

VALLEY COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

DECEMBER 18, 2022 † 10:00 AM

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Bold Text is spoken/sung by everyone

PASTOR: Rev. Robin Garvin

LITURGIST: Anne Scarce

MUSICIANS: Thomas Rheingans, Siena Hertafeld, Youth Bell Choir

VIDEO/SOUND: Steve Rees, Jim Sandberg, Hayden Bach, Dean Bridges

GATHER IN GOD'S PRESENCE

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

ELEMENTS AND MUSICAL INTERLUDE

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE (The Hoffbeck Family)

Advent is growing to a close. The time of anticipation and preparation is about to end. Soon we will celebrate the birth of Jesus, the very incarnation of God who is love. This is how God has shown us love: in the gift of the Son to share our lives. Hear the words of John: "God's love was revealed in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we ought to love one another." (1 John 4:9-11) We light this candle as a symbol of the light of Christ's coming into the world. His light has brought us love. Let us walk in the light of the world. His light has brought us love.

All: Let us walk in the light of the Lord, our hope, our peace, our joy, the gift of God's love.

ADVENT RESPONSE No. 88 (O Come, O Come, Emmanuel)

O come, thou Key of David, come, and open wide our heavenly home; make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

◆ CALL TO WORSHIP

In this season of longing and expectation

We prepare to welcome Jesus, our Hope.

Into the bustle of our lives and the hard-to-find moments of solitude

We prepare to welcome Jesus, our Peace.

Into our homes and situations along with friends and families

We prepare to welcome Jesus, our Joy.

Into our hearts, and those often hidden parts of our lives

We prepare to welcome Jesus, God's love for us in the flesh.

Let us prepare as we worship the Lord our God!

◆ **OPENING HYMN** No. 366 (Love Divine, All Loves Excelling)

Verse 1: *Love divine, all loves excelling, Joy of heaven, to earth come down, fix in us thy humble dwelling; all thy faithful mercies crown. Jesus, thou art all compassion; pure, unbounded love thou art; visit us with thy salvation; enter every trembling heart.*

Verse 2: *Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit into every troubled breast; let us all in thee inherit; let us find the promised rest. Take away the love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be; end of faith, as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.*

Verse 3: *Come, Almighty, to deliver; let us all thy life receive; suddenly return, and never, nevermore thy temples leave. Thee we would be always blessing, serve thee as thy hosts above, pray, and praise thee without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love.*

Verse 4: *Finish then thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be; let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee: changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place, till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise.*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy and awesome God, we admit that there is much in us that is not ready to receive you. Our world is torn by horrors in distant countries and tensions on our streets. Our lives are busy to the point of exhaustion, and we carry so much worry, turning our prayers dry and flattening our joy.

Forgive us. Holy and awesome God, stop us long enough that we might feel your presence in the midst of common tasks and sense the love that flows from you to us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CONFESSONAL RESPONSE No. 92 (While We Are Waiting, Come)

Verse 1: *While we are waiting, come; while we are waiting, come. Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.*

Verse 2: *With power and glory, come; with power and glory, come. Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.*

Verse 3: *Come, Savior, quickly come; come, Savior, quickly come. Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.*

◆ **ASSURANCE OF PARDON** (John 3:16-17)

Hear the good news: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." Rejoice in the good news of the gospel:

Because of God's incredible love for us in Christ, we are forgiven!

The peace of Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

◆ **RESPONSE OF PRAISE** No. 95 (Prepare the Way of the Lord) (Sung 2 times)

Prepare the way of the Lord. Prepare the way of the Lord, and all people will see the salvation of our God.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

PROCLAIM GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE READING (Matthew 1:18-25)

BELL CHOIR ANTHEM ("Carol of the Bells" arr. Dobrinski)

MESSAGE ("Loving Us/One of Us" by Rev. Robin Garvin)

RESPOND TO GOD'S GRACE

◆ HYMN OF RESPONSE No. 110 (Love Has Come)

Verse 1: *Love has come: a light in the darkness! Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies. See, all heaven has come to proclaim it; hear how their song of joy arises: Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior! Love! Love! Glory to God on high.*

Verse 2: *Love is born! Come, share in the wonder. Love is God now asleep in the hay. See the glow in the eyes of his mother; what is the name her heart is saying? Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers. Love! Love! Jesus, Emmanuel.*

Verse 3: *Love has come and never will leave us! Love is life everlasting and free. Love is Jesus and within among us. Love is the peace our hearts are seeking. Love! Love! Live is the gift of Christmas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!*

◆ AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe in Jesus Christ, born to us all so long ago in Bethlehem of Judea. We believe in Him who walked among the common people, and who was welcomed by those with open minds and yearning hearts, whom the poor, the oppressed, the discouraged, the sick and afflicted, welcomed and accepted as their Lord and Savior. We believe in Him whose life changed the course of history, over whom kings had no power, whose life humbled the proud, toppled the mighty, and elevated those of low degree. We believe in Him whose love changed human hearts for the better, and whose life and death on the cross proved that it is more important to serve than to be served, and that the greatest are those who give their lives in service for others. We believe in Him who rose from the grave, conquering death and offering abundant, eternal life to all who believe. We believe in Him who is the Prince of Peace, whose Spirit makes for justice and peace among all peoples, everywhere. We believe that the Christmas Spirit - the Spirit of Christ - is the power that can change the world for the better in love.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE (Anne Scarce, Deacon)

THE LORD'S PRAYER (found on page 35 of the hymnal)

OFFERTORY ("In the Bleak Midwinter" Siena Hertafeld, vocalist)

(Offerings can be mailed to the church office or made online by visiting our website:

www.valleycommunity.org)

◆ DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below; Praise God above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

SHARE THE GOOD NEWS

◆ CLOSING HYMN No. 100 (My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout)

Verse 1: *My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the God of my heart is great, and my spirit sings of the wondrous things that you bring to the ones who wait. You fixed your sight on your servant's plight, and my weakness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my name be blest. Could the world be about to turn?*

Refrain: *My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice burn. Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is about to turn.*

Verse 2: *Though I am small, my God, my all, you work great things in me, and your mercy will last from the depths of the past to the end of the age to be. Your very name puts the proud to shame, and to those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the strong to flight, for the world is about to turn.*

Refrain

Verse 3: *From the halls of power to the fortress tower, not a stone will be left on stone. Let the king beware for your justice tears every tyrant from his throne. The hungry poor shall weep no more, for the food they can never earn; there are tables spread; every mouth be fed, for the world is about to turn.* Refrain

Verse 4: *Though the nations rage from age to age, we remember who holds us fast: God's mercy must deliver us from the conqueror's crushing grasp. This saving word that our forebears heard is the promise which holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be crushed by God, who is turning the world around.*

Refrain

◆ CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

SENDING MUSIC