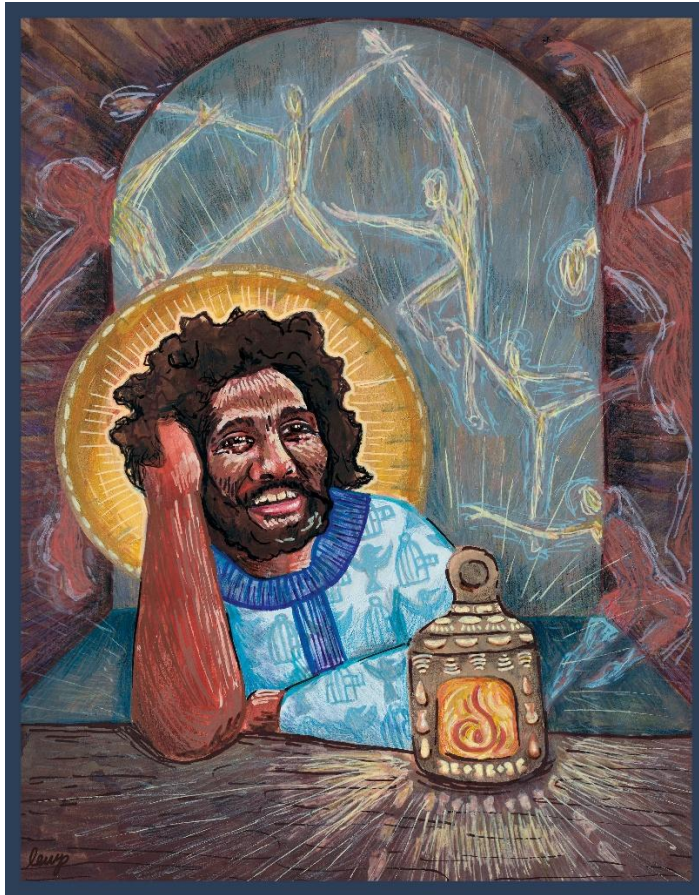




DANVILLE

Congregational Church

United Church of Christ



"Hope Like a Dancer" by Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman

Second Sunday of Advent
Handbell Sunday

December 7, 2025

OUR PURPOSE

Love God • Love Each Other • Be God's Love in the World

Danville Congregational Church acknowledges that the land this house of worship sits upon is the traditional, unceded land of the Ohlone and Bay Miwok people. We offer this land acknowledgment as a sign of respect, with the knowledge that this land was sacred before we ever arrived.

At Danville Congregational Church, we welcome you to a progressive spiritual community that is open and affirming, celebrates differences, and encourages alternate views. We explore the Bible with curiosity and enthusiasm, taking it seriously but not literally. Taking Christ's call passionately to love our neighbor, we extend our faith into action for the betterment of all. Wherever you are on life's journey, we offer you a place of peace and hope.

Danville Congregational Church is an Open and Affirming church, welcoming all of God's people—of diverse race, gender, sexual orientation, family status, economic condition, and physical, mental, and emotional ability.

A NOTE TO WORSHIPERS

Please take note of the emergency exits around you and locate the nearest one to you.

At DCC, wearing a mask during worship or inside the building is optional; please do whatever is comfortable for you. Please be aware of others' personal space and space yourselves out in the sanctuary accordingly. Please invite consent before shaking hands and hugging. The left-hand section of pews as you enter the sanctuary has been designated for those who are free of scents and perfumes.

Please silence your cell phone when you enter the sanctuary.

If you would like to use one of our listening assistance devices, please see the sound technician in the back of the sanctuary.

First-time visitor? Welcome to Danville Congregational Church! We are glad you are here with us today. Please register your attendance in the Blue Pew Book located in the pew and share whatever information you would like us to have about you. If you are interested in learning more about DCC, please see one of the pastors after worship in the narthex (lobby) or contact Joyce Klassen (joyce.klassen@comcast.net) our Community Life Commissioner. We look forward to meeting you!

***The DCC sanctuary is available for meditation and quiet prayer
during the week during normal business hours.***

Please feel free to come by any time—enter through the office.

