



THE LORD'S DAY
December 10, 2023
WE GATHER TO WORSHIP
10:00 a.m.

PRELUDE *Piano/Chancel Organ*

CALL TO WORSHIP & STRIKING THE HOUR *"Adeste Fideles" The Carillon Bells*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

† INTROIT *"The King is Coming"* Page 763
 † *Please stand as you are able.* (Verse 1)

† HYMN *"The First Noel"* Page 265
 (Verses 1,2,6)

† PRAYER OF THE DAY AND THE LORD'S PRAYER
 † ANTHEM *"Gloria Patri"* Page 813

HYMN *"Angels From The Realms of Glory"* Page 259
 (Verses 1,2,5)

WE PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER AND RECITE GOD'S COVENANT PROMISES

PASTORAL PRAYER
 RESPONSORIAL *"Psalm 66"* *Psalter 66^B*
 Sung To The Tune of: *"O' Little Town of Bethlehem"*
 (Verses 7,10)

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

WE RETURN OUR TIME, TALENT AND TREASURE UNTO THE LORD

RECEIVING THE TITHES AND OFFERINGS
 † DOXOLOGY AND OFFERTORY PRAYER



WE LIFT OUR VOICES IN PRAISE

HYMN *"While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks"* Page 272
 (Verses 1,3,5)

SPECIAL MUSIC

EXPOSITION OF THE WORD AND CONFESSION OF FAITH

THE SERMON
"A Thrill of Hope"
 1 Thessalonians 5:4-11

† THE APOSTLES' CREED

† CLOSING HYMN *"O Little Town of Bethlehem"* Page 250
 (Verses 1,2,4)

† BENEDECTION

† ANTHEM *"The Family of God"* Page 419

DEPART IN PEACE TO LOVE AND SERVE THE LORD

*If you are visiting with us today, we're glad you're here.
 We are ordinary people on an extraordinary journey,
 learning to love and serve like Jesus. Come with Us!*



In this constantly changing world, our goal is to reflect and recapture the historic and classical worship of Almighty God. Central to our service is the proclamation of the Word and a biblical understanding of the Sacraments in the tradition of the Evangelical and Reformed faith.

OUR MISSION
 TO PRESENT CHRIST TO EVERYONE,
 EVERYWHERE, AT EVERY AVAILABLE OPPORTUNITY.







THE LESSONS FOR USE ON THE
 SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT ~ YEAR B
 Isaiah 40:1-11 • Psalm 85:1-13
 1 Thessalonians 5:4-11

WE AFFIRM THE FOLLOWING:

- The Holy Trinity of God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- God has revealed Himself fully and decisively in Holy Scripture. We believe the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired, infallible, and authoritative Word of God and our guide for faith and life.
- There is only one way to Salvation - through Jesus Christ.
- The sanctity of human life based on our creation in the image of God and our election by God for service in His Kingdom. This leads us to respectfully affirm the sanctity of life at every stage, from conception to ordinary death.
- The Biblical principles of immutable gender and sexuality: The exclusive union of one man and one woman in marriage; and fidelity to its vows. And, chastity outside of marriage for the sake of the Kingdom.
- God made all people from one man and although people can be distinguished by different ethnicities and nationalities, we are all one human race and absolute equals before God in creation, the need for repentance, and the offer of redemption.
- That the mission of the Church is to spread the Good News of the Gospel in every word and deed. Proclaiming to the world the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and seeking to bring every person into a life of faith, discipleship, and submission to Him.

ATTENDANCE
LAST SUNDAY: 109

GIVING REPORT	
Week Ending December 3, 2023	
\$6,391	
Sunday General Giving	4,703
Online General Giving	230
Total General	4,933
Less 3% to Building	-148
Less 10% to Missions	-493
Net Revenue	4,292
Designated Giving	
Building Maintenance	148
Flowers	58
Gals	30
Hospitality	100
Missions	1,763
T-Shirts	40
Total Designated Giving	2,099
Net Revenue	4,292
Designated Giving	2,099
Total Receipts	\$6,391

Monthly Reports are posted in the Fellowship Hall.

Are you interested in Church Membership? We receive new members the last Sunday of each month. Please see Pastor Kler today.

Our Church believes in financial transparency and so our Quarterly Reports are displayed on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall.



**Are Christmas
Trees
Pagan in Origin?**

**WHY DO WE
DO THAT?**

Few symbols capture the Christmas season quite as well as the Christmas tree. Each year, homes around the world are illuminated by their festive strands of lights, yards of tinsel, and ornaments reflecting brightly. But did the idea of decorating a Christmas tree derive from pagan influences?

