

Sunday, December 21, 2025 – 9:30 am

Fourth Sunday of Advent — A Sunday of Love

TODAY'S FOCUS: PORTENTS. Ahaz won't ask for a sign, but Isaiah gives him one anyway. Joseph wasn't asking for a sign, but an angel gives him one anyway. What would we do with an unexpected portent or sign?

PRELUDE — Brendan Krueger

INTROIT — Blaine Lee on Bagpipes "He Is Born"

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS — Lin

PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST — Lin

OPENING HYMN UMH #213 "Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates" (verses 1-2)

1. Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates; Behold the King of glory waits;
The King of kings is drawing near; the savior of the world is here.

2. Fling wide the portals of your heart; make it a temple, set apart
From earthly use for heaven's employ, adorned with prayer and love and joy.

CALL TO WORSHIP — Diana Murray

One: We come to worship the Lord of Love. The One who loved in the beginning, who is love now and who will cloak us in love to the end of time.

Many: We have prepared ourselves for worship. We come bringing our whole selves to bask in God's love.

One: We look forward to the Reign of the Lord of Love, when wolves will walk with the lambs; the leopards skip with the kids; and the calves will be friends with the lion cubs. Peace will come through the root of Jesse,

All: and we will abide in love with Christ forever!

OPENING PRAYER — Lin

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE OF LOVE — The Lawrence Family

SPECIAL MUSIC — Scott Anderson

HYMN TFWS #2233 "Where Children Belong"

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE — Sue Mercer

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 7:10-14/Matthew 1:18-25 — Diana Murray

Isaiah 7:10-14

¹⁰ Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹ Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. ¹² But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test. ¹³ Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. ¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶ For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³ "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

MESSAGE

"Isaiah & Joseph: A Prophet and a Dreamer"

Rev. Lin Cheek

RESPONSIVE HYMN

UMH #242 "Love Came Down at Christmas"

1. Love came down at Christmas, Love all lovely, Love divine;
Love came down at Christmas, star and angel gave the sign.

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

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

OFFERTORY — Betsy Foushee & Lin Cheek

"Sheep That Safely Graze"

DOXOLOGY

UMH #94

PRAYER OF DEDICATION — Diana Murray

All: Gracious God, accept these gifts in the spirit of love with which they are given. Use them to your purpose. Use us to your purpose. Make our hearts so completely open to you that

every word we speak, every action we take, and every gift we give this Christmas glorifies you. We pray in the name of your son Jesus Christ. Amen!

PASTORAL PRAYER/LORD’S PRAYER — Lin

ALL: 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.

CLOSING HYMN

UMH #251 “Go Tell It On the Mountain”

REFRAIN: Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere
Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ was born.

1. While shepherds kept their watching o’er silent flocks by night,
Behold throughout the heavens there shone a Holy light. **REFRAIN**

2. The shepherds feared and trembled when, lo! Above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior’s birth. **REFRAIN**

3. Down in a lowly manger our humble Christ was born
And brought us all salvation that blessed Christmas morn. **REFRAIN**

BENEDICTION — Lin

SENDING FORTH — Blaine Lee on Bagpipes

POSTLUDE — Brendan Krueger

Prelude/Postlude—Brendan Krueger

Offertory—Betsy & Lin?

Organ — Betsy Foushee

Liturgist —Diana Murray

Special Music:

Introit & Sending Forth — Blaine Lee on Bagpipes

Special Music — Scott Anderson

Accomp.— Brendan Krueger

Song Leader — Scott Anderson

Violin — Rae Ann Norell

Children’s Message— Sharon Goldade