Worship & Celebration**

Sunday, December 24, 2023, 5:00 p.m.



*painting by Woonbo Kim Ki-Chang, 1952-1953*

## WE GATHER

CHRISTMAS PRELUDE

Jesslyn Thomas  
Julia Hathaway  
Christopher Jackson  
Nikolas Nackley  
David Milnes

BRINGING OF THE LIGHT & RINGING OF THE HOUR

The Acolytes

WORDS OF WELCOME

Reverend Elizabeth Robinson

INTROIT

*I Wonder As I Wander*  
Julia Hathaway, soloist

John Jacob Niles 1933

I wonder as I wander out under the sky,  
How Jesus, the Saviour, did come for to die.  
For poor, or'nary people like you and like I  
I wonder as I wander  
Out under the sky.

When Mary birthed Jesus, 'twas in a cows' stall,  
With wise men and farmers and shepherds and all.  
But high from God's heaven a star's light did fall,  
And the promise of ages  
It did then recall.

(continued on next page)



*From Giotto's "Scenes from the Life of Christ, 14<sup>th</sup> Century*



The Church Office will be closed next week,  
December 25 – 29.

We will reopen on Tuesday, January 2, 2024.

SEE YOU NEXT YEAR!

*(I Wonder As I Wander continued)*

If Jesus had wanted for any wee thing:  
A star in the sky, or a bird on the wing;  
Or all of God's angels in heaven to sing,  
He surely could have had it,  
'Cause He was the King!

I wonder as I wander out under the sky,  
How Jesus, the Saviour, did come for to die.  
For poor, ornery people like you and like I  
I wonder as I wander  
Out under the sky.

CALL TO WORSHIP\*

Kurt Sunderbruch

**One:** This night and every night  
**All:** **grant us light.**

**One:** This night and every night  
**All:** **grant us peace.**

**One:** This night and every night  
**All:** **grant us love.**

**One:** This night and every night, grant us grace.  
**All:** **This night and every night, grant us joy. Amen.**

*\*Please stand, as you are able*

CAROL\*

*O Come, All Ye Faithful*

ADESTE FIDELES 1743

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.  
Come and behold him, born the King of angels;  
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation;  
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;  
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,  
Jesus, to thee be all glory given.  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:  
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

COMMUNITY PRAYER

Jeane Samuelsen

*adapted from a prayer by St. Augustine, 354-440 C.E.*

Let the just rejoice, for their justifier is born.  
Let the sick and infirm rejoice, For their healer is born.  
Let the captives rejoice, For their liberator is born.  
Let those who are freed rejoice,  
For their Creator and Guide is born.  
Let All Christians rejoice,  
For Jesus Christ is born. Amen.

*\*Please stand, as you are able*



Alta Mesa Center for the Arts  
is an interfaith arts and spirituality hub,  
housed within and sponsored by Orinda Community Church.

Check them out on our website:

<https://www.orindacommunitychurch.org/alta-mesa-center-for-the-arts>

or on their facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/altamesacenter/>



## Frog Hollow Community Supported Agriculture

Bringing exceptionally flavorful, regenerative, organic fruit to the Orinda Community!

Have you signed up yet for your weekly or bi-weekly boxes of fruit?

Orinda Community Church is hosting Frog Hollow Farm Community Supported Agriculture by offering them a drop-off/pick up spot for their produce.

Every Tuesday, Frog Hollow drops off boxes of fruit and folks that have signed up for weekly or bi-weekly boxes pick them up.

It's east to sign up, go to [www.froghollow.com](http://www.froghollow.com) and choose Orinda as your pick-up location. The boxes are deposited on the parking lot side of Fellowship Hall for pickup.



**Questions? You can ask Anna in the office, or go to their website [www.froghollow.com](http://www.froghollow.com) or email them at [csa@froghollow.com](mailto:csa@froghollow.com)**

PASSING OF THE CHRISTMAS PEACE Rev. Elizabeth Robinson

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

DECORATING THE ADVENT TREE

Amelia McCall

Peter Milnes

The Bernard Family

Isaac Reader-Taatzes

## THE CHRISTMAS STORY

CAROL\*

*Once in Royal David's City*

IRBY 1849

**Once in royal David's city  
Stood a lowly cattle shed,  
Where a mother laid her baby  
In a manger for His bed:  
Mary was that mother mild,  
Jesus Christ her little child.**

**He came down to earth from heaven,  
Who is God and Lord of all,  
And His shelter was a stable,  
And His cradle was a stall;  
With the poor and meek and lowly  
Lived on earth our Savior holy.**

*\*Please stand, as you are able*

## ANNUNCIATION

Mike Kersten

An angel visits Mary and declares the good news of her pregnancy with Jesus. Mary dares to believe she can help to bring God's love and justice into being, even in what seem to be impossible circumstances. She chooses to work in partnership with God for a better world.

*Luke: 1:26-35*

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.

CAROL

*Gabriel's Message*  
Chancel Choir

BASQUE CAROL

## GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

~LIFE AFTER LOSS~



Every Thursday from 12:15 pm – 1:45 pm,  
the Life After Loss group meets in the Fireside  
Room, under the guidance of Reverend Lois  
Mueller.