It is true that many ancient pagans worshipped trees and that the use of evergreens in winter rituals dates back thousands of years. For many cultures, evergreen trees and plants symbolize eternal life and renewal during the dark winter months. However, the Christian idea of a Christmas tree serves a very different purpose – we don't worship the tree; we use it as a symbol to point to the Creator of trees (and everything else) and to the Advent of his Son.

Christian tradition has it that the very first Christmas tree can be traced to Saint Boniface, an eighth-century English missionary to the Pagan tribes in the region that became Germany. When Boniface discovered in 723 A.D. that the local people worshipped a giant oak tree (Donner's Oak) dedicated to the Norse god Thor, he bravely chopped it down. Boniface explained that if Thor was a real god, he would have killed Boniface, but that didn't happen. St. Boniface told the people that his survival was proof that the God of Heaven and Earth was the only true God, and no one wanted to argue with him after this incident. Boniface presented the gospel of Jesus Christ that day and converted many. According to the story, St. Boniface planted a fir tree in place of the oak as a reminder of the event, and it became the first "Christmas tree."

Shortly after the beginning of the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther reinvented the idea of a Christmas tree. Around 1523, Luther decided to plan a special surprise for his six children. A staff writer for World Vision magazine, Dorothy Haskins, writes of this: *Luther loved his children and wanted to do something to brighten the holiday season and celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ in a different way for them. The beauty of the evergreen trees near his home often delighted his heart when he walked through the snow in the starlight. The little trees stood there bravely, keeping green while everything around them went dry, drab, and lifeless. So, one day, he cut one down and brought it into the house, thinking of bringing some of its beauty into his home to fight against the bleakness of the winter. He wanted it to stand there "evergreen" as a reminder to his children that when the world was at its bleakest moment – sad and helpless and covered with a weight of sin – God sent his Son, everlasting life itself, to bring hope in the midst the dark and chill. He explained to his children that the tree is green in the winter, like our faith in Christ. It stays fresh even in a time of trouble. Our trust in Christ remains green even in sorrow. It stays alive even in the midst of despair. Then Martin Luther put candles on the tree, saying, "The candles remind us of the star that led Wise Men to the Christ child." That was the first decorated Christmas tree. When all was done, he sat his children down and taught them a new carol he had written....*

*Good news from heaven the angels bring.
Glad tidings to the earth they sing.
To us, this day, a child is born.
To crown us with the joy of heaven.*

As you decorate your tree this year, remember the story of the first Christmas and let your Christmas tree be a symbol of the everlasting love of God, "sent into a bleak world in the moment of its deepest darkness, that through Jesus you and I might have life everlasting." May you have a blessed and happy Christmas!



The Chancel Flowers Are Placed by:

The Kler Family
in celebration of Jane's 94th Birthday



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

-----DECEMBER 2023-----

Board Meeting.....Tuesday, December 12th at 5:00 p.m.
Christmas Eve Service.....Sunday, December 24, at 6:30 p.m.

