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## **TRADITIONAL WORSHIP**

*Celebration of Faith*



### **Baby Jesus: The Love of God**

December 20, 2020

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent

11:00 A.M.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **Lighting of the Advent Wreath: The Fourth Sunday of Advent**

Pastor/Reader 1:

This is the fourth and last Sunday in Advent. Today we will think about another word that comes to mind at Christmas. It is the word "wonder." It comes on the Sunday of the Advent theme of love. Awe in love.

**Liturgist/Reader 2:**

*Luke 2:15-20*

Pastor/Reader 1:

The coming of Christ brings wonder. When the angels made known to the shepherds that the Savior had been born in Bethlehem, "they went with haste" to see the child. They found the little family and soon were glorifying and praising God for all they had witnessed. They were so ecstatic that they simply had to tell the story to anyone who would listen. That's love.

## Liturgist/Reader 2:

The response they received was surely predictable. St. Luke wrote that all who heard their story "wondered at what the shepherds told them" (Luke 2:18). What does it mean to "wonder"? Wonder has to do with awe, amazement, mystery, regarding that which holds us spellbound. When the astronauts landed on the moon for the first time, some Christians were in a meeting at a church. Having a television near-by, as the dramatic action began to unfold, they took time out to watch. When Neil Armstrong stepped onto the surface of the moon, they were so awestruck that they stood up and sang the Doxology. "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." It was a time of mystery, wonder and gratitude.

## Pastor/Reader 1:

What else would have been proper? And what else but wonder is proper when we think of God walking down the stairs of heaven carrying a little baby in his arms? Wonder is what the shepherds experienced. The wise men as well. Mother Mary, too. She wondered and pondered the whole affair in her heart. Wonder of wonders then. Wonder of wonders now. (lights candle)

**Liturgist/Reader 2:** Let us join in singing a verse of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel."

**ALL: O Come, Thou Key of David, come, and open wide our heavenly home.**

**The captives from their prison free, and conquer death's deep misery.**

Refrain: **Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel shall come to you, O Israel.**

## Let us pray:

O God, we thank you for the great gift of Christ our Lord. Truly his coming causes our minds to swirl in wonder. Accept our deepest thanks for all that you have done for us in the sending of our Lord. In his name, we pray. Amen.

## PRELUDE

*Now Sing We, Now Rejoice*

Paul Manz

## CALL TO WORSHIP

Liturgist: We come to celebrate a love that is alive, real, in-person.

**People: A love that touches our lives, bringing light and joy.**

Liturgist: For these moments we leave behind our cares and our concerns

**People: and participate in the love that came down on Christmas,**

**All: a love that enriches us through our lives.**

## Hymn

*O Little Town of Bethlehem*

## OPENING PRAYER

Dear Lord, when we are asked: "are you ready for Christmas?", sometimes we think of cards sent, gifts purchased and wrapped, trees decorated, cookies baked? Or on more faithful days, there are times we pause to think of preparing our hearts for the greatest gift you sent us. Help us to enjoy all the "trimmings" of Christmas while still acknowledging our need for your unbelievable gift of Jesus Christ. Help us to never forget that your love and your gift are the reason for our celebration. Amen.

## SCRIPTURE READING

*Luke 2:1-14*

Liturgist: The Word of God for God's people.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**DOXOLOGY** (TUNE: *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks*)

All glory be to God on high, and to the earth be peace;  
good will henceforth from heaven to earth,  
begin and never cease, begin and never cease. Amen

**AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

*Christmas Affirmation*

by Nathan Nettleton

We believe in God,  
the creator and giver of life,  
who brought all creation to birth,  
who mothers us and fathers us,  
protecting, nurturing,  
and cherishing us.

We believe in Jesus Christ:  
God born among us as a fragile baby,  
embodying both love and the need for love,  
and calling us to rest in God  
as trustingly as a tiny child.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
breathed into us at our birth,  
always drawing us on to be born again,  
encouraging, exhorting, comforting,  
nourishing our growth  
and inspiring our living.

And we believe that each new child  
is a glimpse of the face of God,  
a sign of the life to come,  
and a call to live in peace  
and celebrate living together.

Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to God's people on earth. Amen.

**MESSAGE**

*Baby Jesus: The Love of God*

Pastor Alan Smith

**HYMN**

*Rock-a-Bye, My Dear Little Boy*

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION and**

**WORDS OF ASSURANCE** from *Ministry Matters*

**People:**

**God of tenderness and love,  
breathe your grace into our lives.**

**Forgive our wandering ways,  
and guide us along your paths of peace.**

**When we lose our way,  
and forget the reason and purpose of this season,  
carry us back to you.**

**Lead us up to that high mountain of faith, hope, and love,  
that we might truly proclaim: "Here is our God!"**

**In your holy name, we pray. Amen.**

Pastor:

"Comfort, O comfort my people," says our God.  
You have served your term. Your penalty is paid.  
In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

**People:**

**In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!**  
— posted on the Ministry Matters

**PASTORAL PRAYER**  
**LORD'S PRAYER**

**HYMN**

*Love Came Down at Christmas*

**COMMISSION and BENEDICTION**

Pastor: Yes, let love be your token to God and all men.

**People: We will embrace the Christ child with love and awe.**

Pastor: He loves you so dearly.

**People: As we go forth we will adore Him, Christ our Lord.**

**All: Amen**

**RESPONSE**

*O Come All Ye Faithful*

**POSTLUDE**

*Joy to the World*

Robert Lau

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*Baby Jesus: The Love of God*

Scripture: Luke 2: 1-14

Pastor Alan Smith

Hope beckons us to what we cannot see, but believe with all our hearts.

Peace woos us to the quietness of the strong presence of God unfolding with confidence in the plans of God.

Joy effervesces with a contagious spirit, the excited enthusiasm, freedom and dance of youth...

Love matures as it steadfastly endures challenges.

How many of us have loved someone before they were aware of the depth of that love?

Love creates/conceives, love nourishes and cherishes, love forgives and redeems, love lives.

When born into the plans of God, engage in a life conceived in a plan that you discover and engage in as you grow in the course of living.

Love nourishes and cherishes.

God says "live!, do what you were created to do, become who you were created to become – God's child."

We are invited to participate in God's love for all the world, to love as we have been loved.

## Calendar for Week of 12/20/20

### **SUNDAY**

**8:30 - Drive In Worship [Parking Lot]**

9:45 - Contemporary live stream on Web

9:45 - Sunday School [zoom]

11:00 - Traditional Worship on Web

2:00—Blue Christmas [web]

6-8 - Youth Night [zoom]

### **MONDAY**

*Because of Bethlehem*

### **TUESDAY**

*Because of Bethlehem*

### **WEDNESDAY**

*Because of Bethlehem*

7:00 am - Prayer & Sacrament

7:00 pm—Celebrate Recovery

(contact Jason [jgillhoolley@gmail.com](mailto:jgillhoolley@gmail.com)

or Andrea [agillhoolley717@gmail.com](mailto:agillhoolley717@gmail.com) )

### **THURSDAY Christmas Eve**

*Because of Bethlehem*

### **FRIDAY Christmas Day**

### **SATURDAY**

9:00 - Contemporary Worship Rehearsal

**6:00 - Drive In Worship [Parking Lot]**

### **SUNDAY**

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6-8 - Youth Night [zoom]