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD



Liturgy by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

PRELUDE

Lullay, Thou Little Tiny Child
Celebration Bells

arr. Janis Jang

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Kim Lawrence

WELCOME

Rev. Todd Atkins-Whitley

Please sign the sheet in the blue pad, pass it to another, and place it in the offering plate.

To offer a special prayer, please fill out a Prayer Card, which will be collected during Prayer Time.

LIGHTING THE CANDLE OF PEACE

Bode and Trent Lawrence

*CALL TO WORSHIP

**All are invited to rise in body, mind, or spirit.*

One: Family of faith, God is at work!

All: God is healing and creating,

One: redeeming and dreaming,

All: calling and sending,

One: listening and loving.

All: Yes, indeed, God is at work!

One: So may we worship our God who never gives up.

All: May we worship our God who holds onto hope. Amen.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

One: Peace be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Let us greet one another and pass the peace of Christ

*OPENING HYMN

Comfort, Comfort O My People

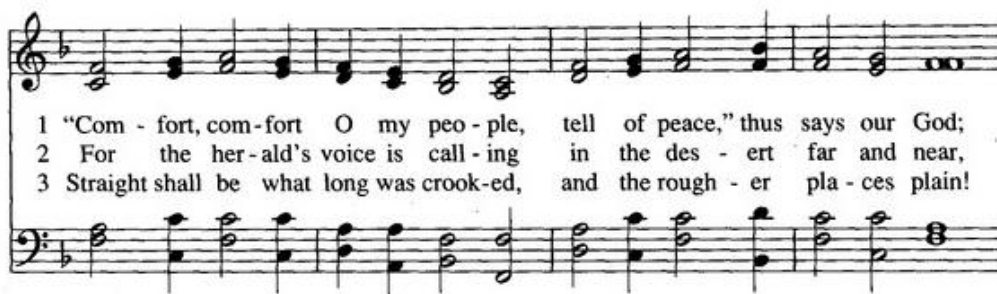
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Comfort, Comfort O My People

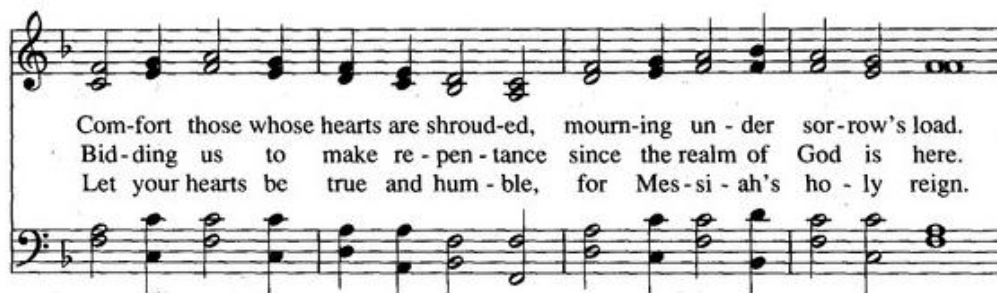
Isa. 40:1-8

Johannes Olearius, 1671

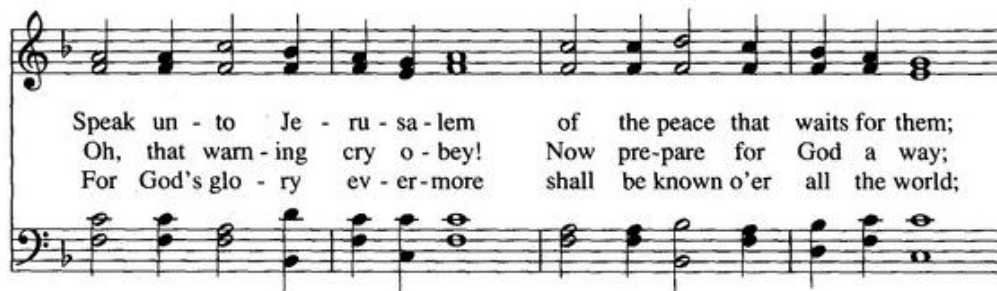
Transl. Catherine Winkworth, 1863; alt.