No sign-up is necessary.

For any questions, please contact the office at  
925-254-4906 or by email: [office@orindachurch.org](mailto:office@orindachurch.org)



**Winter Nights will be at OCC  
February 12 through February 26, 2024**

Winter Nights is a shelter program for families who are unhoused.

The shelter moves to different churches for two weeks each, through the nine months it is open. Each church provides a warm, hospitable environment, healthy food and friendly volunteers. Winter Nights staff are always on hand while families are in residence.

Many volunteer opportunities will be available. The sign-up for the various tasks will take place beginning Sunday, January 7. Meals preparers and servers, child care, tutoring, overnight helpers are among the volunteer tasks.

The Christmas offering collected at OCC tonight will be dedicated to Winter Nights. Also, you can just put Winter Nights in the note on your check any time.

**BIRTH**

Karen Sanford

Suddenly, we realize the Holy Spirit is present to us in a person.  
Immanuel = God-with-us

*Luke: 2:1-7*

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room.

**CAROL**

*There is No Rose of Such Virtue*  
Chancel Choir

Benjamin Britten 1943

There is no rose of such virtue  
As is the rose that bare Jesu;  
Alleluia.

For in this rose contained was  
Heaven and earth in little space;  
Res miranda.

(continued on next page)

*(There is No Rose of Such Virtue, continued)*

By that rose we may well see  
That He is God in persons three,  
Pari forma.

The angels sungen the shepherds to:  
Gloria in excelsis Deo:  
Gaudeamus.

Now leave we all this worldly mirth  
And follow we this joyful birth;  
Transeamus.

Alleluia, res miranda,  
Pares forma, gaudeamus,  
Transeamus.

## GOOD NEWS FOR ALL PEOPLE

Hillary Hoppock

Throughout its long history, Christianity has strived to demonstrate that we can bring our hopes for a better world into fruition.

*John 1:14*

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.



**ARE NEEDED!**

About 4 friendly volunteers are needed to join our usher teams for the 2024 calendar year. Youth are especially encouraged to volunteer.

Two additional greeters are also needed to focus on welcoming first-time visitors to our worship services.

The commitment for both ushers and greeters is for just one Sunday a month. These opportunities for service are a great way to meet and serve all who attend our worship services and to provide an extravagant welcome to people in the greater community.

If you would like to volunteer or for more information, please contact our Usher Coordinator, Mike Kersten, at [mikejkersten@aol.com](mailto:mikejkersten@aol.com) or by cell **925-254-2209**





**Thank you to this week's ushers:**

**Carey & Bill Carpenter,  
Mike Kersten,  
and Jeane & Roger Samuelsen**

**And thank you to all our ushers for their service all year long!**

*Luke: 2:8-16*

Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger.

CAROL\*

*O Little Town of Bethlehem*

ST. LOUIS 1868

**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.**

(continued on next page)

*\*Please stand, as you are able*

*(O Little Town of Bethlehem continued)*

**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.**

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

**GOD'S PRESENCE OVERCOMES FEAR**

Laurie Goetzl

As people experienced God-with-them in Jesus, so throughout our personal spiritual journeys we discover that at the heart of creation there is a saving Love present, greater than the deathly force of fear in ourselves or others.

*Matthew 2:1-15a*

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea."

**THANK YOU TO**

**Our Volunteers**

**for providing coffee and refreshments  
after our Sunday services.**



**If you're able to take on this greatly appreciated service  
for one Sunday, please sign up today!  
The ushers have the Coffee Hour sign-up sheet.**

**January Volunteers needed!**



Elementary aged kids are welcome to join us in the Agape Center each week for some learning and fun!

Kids start in the Sanctuary for 10 am Sunday service and then are excused part way through, to go to Sunday School.

For any questions about Sunday School or if you want to volunteer, please contact Amy Parlett at [saparlett@comcast.net](mailto:saparlett@comcast.net)

*(Matthew 2:1-15a continued)*

Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road. Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod.

CAROL\*

*Balulalow*  
Chancel Choir

Peter Warlock, 1925

Oh my dear heart, young Jesus sweet,  
Prepare thy cradle in my spirit,  
And I shall rock thee to my heart  
And never more from thee depart.

(continued on the next page)

*\*Please stand, as you are able*

*(Balulalow continued)*

And I shall praise thee ever more  
With songs sweet unto thy gloire!  
The knees of my heart shall I bow shall I bow  
And sing that right balulalow.

## SHARING LOVE

Anne Barr

At Christmastime, we participate in God's generosity by sharing resources, compassion, and hope with others. At all times we share God's generosity in working for justice because we see God present in each and every person.

