



Connecting. Sharing. Serving!

## THE Weekly

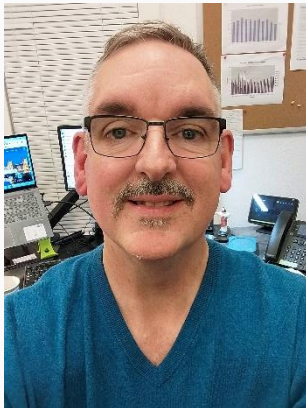
Thursday, December 19, 2024



### ON SUNDAY

+ Join us for worship on Sunday, December 22, at 10:00 AM. The Scripture lessons are 1 Samuel 2:1-10 & Luke 1:39-55. The sermon's title is, "Moving with Mary's Song." The Lay Reader is Gary Stephenson. The Usher is TBA. The Teller is TBA. Fellowship is provided by Xuan Guerrero & John Busschaert. Flowers are provided by Christmas Poinsettias.

+ If you prefer to meet online, you can watch our live-stream service on the church's [YouTube channel](#). The service begins promptly at 10:00 AM. The service will be posted later in the afternoon and evening if you cannot watch it live.



### Pastor's Page

Dear Friends,

Two weeks ago, the Sacramento Gay Men's Chorus, which I sing with, sang a song that pulled deeply at my heartstrings. Each time we sang it in rehearsal, tears would well up in my eyes and each time, getting through the song was a difficult experience. As the chorus got better at singing the song, the deeper the feelings of sadness washed over me. When we entered into tech week, the week of full rehearsals of the show prior to the official shows on

Friday and Saturday, the rich, booming chorus and the soloist singing the song were nearly too much for me to take. And yet, I was able to sing the song and keep my composure. After the show, I had to walk home rather than taking an Uber. I needed time to heal my soul from the sadness of that song.

The song is "Love is Christmas." It was written and originally sung by Sara Bareilles and then adapted for Gay Men's Choruses nationwide. Here is a link where you can listen to the Columbus Gay Men's Chorus singing it: <https://youtu.be/ZUISq1RvtkY?si=9n7afTdDMe4uw4JZ>. I don't yet have a video of our chorus singing it.

This song brought up such emotion due to an experience I had with my mother several years before she passed away. At the time, I was living in Cresskill, NJ, serving as the pastor of the Cresskill Congregational Church. One afternoon in early December, I received a call from my mom's pulmonologist. He said that mom had been rushed to the Emergency Room just a few hours earlier and had slipped into a coma. She was not expected to survive. I needed to come home immediately.

I called my church council, and they said to go. I grabbed my robes, prayer book, Bible, and laptop, believing I would be officiating my mom's funeral. I got a plane ticket and flew home the next day. I arrived at the airport and took a taxi directly to the hospital. I walked into a room where the doctor had placed my mom. There she was, laying still in the cold room hooked up to beeping machines. She looked asleep but in an uncomfortable way. A thought hit me. I cried out, "Mom, I'm home!" I always said it when I walked into the front door of the family home, whether coming home from military leave or when I arrived on vacation from either New York or New Jersey. "Mom, I'm home!," I yelled out so she could hear me. And with that, she woke up immediately, turned her head, and said, "Oh David. I am so glad you are here."

Tears welled up in my shocked and surprised eyes. The nurse behind me jumped. She ran from the room and called the doctor. He and other nurses burst into the room. Mom was awake. We spoke for several minutes and I kissed her forehead and said I'd see her later as the doctor ushered me outside. He said it was a miracle. Mom would live for several years and have a few more close calls.

I remember getting into the cab to take me to my brother's house, where I would stay. My heart was trembling and I was sad and grateful. I remember those feelings as I hear or sing this song, Love is Christmas. When I listen to the words, they tell me that Christmas isn't about the toys or the food on the table or being perfect for the holiday season. They say "Love is who we are, and no season can contain it; love would never fall for that. Let love lead us, love is Christmas." I pray that your holiday season is filled with



love and that you and your loved ones are the center of attention, well, that and Jesus of course. Try not to let the holiday trappings cause you to miss the love, for that is truly the reason for the season.

See you on Sunday,

**Pastor Bo**

p.s., Please don't forget to attend our Lessons and Carols concert tomorrow, Friday, at 7:00 PM. Tickets are available at the door for \$25. There will be carol singing, and the Capital Chorale and Orchestra will be playing their hearts out for the concert. Afterwards, we'll have a dessert reception in Fellowship Hall. It'll be a fantastic evening.

**Music Musings, by Dr. Elliot Jones**



The *Magnificat*, Mary's song upon learning that she will give birth to the Christ child, is this Sunday's scripture text. These words have inspired composers for centuries. On Friday night during Lessons and Carols, Donna Apidone will read the beginning of it, and the choir will sing the rest in J.S. Bach's setting. Sunday's prelude will be the "Prayer to Our Lady" from *Suite Gothique* by Léon Boëllmann (1862-1897), composed in 1895. The postlude will be one of many fugal variations on a Gregorian chant *Magnificat* by Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706).

Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924) was one of the first composers to drive, and on one occasion crash, a car. He wrote at least seven settings of the *Magnificat*, but the one in B-flat is particularly joyful, and the choir will sing it as the offertory anthem.

Most of the Christmas carols we'll be doing on Christmas Eve have final verse arrangements and descants by Sir David Willcocks (1919-2015), with whom I studied briefly. These were first published in 1961 in a collection called "Carols for Choirs." Especially famous is what has become known as "The Chord" in *O Come, All Ye Faithful*:

thee be glo - ry giv'n; Word of the Fa - ther,

It is a half-diminished seventh chord, not at all uncommon. But, like Wagner's "Tristan chord," it's all about the context: It's placement on the word "Word" after an octave leap in the melody, the ascending outline of the D7 chord that precedes it, and especially the equally tense C-augmented chord that follows it, all combine to create a stunning musical moment. Last year there was an article in the New York Times about this chord:

<https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=Christmas%20chord>

"David Willcocks has transformed our musical celebration of Christmas, and it's hard to imagine now what it must have been like in the BCC era (before 'Carols for Choirs')." -Sir John Rutter

The Pioneer Bells will ring the beloved Christmas carols *O Little Town of Bethlehem* and *Away In a Manger*. The choir will sing *This Christmastide*, written for soprano Jessye Norman in 1988.

Bach's arrangement of the German carol *In Dulci Jubilo* is much like a "toccata," which literally means "to touch," as in touching the keys in fast flourishes like you're improvising. Toward the end, I engage the *Zimbelstern*, a set of small bells that ring when the device they rest on is set in motion. The word means "spinning star," and indeed there are some of these that also have a visible star that spins as the bells do. It is especially appropriate during the Christmas and Epiphany seasons with all of their myriad star references, but can be used at other times of year.



## A FESTIVAL OF LESSONS & CAROLS

featuring

### The Capital Chorale & Orchestra

Dr. Elliot Jones, Conductor

Donna Apidone, Narrator

**Friday, December 20, 2024**

**@ 7:00 PM**

*A dessert reception to  
follow the concert.*

Tickets: \$25 at the door  
or through Eventbrite



(Use the QR Code to get your tickets today!)



**Pioneer Congregational Church  
2700 L Street, Sacramento, CA 95816**

### Lessons and Carols Christmas Concert Dessert Buffet



**Calling all bakers, makers and savvy shoppers! We need your help to host the dessert buffet following the Christmas Concert on Friday 12/20/24.**



We are inviting people to attend a dessert buffet after the concert, and we need cookies, brownies, mini cupcakes, mini tarts, and other goodies that are individually portioned or can be easily sliced into individual portions. Lovely dessert items can be made or purchased and dropped off at the church starting at 5 pm on Friday before the concert at 7 pm.

We will be serving a variety of hot beverages (Christmas tea, mulled cider and coffee) to go with our variety of desserts. This concert is always well attended and we expect around 200 people to stay for the festivities.

For more information, or to volunteer for set up and service, email Ellen Arden-Ogle at [ellen.ardenogle@gmail.com](mailto:ellen.ardenogle@gmail.com).



Pioneer Congregational Church  
Presents  
**Christmas Eve**  
**Carol & Candlelight Service**  
**Sunday, December 24 at 5:00 PM**  
2700 L Street, Midtown Sacramento, CA  
[www.pioneerucc.org](http://www.pioneerucc.org)

**Word Find Puzzle: Luke 1:39-55**

A G R E E T E D J M B W A  
 H C F P H S X G T J T H B  
 A O R Z D O C E O H F E L  
 P M U L A O L N W A H N O  
 P E I O Y N A E N S O M Y  
 E S T U S P I R I T U O L  
 N A H D B C M A M E S T O  
 E L I Z A B E T H W E H W  
 D O N R M L D I J E N E L  
 W R G B E E C O U N T R Y  
 O D S H R S H N D T E N M  
 M O Z I C S I H E A R D A  
 B H O L Y E L E A P E D R  
 F I L L E D D B N J D A Y

BLESSED	CHILD	COME
COUNTRY	DAYS	ELIZABETH
ENTERED	EXCLAIMED	FILLED
FRUIT	GENERATION	GREETED
HAPPENED	HASTE	HEARD
HILL	HOLY	HOUSE
JUDEAN	LEAPED	LORD
LOUD	LOWLY	MARY
MERCY	MOTHER	SOON
SPIRIT	THINGS	TOWN
WENT	WHEN	WOMB

### 3 Ways to Give to Pioneer



1. [Follow this link to Paypal](#) and make your donation there.
2. Worship services on Sunday at 10:00 AM or stop by the church office.
3. Mail in your donation: Pioneer Congregational Church, 2700 L Street, Sacramento, CA 95816

**Birthdays**

12/03 Marietta Jackman

12/11 Pinki Cockrell

12/21 William Ruygt

12/24 Laird Miers



If you know of other birthdays from the members and friends of the Pioneer Church not listed here, please let us know. Thanks!