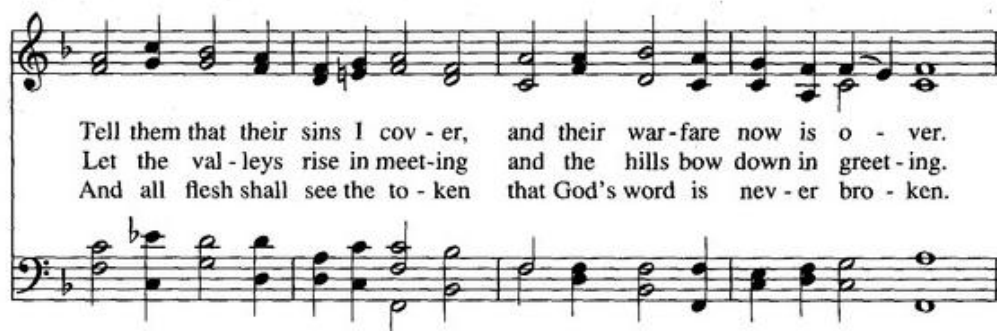
1 "Com - fort, com - fort O my peo - ple, tell of peace," thus says our God;
 2 For the her - ald's voice is call - ing in the des - ert far and near,
 3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er pla - ces plain!



Com - fort those whose hearts are shroud - ed, mourn - ing un - der sor - row's load.
 Bid - ding us to make re - pen - tance since the realm of God is here.
 Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, for Mes - si - ah's ho - ly reign.



Speak un - to Je - ru - sa - lem of the peace that waits for them;
 Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way;
 For God's glo - ry ev - er - more shall be known o'er all the world;



Tell them that their sins I cov - er, and their war - fare now is o - ver.
 Let the val - leys rise in meet - ing and the hills bow down in greet - ing.
 And all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

Tune: PSALM 42 8.7.8.7.7.8.8.

(FREU DICH SEHR)
Trente quatre Psaumes, Geneva, 1551

Written for John the Baptist's Day, June 24, this hymn clearly reflects the Isaiah text. Johannes Olearius, a Lutheran pastor, held a faculty appointment at Wittenberg University as well as church administration positions in his region.

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Pastor Todd

*Following the Time With Children, children are invited to meet their teachers
in the back of the sanctuary for Godly Play.*

SCRIPTURE LESSON

[Isaiah 43:19-21](#)

Trent

I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth; do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert.
The wild animals will honor me,
the jackals and the ostriches,
for I give water in the wilderness,
rivers in the desert,
to give drink to my chosen people,
the people whom I formed for myself
so that they might declare my praise.

GOSPEL LESSON

[Matthew 11:1-11](#)

Bode

Now when Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and proclaim his message in their cities.

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.'

"Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

SERMON

When We're Running Out of Hope, God is at Work

Pastor Todd

ANTHEM

A la Media Noche
Joyful DeciBELLES

arr. Larry Sue

TIME OF PRAYER

Pastor Todd

Sharing our Joys and Concerns

All: Hear our prayer

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Our Loving God, who is 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.

TIME OF GIVING

Invitation to Giving

For those of you who have already made a gift by check or automated giving, we are grateful. If you would like to make a gift today, please place it in the offering plate or [give using our web site](#) or donate using your mobile device, text the word give to 855-940-3756.

Offertory

Still Still Still

arr. Janis Jang

Celebration Bells

*Doxology **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**

*Offertory Prayer

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

Pastor Todd

SURSUM CORDA

One: God be with you!

All: And also with you!

One: Lift up your hearts!

All: We lift up our hearts to God!

One: Let us give thanks to God.

All: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

COMMUNION PRAYER

Pastor Todd

SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP

Pastor Todd

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

One: Loving God, in a world wracked with fear,
All: you gather us together.
You set the table.
You meet us here.
You nourish our bodies as you nourish our spirits.
You remind us that this is a joyful feast,
and that fear cannot win every time.

One: So with renewed courage,
All: with renewed hope, with renewed conviction,
send us out into the world.
Help us to feed others as you have fed us.
With gratitude we pray, Amen.

WORK OF THE PEOPLE Pastor Todd

*CLOSING HYMN *Looking Out A Prison Window* See next page.

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH & BENEDICTION Pastor Todd and Congregations
All: We believe in a with-us God. We believe in the hope of tomorrow.
We believe that good news is louder than fear.
We believe this good news is for all people.