*Isaiah 1:1-3, 6-7*

The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—  
on them light has shined.  
You have multiplied the nation,  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,

(continued on the next page)



**For those who sponsored poinsettias,  
you may pick yours up after tonight's service.**

*And, Thank You!*

*\*Please stand, as you are able*

## Orinda Community Church

10 Irwin Way, Orinda, CA 94563

(925) 254-4906

office@orindachurch.org

Reverend Elizabeth Robinson, Senior Pastor

David Milnes, Director of Music

Anna Gregory, Office Administrator

### WEEKLY EVENTS

**In addition to 10 am Sunday worship, we offer these weekly:**

- ✚ Monday mornings at 9:30 a.m. in the Chapel, we host [Centering Prayer](#).
  - ✚ Wednesday mornings at 10:00 a.m., we hold a brief [Contemplative Service](#) in the chapel, which includes readings, music, prayer time, and silence. This service also goes out electronically.
  - ✚ [Life and Loss Group](#) meets every Thursday in the Fireside Room from 12:15 pm to 1:45 pm. No need to sign up. Please stop by if you are interested.
  - ✚ Thursday afternoons at 2:00 p.m., our [Theology and Scripture](#) group meets via Zoom to discuss theology, the bible, and other topics. The next meeting is Thursday, January 4.
- And these, every other week:**
- ✚ Two Tuesdays a month, the [Writers' Group](#) shares and discusses their writings via Zoom at 10:00 a.m. The next meeting is Tuesday, January 9.
  - ✚ Two Thursdays a month, starting at 3:45 p.m., the [Reading Group](#) meets via Zoom. The room opens 15 minutes early for welcome and chatting. Our next meeting is Thursday, January 11.

(Isaiah 1:1-3, 6-7 continued)

For a child has been born for us,  
a baby given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders;  
and he is named  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting One, Prince of Peace.  
Whose authority shall grow continually,  
and there shall be endless peace.  
Our Holy One will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onward and forevermore.

### WE RESPOND

CAROL\*

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

MENDELSSOHN 1840

**Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"  
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled  
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, Join the triumph of the skies;  
With th' angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem."  
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

**Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.  
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,  
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.  
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

*\*Please stand, as you are able*

THE CHRISTMAS HOMILY    *Love*    Reverend Elizabeth Robinson



THE CHRISTMAS PRAYER

**Poinsettia sponsored in Honor of:**

THE CHRISTMAS OFFERING

*O Magnum Mysterium*    Tomás Luis de Victoria 1572

The Chancel Choir

**Louise Davidson** *by Anne Barr and Fred Matteson*

O great mystery and wonderful sacrament,  
that animals should see the new-born Lord lying in a manger!  
O blessed is the Virgin, whose womb was worthy to bear Christ  
the Lord.  
Hail Mary, full of grace: the Lord is with you.  
The Blessed is the Virgin whose womb was worthy to bear Christ  
the Lord.  
Alleluia!





## THE COMING OF THE LIGHT

### Poinsettias sponsored in Memory of:

**Dekkers Davidson** by Anne Barr and Fred Matteson

**Eunice, Richard, Catherine & James** by Kerry Poethig and Victoria Rue

**Fred, Ann & Bob Elkinton** by Joyanne Elkinton Walker

**Doug and Beverley Finlayson** by Leslie Dickson

**Jim Frane** by Tré Frane

**Christen Goetzl** by The Goetzl Family

**William and Delia Kling** by Kathi Kling

**Mr. and Mrs. Samuel C. Lapidge** by Reverend and Mrs. John A. Thursby

**Katherine Matteson** by Anne Barr and Fred Matteson

**Myron Matteson** by Anne Barr and Fred Matteson

**Jim and Jane Mead** by Chris and Gail Mead

**Reg and Christine Robinson** by Chris and Gail Mead

**Jamie Samuelsen** by Roger and Jeane Samuelsen

**Reverend and Mrs. Irvin G. Thursby** by Reverend and Mrs. John A. Thursby

**Richard V.B. Thursby** by Reverend and Mrs. John A. Thursby

**Alan and Margaret Walker** by Carl Walker

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Reverend Elizabeth Robinson

*John 1:1-5, 10-12, 14, 16*

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 were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of all humans. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.

PROCESSION OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

The Abriel Family

*O Holy Night*, Nikolas Nackle, soloist

O Holy Night,  
The stars are brightly shining  
It is the night of our dear Savior's birth  
Long lay the world in sin and e'er pining  
'Til He appeared and the soul felt its worth  
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices  
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.  
Fall on your knees O hear the angels voices.  
O night divine, O night when Christ was born!

Truly He taught us to love one another;  
His law is love and His gospel is peace.  
Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother;  
And in His name all oppression shall cease.  
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful raise we,  
Let all within us praise His holy name.  
Christ is the Lord! O praise His Name forever,  
His power and glory evermore proclaim.  
O night divine, O night, O night divine.

\*THE GREAT CIRCLE OF LIGHT

*The congregation is invited to step out of the pews and encircle the sanctuary. The light of Christ will be passed around the circle as we sing the concluding hymn, "Silent Night." For safety's sake, please ask young children to use our battery candles, which they are welcome to take home as a reminder of this night.*

\*CAROL

Silent Night, Holy Night

**Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright.  
Round yon virgin, mother and child.  
Holy infant, so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight;  
Glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing  
Alleluia!  
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!**

**Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light;  
Radiant beams from thy holy face with the dawn of  
redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.**

\*CHRISTMAS BLESSING

Reverend Elizabeth Robinson

POSTLUDE

David Milnes

*\*Please stand, as you are able*