

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Rev. Michael Q. Atkinson, Lead Pastor

Rev. Harry Jenkins, Associate Pastor

"A Holy, Healthy, and Loving Community Striving to Know Christ and to Make Christ Known"



December 20, 2020 4th Sunday of Advent "Love"

WORDS OF WELCOME

Rev. Harry Jenkins

LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES

Mischa Matheny

ORGAN PRELUDE

Dr. Jessica Scott

CALL TO WORSHIP

Rev. Jenkins

Leader: Welcome, dear people, God has blessed our gathering.

People: **We come again on this journey, following the light.**

Leader: God's light shines for us today, bringing peace and comfort.

People: **May we, like Mary, respond to God's presence and love, with confident joy.**

OPENING PRAYER

In the rush of preparation for holiday celebration, we come to this place to be fed by God. We need the hope, joy, peace, and love that this season represents. We need to listen again with wonder at the magnificent words of Mary as she proclaims her faithful participation in God's most miraculous gift. Open our hearts this day, Lord, to receive the words and the blessings, to be fed and then to be those who will share with others as you have shared with us. In Jesus' name, we pray. AMEN

OPENING HYMN

"Angels from the Realms of Glory"

Brett Miller, Music Director

Angels from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;

Ye who sang creation's story now proclaim Messiah's birth:

Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn King.

Shepherds, in the field abiding, watching o'er your flocks by night,

God with us is now residing; yonder shines the infant light:

Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn King.

Saints, before the altar bending, watching long in hope and fear;

Suddenly the Lord, descending, in his temple shall appear:

Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn King.

GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 1:26-38

Rev. Jenkins

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.'

Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.'

Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING-----Mischa and Chad Matheny

Last Sunday, we lit the candle of peace. We light it and the candles of hope and joy again as we remember that God became personal that first Christmas to bring us hope, joy, and everlasting peace.

(Light two purple candles and the pink candle.)

The fourth candle of Advent is the Candle of Love. Its light reminds us of the love that God has for us. Jesus shows us God's perfect love. He is God's love in human form. The Bible says that "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life." We light this candle today to remind us of how God's perfect love is found in Jesus.

(Light the remaining purple candle.)

SPECIAL MUSIC

"Silent Night, Holy Night"

arr. By Charles Ore

Dr. Jessica Scott, organ Brett Miller, clarinet

PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Jenkins

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, 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 trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 1:47-55

“The Magnificat”

My spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.

THE MESSAGE

“The Nativity”

First Church Children

“Mary and Joseph journey to Bethlehem”

(Aniston and Dominic Hazuka)

“The Shepherds hear of the birth”

(Mischa Matheny)

(Katie Shaver — “Away in a Manger”)

(Kate Thrush — “Silent Night”)

“The Angel appears to the Shepherds”

(Audra Skidmore — “Angels We Have Heard on High”)

“The Shepherds go to see the Infant Christ”

(Mischa Matheny)

“The Magi seek the Holy Child”

(Brett Miller, Harry Jenkins, Don Gardner)

“We Wish You a Merry Christmas” — Aniston and Dominic Hazuka

CLOSING HYMN

“Love Came Down at Christmas”

Brett Miller, Music Director

*Love came down at Christmas, Love all lovely, Love divine;
Love was born at Christmas; star and angels gave the sign.*

*Worship we the Godhead, Love incarnate, Love divine;
Worship we our Jesus, but wherewith for sacred sign?*

*Love shall be our token; love be yours and love be mine;
Love to God and neighbor, love for plea and gift and sign.*

**BENEDICTION
ORGAN POSTLUDE**

Dr. Scott

**Our thanks to Andrew Skidmore
for the delightful painting of the nativity used for this service.**

Jesus Christ is the joy and happiness of all who look forward to his coming.

Let us call upon him and say: “Come, Lord, and do not delay.”

In joy, we wait for your coming: “Come, Lord Jesus”

Before time began, you shared life with the Father: “Come now and save us”

You created the world and all who live in it: “Come to redeem the work of your hands.”

You did not hesitate to become man, subject to death: “Come to free us from the power of death.”

You came to give us life to the full: “Come and give us your unending life.”

You desire all people to live in love in your kingdom:

“Come and bring together those who long to see you face to face.”