PIONEER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

# COME AND WORSHIP WITH US.

*Experience a traditional service of worship with beautiful choral music, meaningful liturgy, reverent prayer, and an inspiring sermon.*

2700 L STREET, SACRAMENTO  
SUNDAY WORSHIP 10:00 AM

Where the traditional meets a progressive, open and affirming faith. All are welcome.  
Learn more about us at [www.pioneerucc.org](http://www.pioneerucc.org).



**Coworking Office Space @ Pioneer**



We need your help in helping us locate anyone who would like to work out of one of our offices or use our many common rooms as a place to work. Mainly geared for those who work from home, our coworking space sharing is a great way at an affordable price to work in a peaceful atmosphere. Spread the news, tell your friends, and let us use these office spaces that have sat empty throughout the week. For more information, please call the church office.



**Pioneer**  
CONGREGATIONAL  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**COWORKING**  
**OFFICE SPACE**

Work in peaceful, quiet spaces in midtown Sacramento, the perfect setting for your professional growth. Join us and experience a workspace that inspires and supports your success. Rates: Day Pass \$25; full access \$200/mo; private offices for \$1000/month;

FREE COFFEE | FAST WI-FI

Conference Room & Lounge

Individual offices

Outdoor Area

Contact Us:  
916-443-3727  
connect@pioneerucc.org  
2700 L Street, midtown  
Sacramento, CA 95816

## CONTINUING ANNOUNCEMENTS OF THE CHURCH



+ The **church office will be closed** on Wednesday, December 25, and on Thursday, December 26.

+ There will be **no Bible Study** on Wednesdays, December 25 and January 1. Bible study will return on Wednesday, January 8 at 6:30 PM.

+ **Bell Choir Rehearsals.** Pioneer Bells rehearses on Tuesdays at 6:30 in our choir room, and presents some of the rich repertoire of music for bell choir in worship services – and occasionally in front of the church, serenading Sutter’s Fort Park!

+ **Ghost Kitchen at Pioneer.** We are now looking for start-ups and businesses interested in renting out our kitchen as a “ghost kitchen.” This new way of renting out space means that a business will cook their food here but be delivered to different destinations rather than serving it in our space. If you know anyone interested in our ghost kitchen, please contact Vi or Pastor Bo.

## GHOST KITCHEN

Pioneer Congregational Church  
2700 L Street, Sacramento, CA  
916-443-3727  
[connect@pioneerucc.org](mailto:connect@pioneerucc.org)  
[www.pioneerucc.org](http://www.pioneerucc.org)

*Kitchen for Delivery  
or Takeout only*

- Southbend 6 Burner Gas Stove
- Valpro Refrigerator and Freezer
- 2 Lamber Dishwashers
- Winholt Heater/Proofer
- Rubber Floor Mats + Ice Maker
- Sinks: Handwash/Prep/Triple Unit
- All Stainless Steel Tables + Storage Racks



+ **Do you have a prayer request?** Heidi Munoz collects prayer requests and emails them out to our prayer champions, and we pray over all prayer requests each and every Sunday. If you have a prayer request, please email Heidi at [prayingpioneers@gmail.com](mailto:prayingpioneers@gmail.com).

+ We provide **large print bulletins and hearing devices** for the hearing and visually impaired.

+ **Where to Park.** There is no free metered parking outside around the church. However, there is free parking underground next door/behind the church in the underground car park at the Teichert/Sutter underground parking garage. Enter Capitol Street between the garage and the hospital. The parking gate is open 9:00 AM – 12:30 PM on Sundays. You may park in any space, even if it says reserved.

# Pioneer Congregational Church

## WHERE TO PARK



- ✿ Metered Street Parking around Church, download Park Mobile App for easier pay-to-park experience
- ✿ Teichert/Sutter Underground Garage
 

Free parking on Sundays for Pioneer Church members and visitors! Enter on Capitol Ave btw 27th and 28th Streets, drive down the ramp and park anywhere. The gate remains open until 1 PM. Exit and re-enter through the hospital.
- ✿ Free Street Parking without meters, 2-hour time limit
- ✿ Pay-to-park Sutter Garage, 27th St, 1 block north of N St.



During the weekdays, we have the entire basement level (B2) for our parking needs, but you will need to get a parking card to access the closed gate unless we have prearranged an event for the gates to be open. On-street parking is available where meters are present. If you are willing to walk a couple of blocks, on-street parking with no meters allows for 2-hours of free parking.