POSTLUDE *Noel Nouvelet* arr. Janis Jang
Celebration Bells

Please remain in your pews until the light has been taken out of the Sanctuary. Thank you!

Celebration Bells

Penny Atkin	Randy Jang
Anne Bremirez*	Karol Mead*
Joy Davis	Lori Smith*
Janis Jang*	

*Joyful DeciBELLES

If you would like to join Celebration Bells, now is the time to contact Janis Jang.

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Looking Out a Prison Window

IRBY 8.7.8.7.7.7

Words by Anna Strickland, 2025

Music by Henry John Gauntlett, 1849



Look - ing out a pri - son win - dow, who can
All the things that keep us cap - tive shrink our
To our sib - lings still im - pris - oned be - hind
We are called to li - ber - a - tion, to be



see the flow - ers bloom? Hope dis - solves like dreams at
op - ti - mis - tic faith We must prac - tice hope on
bars of steel or fear Bring the mes - sage from our
freed and to set free Break - ing chains of world - ly



day - break leav - ing us an emp - ty room Still be - yond what
pur - pose e - ven when our spi - rits break 'Til at last our
Sav - ior: hope is real and dawn - ing near Tell the gos - pel
pow - ers who would claim our li - ber - ty Bo - dy, spi - rit,

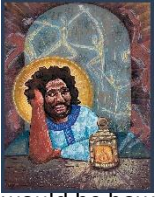
10



we can see God is al - ways plant - ing seeds
free - dom comes And we fin - ally see the sun
all a - round New life springs up from the ground
mind and heart Li - ber - ate each cap - tive part

© Anna Strickland, 2025. Commissioned by A Sanctified Art, LLC.

WORSHIP NOTES



Hope Like a Dancer by Lauren Wright Pittman

Inspired by Matthew 11:1-11 | 11"x14" Gouache, paint pens, colored pencils, and ink on paper

John the Baptist was thrown in prison after publicly questioning the legality of Herod's marriage (Matthew 14:3-5). He was not afraid to go toe-to-toe with the powerful, and perhaps he expected Jesus' ministry to look more confrontational and politically strategic. In questioning Jesus, I wonder if John sought a particular answer to hang his hope on, that maybe the Messiah would be how he'd imagined him. Maybe Jesus would bust him out of jail and take things straight to Herod, but Jesus offers something else.

In this image, John sits in prison, letting the disciples' testimony settle in. People with hearing, visual, and physical impairments experience new senses and mobility. Those with skin diseases are cleansed. Those with little material comfort are offered irrepressible hope, and the lungs of the dead are filled with the breath of life. I decided to image this good news through the dancing light of a lantern in John's prison cell. I chose dancing figures because dancing feels like a primal response to the radical healing taking place outside the prison walls. As these six dancers illuminate the cell, I imagine John, even if for a moment, breaking into a bit of laughter at the magnitude of Jesus' ministry. Jesus was quite literally doing the unimaginable. He was removing barriers so that the marginalized were no longer reduced to begging and sitting on mats, shoved to the edges of society. He was not only healing physical ailments; perhaps more importantly, he was restoring people to community.

Out of all the miraculous actions mentioned, the news did not include "release of the captives" (Luke 4:18-19). With this message, John would know that he was not going to be freed, and so, the number of dancers would remain one short of seven. As we know all too well, God's work isn't completed in Jesus' time. We are still woefully short of realizing the fullness of God's desire for all of creation, and the work is ours to see through. Until then, let us keep our eyes peeled for the glimmers of hope dancing all around us and work toward a day when all can join in that dance of wholeness.

—Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman



Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman (she/her) is an artist, graphic designer, and theologian. She uses paint, metallic inks, linoleum carving tools, and her trusty Apple pencil to image the layered complexity she experiences in scripture texts. Visual exploration offers her a holy space to ask questions, find her voice, take risks, and make bold statements.

TODAY'S SCHEDULE

8:00am–9:00am	Celebration Bells Rehearsal
8:30am–9:15am	Choir Rehearsal
9:30am–10:30am	Worship (In-person and Zoom)
10:30am–11:00am	Time of Fellowship in Koinonia / breakout room
After worship–1:00pm	Youth Group
11:15am–noon	Anti-Racism Coffee Chat
12:00pm	Monthly Lunch Bunch

Our unattended nursery is open for anyone who would like to make use of it during worship. For safety reasons, we request that no child be left on the playground without appropriate supervision.

