



Sleeping Disciples from *Agony in the Garden* by Andrea Mantegna, 1460  
*"And what I say to you I say to all: **Keep awake.**"* Mark 13:37

**First Congregational Church of Palo Alto  
United Church of Christ**

*"No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey,  
you are welcome here."*

An Open and Affirming Congregation  
[www.fccpa.org](http://www.fccpa.org) • 650-856-6662

First Sunday of Advent  
November 29, 2020

# Order of Worship for November 29, 2020

**Prelude**

*Nun Komm der Heiden Heiland*

J. S. Bach

**Lighting of the Advent Candle**

The Loverro Family

**Opening Hymn**

*Come Thou Long Expected Jesus*

Led by Jenny Matteucci and Daniel Lockert

*Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;  
From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.*

*Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;  
Dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.*

*Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King,  
Born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.*

**Welcome and Announcements**

**Children's Story**

Teacher Todd and Clarence

**Virtual Chancel Choir**

*E'en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come*

P. Manz

**Prayers of the People**

Unison Prayer (You are invited to use the language that is most meaningful to you.)

*Our Father (Mother/Parent/Creator), 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.*

**Musical Response**

*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.*

**Time of Offering**

Advent Poem: *A Plagued Journey* by Maya Angelou

*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*

## Reading of the Gospel

Mark 13:24-37

## Sermon

*The Problem with Mysteries*

Rev. David Howell

## Musical Response

*O How I Long to See*  
Jenny Matteucci and Daniel Lockert

Bob Hurd

## Benediction & Choral Response

## Postlude

Variation on *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*

## Participating in Today's Service:

Senior Pastor:	Rev. David Howell
Associate Pastor:	Rev. Dr. Eileen Altman
Dir. of Children's Ministries:	Todd Erickson
Music Director:	Joe Guthrie
Choral Director:	Jenny Matteucci
Accompanist:	Daniel Lockert
Tech Support:	Howard Look
Video Production:	Tim Biglow
Flowers:	Kathy Terry

## Happening Online and in Person

- **Backyard Sunday School:** Join Teacher Todd after worship today and every Sunday online in the Backyard for songs, a story, and some fun together! Cherub, Children's, and Youth Choir also meet through this link. Find the link in the enews or Backyard update.
- **Advent Art Forum:** Kathy Terry will show beautiful images of the Christmas story in masterpieces through the history of art after worship today. She will focus on lovely angels and solemn Magi, who anticipate and celebrate the birth of the Christ Child. It should be a fun way to share the Christmas spirit as we begin the Advent season.
- **Advent Wreath Event:** Don your favorite face mask and join us today from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. as we kick off the advent season with our annual Advent Wreath event! This year's wreath making will take place in the courtyard. Please share your table only with family or people within your social bubble. We will enjoy piano music from Joe, snacks and drinks and our customary readings. The event will end with the lighting of the first Advent candle. Take-home Advent wreath kits will be available at 1:00 p.m. for those who requested them. With questions, to ask for a kit, or to RSVP to ensure adequate spacing, please contact Gina Parks at 650-387-2952.
- **Eclipsing Empire Tuesday Night Class:** Ben Roberts will facilitate Tuesday evening discussions of this DVD series featuring Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossen. The group will meet December 1 and 15, and then again in January and February.
- **Covid Forum:** After worship on December 6, Dr. Angela Rogers and Dr. Jenna Bollyky from our congregation will be talking about the pandemic, where we are locally, what is coming, and what we can still be doing. They will be sharing their experiences and expectations and taking questions.

- **Giving Tree:** The Christmas Giving Tree is a wonderful tradition our church has sustained over many years through the support of our Outreach Board. Because of the changes in our lives with Covid-19 we will have a “Virtual Tree” this year. The seven charities we support are asking for gift cards and cash donations so that they can grant gift wishes for needy children, teens and adults in our local community. There are two ways to donate. You can go to the FCCPA Website and click on the Giving Tree Link. There you will see our “Virtual Tree” and you can donate through PayPal. Checks are also accepted, made out to FCCPA with “Giving Tree” in the memo line. Our last day of giving is tomorrow, Nov. 30<sup>th</sup>.
- **Maya Angelou Poetry Advent Devotional:** During our Advent worship services, we will share a poem each week from Maya Angelou, using suggestions from an Advent Devotional you can download for your own use from our weekly enews. Her poetry often stands in the shadows and writes of the light. She boldly insists on blessedness and freedom, even as she confronts the pain and injustice of the world. In this Advent devotional, scripture and Angelou's poetry together point us toward weekly practices that can help deepen and enrich our experience of the season. While you can find her poetry online, you may also wish to purchase [\*Maya Angelou: The Complete Poetry\*](#).
- **Naming Jesus Family Advent Devotional:** Families are invited to download an Advent Wreath lighting devotional (see our weekly enews for the link). For each of the four weeks of Advent (from the Latin for “coming” or “arrival”), your family will be offered a practice to try, inspired by scripture and based on some of the names people have given to – or discovered for – Jesus. There are also suggestions for things you might do together throughout the week to bring a little more meaning and mystery to your Christmas preparations and celebrations.
- **2020 Alternative Artisans’ Bazaar:** Several church members have hand-crafted items for purchase: photo note cards, quilted gifts, watercolor paintings, tote bags and other crafts, hand-turned wood pens, and hand-made books. All artisans will be making donations to FCCPA or First Congo Nursery School from their proceeds. All transactions will be done following COVID-19 precautions. Shop now for the holidays! [Contact Diane Churchill](#) for more information.
- **Youth Groups:** High school youth group meets every other Sunday at 5:00 p.m. on Zoom. Middle School meets every Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. Contact [Sam@fccpa.org](mailto:Sam@fccpa.org) for the Zoom links and to get on the reminder list.
- **Contemplative Prayer:** meets in the Memorial Garden Wednesdays at 12:00 p.m.
- **Storytime for Families:** Join Teacher Todd and Pastor Dave for Storytime, Thursday evenings at 7:00 p.m. online. Find the link in the enews or Backyard update.
- **Church Council meeting:** Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. on Zoom.
- **Choir Zooms!** The choir continues practice via Zoom on Thursday nights 7:00-8:10 p.m. “Rehearsal” commences with a 30 minute vocal masterclass, and the choir will “sing” together after that from 7:40-8:10 p.m. If you are interested in joining us, please email Jenny Matteucci at [Jenny@fccpa.org](mailto:Jenny@fccpa.org).
- **Contact our Pastors:** If you would like to learn more about the church or talk with one of our pastors, please contact us at [David@fccpa.org](mailto:David@fccpa.org) or [Eileen@fccpa.org](mailto:Eileen@fccpa.org). We would be very glad to talk with you. For Pastoral Emergencies, you may contact Rev. David Howell at 650-906-7284 or Rev. Dr. Eileen Altman at 831-345-3830.

**Do you get our weekly electronic newsletter?** It's the best way to stay up-to-date on church events. Contact [office@fccpa.org](mailto:office@fccpa.org) to sign up to receive it.

**Open and Affirming Statement, adopted in 2007:** As we, the members of the First Congregational Church of Palo Alto, seek to embody God's extravagant welcome to all, we declare ourselves to be an Open and Affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ, welcoming into the full life and ministry of our church all who are LGBTQ+.

**Land Acknowledgement:** As we gather for worship today, we remember that for thousands of years, this land has been the traditional home of the Ohlone, also known as Costanoans. The people of this place we know as Palo Alto called this place Puichon. It is still home to indigenous people from across Turtle Island. We are grateful to work, live and worship on this land.