-----JANUARY 2024-----

GAL's Meeting.....Monday, January 8th at 12:30
Board Meeting.....Tuesday, January 9th at 5:00 p.m.
Guy's Lunch.....Thursday, January 12th at 11:00 a.m.
~~~ Guy's Prayer Group.....Thursday, January 12<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m. ~

-----REGULAR SCHEDULE-----

Wednesday Bible Study..... Weekly at 4:00 p.m.  
Sunday School.....Weekly at 9:00 a.m.  
Lord's Day Worship.....Weekly at 10:00 a.m.



**THE ELDERS**  
TEACHING & WORSHIP

Rev. H. Joseph Kler  
Senior Pastor / L.F.O.C. Chaplain  
Rev. John O. Strauss  
Worship Leader / Minister of Music

**THE DEACONS**

Jim Leitzke, Gary Hatrick

**OUR MUSICIANS**

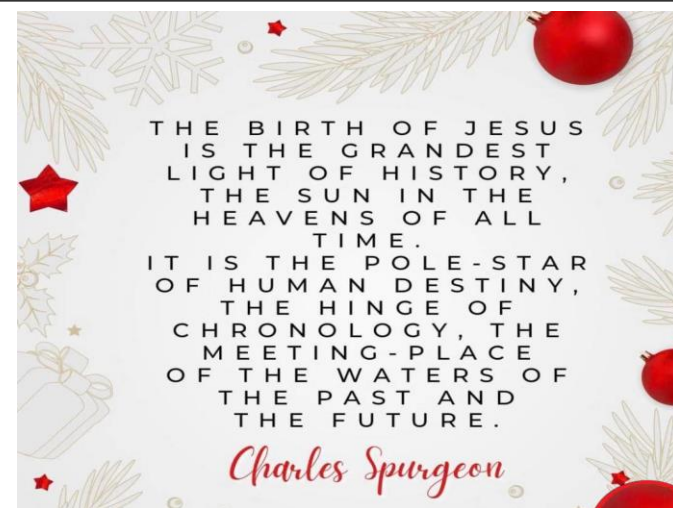
Ann Dantuma  
Pianist/Organist  
Donna Zenisek-Huber  
Flutist

**SOUND BOOTH**

Ric Romyn, Joe Negron,  
Jonathan Kler

To contact Board President  
John Vosteen, please call:  
813-731-2803

To contact  
the Pastor, please call:  
813-323-0802



CONNECT WITH US ONLINE AT:

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

Email: [fcczh@aol.com](mailto:fcczh@aol.com)

Or Phone: 813-780-6027

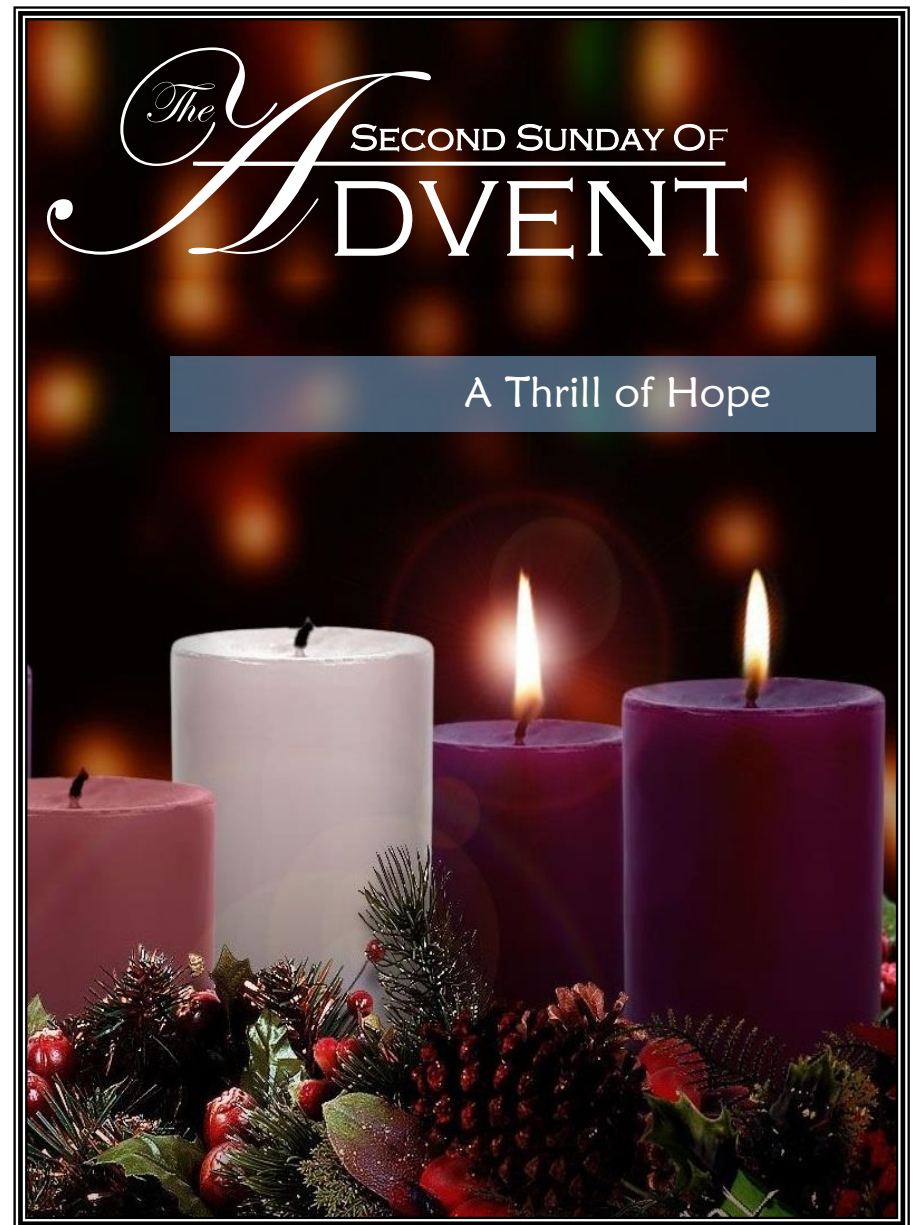
Monday - Friday: 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.



**FAIRVIEW**

COMMUNITY CHURCH of ZEPHYRHILLS  
...a Christ-centered. Reformed faith fellowship.

Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing, but encourage one another as the Day of the Lord draws near. -Hebrews 10:25



The **SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

A Thrill of Hope

7900 Fort King Road - Zephyrhills, FL 33541

813-780-6027 / [fcczh@aol.com](mailto:fcczh@aol.com)

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