Godly Play (for children ages preschool through 5th grade) is offered immediately following the Opening Hymn. All children are invited to participate in Godly Play.

THIS WEEK AT DCC

Tuesday	11:30am	Men's Luncheon
Tuesday	1:00pm–3:00pm	Diaconate Meeting
Wednesday	10:00am	Wednesday Morning Prayer
Wednesday	2:30pm–3:30pm	CARE Support Group
Wednesday	7:00pm–8:30pm	Choir Rehearsal

TODAY'S EMMAUS TEAM

Today's Emmaus Team is **Team 1**. Next Week's Emmaus Team is **Team 2**.

Liturgists: Kim Lawrence, Bode Lawrence, and Trent Lawrence

Sound Tech: Jim Felton

Tech Ministers: Carol Bassett and John Klassen

Lock Up Duty: Dee Brook

Children's Ministers

Godly Play: Nan Karns and Alan Wong

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next Sunday

2nd Annual Intergenerational Christmas Pageant

Hear Ye, Hear Ye!!!

We are seeking people of all ages to participate in our 2nd Annual Intergenerational Christmas Pageant. We need shepherds, angels, tons of townspeople, Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, star, Holy Spirit, donkey, goat, and lots of sheep(bring your friends!)



- **Step 1:** Choose a role.
- **Step 2:** Costumes
- **Parents of children and babies:** Contact Pastor Todd. Children can come and get a costume if they don't already have one.
- **Adults:** Email [Janis Jang](mailto:Janis.Jang@church.org) for suggestions on how to assemble a costume from your closet. Come in costume...especially if you're late!

Please arrive between 8:45am–9:00am and head to the Spirit Room for costume check. At 9:10am, we will head to the Sanctuary for last minute instructions and group picture.

No matter what happens, it's the DCC way of recreating the birth of Jesus. It's a "there are no mistakes" play. Come one, come families, come all, and be part of the fun!



Children - Join us for Godly Play today

This Sunday in Godly Play we will hear about Mary and Joseph (and the donkey!) and their journey to Bethlehem. All children are welcome to join Ms. Nan and Mr. Alan for this Advent time of wondering and waiting. Hope to see you there!



Today 11:15am–noon Anti-Racism Coffee Chat

There will be an Anti-Racism Coffee Chat from 11:15am–noon today in Kairos Hall. All are welcome to attend, including Lunch Bunchers who are welcome to leave our chat before noon. Barb DeBarger and Bette Felton will facilitate. Looking forward to chatting with you!

Today

Pastor Todd's PSC Meeting

Pastor Todd's Pastoral Support Committee will meet after worship today. Members include Dee Brook, Jen Faight, John Klassen, Dave Michaud, and Jenn O'Neal.



Today at noon

Monthly Lunch Bunch - Please Join Us!

Would you like to get to know some of your DCC colleagues better? Come join us for lunch after church today. We'll be gathering at noon at **The Peasant and the Pear** in downtown Danville and would love for you to join us! Note: Please come prepared to pay for your meal with check, cash, Paypal or Venmo. Thanks

Next Sunday after worship

Christmas Lunch and Cookie Exchange



Join us in Kairos Hall after worship on Sunday, December 14th, for our Christmas Lunch and Cookie Exchange.

- Soup and salad lunch will be provided by the Community Life Commission
- Bring 1-2 dozen of your favorite cookies to share! We'll pack boxes for our homebound friends (delivery addresses will be available), with plenty left to enjoy and take home
- Bring a Christmas card or make one for our friends in Guatemala
- Enjoy festive music and warm fellowship
- Friends and family are welcome!



Advent Flower & Endowment Fund Donations

Advent has begun and to celebrate the season, the Worship Commission extends the opportunity for you to honor or commemorate the memory of someone by donating Advent flowers to fill our sanctuary this Advent.

To make a donation, fill out the form in the bulletin or fill out [this form online](#) and print. Take the completed form along with your check or money and do one of the following:

- Give it directly to **Janis or Randy Jang**.
- Place it in the offering plate.
- Drop it by or mail it to the church office.

You can also make your designation and make your donation using our [web site](#).

Please enter amount in "Advent Flowers" and specify In Honor or Memory of _____ in comment field.

An email will be sent to you to verify that we received your donation. If you don't receive an email within the week, contact [Randy Jang](#). Please note on your check that it is for "Advent Flowers." Thank you!

In addition, the Endowment Committee invites you to remember a loved one during Advent by making a donation. You may do so by filling out the same form and designating that it is for the Endowment Fund. Please fill out the form and place your check in the offering plate or deliver it to the office.

Fourth Sunday of Advent

DCC MUSIC SUNDAY
DECEMBER 21, 9:30am

Christmas Carols by John Rutter

DCC CHANCEL CHOIR
 with guest singers and members of the Mozart to Mendelssohn Orchestra

As we celebrate the season, our annual December Music Sunday commemorates the 80th birthday of English composer John Rutter whose Christmas carols have been some of the most beloved in recent decades. With an expanded choir and 25-piece orchestra, you will certainly experience the beauty of Christmas!



Introducing Dayspring Preschool's New Administrative Assistant

A few weeks ago, we sent an article about the new Administrative Assistant at Dayspring to the e-News. Unfortunately, that person was not able to actually accept the job, and so we resumed our search. With that in mind, we are pleased to introduce our newest Administrative Assistant, **Stacey Perez**, who has recently joined our Dayspring Preschool team. She brings with her a wealth of experience, a warm and welcoming spirit, and a genuine passion for early childhood education. She will be the friendly face you see at the front desk, ready to assist! We are confident she will be a wonderful addition to our Dayspring Preschool family and look forward to the many ways she will support our staff, children, and families. If you have a moment, feel free to stop by the office to introduce yourself and say hello.

Pictures of the Week



Last Sunday, Pastor Lauren led Time with Children and walked the youth through the elements on the altar during Advent; Max and Hazel lit the first candle of Advent—the candle of hope; and DCC members showed their artistic skills on our HOPE poster.

If you'd like to submit a picture to be considered for the pic of the week, email anne-marie@danvillechurch.org.

Wednesday Morning Prayer

Pastor Todd facilitates morning prayer on Wednesdays at 10:00am via Zoom and in the Sanctuary. We will engage in centering prayer and then pray for those requests we have received. To join via Zoom use this [link](#).

Pastoral Availability

Pastor Todd keeps regular office hours remotely on Monday and in the office Tuesday through Thursday. If you would like to meet with Pastor Todd, please reach out to him directly via phone or [email](#).

Pastor Lauren is available by appointment. You can reach her via [email](#) or phone.



Advent Flower Donations

Donations are now being collected for our Advent Flowers. Fill out this form and give your check/money to **Janis or Randy Jang**, place it in the offering plate, or deliver it to the office.

Name(s) gift given by

Name (Circle One) in honor of / in memory of

You may also donate online on the church website: please enter amount in "Advent Flowers" and specify In Honor or Memory of ____ in comment field.

An email will be sent to you to verify that we received your donation. If you don't receive an email within the week, contact **Janis or Randy** at somedad579@yahoo.com.

Please note on your check that it is for
"ADVENT FLOWERS." Thank you!



DANVILLE
Congregational Church
Endowment Fund



The Endowment Committee invites you to remember a loved one during advent by making a donation. You may do so by submitting a check to Danville Congregational Church and designating that it is for the **Endowment Fund**. Please fill out this form and place your check in the offering plate or deliver it to the office.

Name(s) gift given by

Name (Circle One) in honor of / in memory of



Ministers—The Entire Congregation

Church Staff

The Rev. Todd Atkins-Whitley, Senior Pastor

The Rev. Lauren Jewett, Minister of Youth & Community Engagement

John Kendall Bailey, Music Director

Anne-Marie Vanniasinkam, Office & Communications Manager

The **DCC Prayer Team** prays daily for those in need of prayers.
If you would like to submit a prayer request for yourself or someone else,
contact a pastor or send an email to **prayers@danvillechurch.org**.
All requests are kept confidential unless specified otherwise.

Maria Arroyo, Dayspring Preschool Director

Stacey Perez, Administrative Assistant

www.dayspringpreschool.org



Danville Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

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