

THE
United Church
OF THE **San Juans**



The Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 20, 2020

WELCOME

PASTOR PAM STOFFERAHN

WELCOMING SONG

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence
(Liturgy of St. James, 4th century; French melody, 17th century)

UCSJ ENSEMBLE

Let all mortal flesh keep silence,
And with fear and trembling stand;
Ponder nothing earthly minded,
For with blessing in his hand
Christ our God to earth descendeth,
Our full homage to demand.

Rank on rank the host of heaven
Spreads its vanguard on the way,
As the Light of light descendeth
From the realms of endless day,
That the powers of hell may vanish
As the darkness clears away.

King of kings, yet born of Mary,
As of old on earth he stood,
Lord of lords, in human vesture,
In the body and the blood,
He will give to all the faithful
His own self for heavenly food.

At his feet the six-winged seraph,
Cherubim, with sleepless eye,
Veil their faces to the Presence,
As with ceaseless voice they cry,
"Alleluia, alleluia,
Alleluia, Lord most high!"

LIGHTING THE CANDLE OF LOVE

As the candle lighters come forward, the congregation is invited to hum the melody of "O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

Leader: We live on the brink every day. We stand on the threshold between this world and the next one. We live and move between the ordinary and divine, between the mundane and the mystery. Too often, we forget to look up and see the angels in our living room. We forget that the love we give and live is a sign of eternity, God with us, right now. Luke tells us that God's favor came to a girl, an ordinary girl. It might have been you or your daughter; it might have been the girl down the street or your grandchild. But the messenger of God came and greeted her and said, "The Lord is with you."

People: What a gift and a promise: Emmanuel, God is with us.

Leader: We light the candle of love knowing that God would go to any length to come to us, knowing that God longs to be with us. Even when we forget to listen, to lean into that presence, God is as close as our own breath. This, in a confused and confusing world, is all the assurance we need. Let God's love seep deep into your soul. Christ is coming because God loves you.

People: O Come, O Come Emmanuel

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

(John M. Neale; French melody)

UCSJ ENSEMBLE

O come, Thou Wisdom from on high, and order all things far and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show, and cause us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

CONFESSON AND ASSURANCE OF GOD'S GRACE

Leader: Do not be afraid, said Gabriel, surprising Mary and confronting her with the decision of her life. Do not be afraid, God is with you. 2020 has confronted many of us with life-changing circumstances and decisions. We know fear from the inside out. In this moment, ponder that fear. Name it, if you can, at least to yourself.

Silence for personal reflection

Leader: O God, Our God, who has been with the people since the beginning, is with us now offering grace that is more than we can ask or imagine. God's love frees us from the past, and helps us move forward into a new future. Let us thank God-with-us, Emmanuel, for faithful love.

People: Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also, with you.

Leader: Let us pray. O Wondrous God, send your Messenger to us today with a word of grace. If we are fearful, move us to confidence. If we are weary, offer us rest. If we are empty, fill us with hope. We have been searching for you far away. Let us find you at home in our midst, changing hearts and minds, urging us to join your work of Love. We pray in the name of the one who is coming, Jesus, the Christ.

People: Amen.

GOSPEL READING

Luke 1:26-38

MESSAGE

THE MOST SURPRISING NEWS

PASTOR PAM STOFFERAHN

ANTHEM

In the Bleak Midwinter
(Fred Pratt Green; *Piae Contiones*, arr. Gustav T. Holst)

UCSJ ENSEMBLE

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood still as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain,
Heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign:
In the bleak midwinter a stable-place sufficed
The Lord God incarnate, Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
But his mother only, in her maiden bliss,
Worshipped the Beloved with a kiss.

What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give him: give my heart.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

HOLY COMMUNION

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us,
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Instrumental Improvisations

KATY KRISTOFFERSEN

*This is the Lord's Table, and all are welcome here. Servers will bring communion to you. All service is grape juice.
Gluten-free communion is available. Just let your server know if that is your preference.*

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING AND PRAYER

PASTORAL BLESSING

SENDING SONG

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice
(Latin carol, 14th century traditional; German melody, 14th century)

UCSJ ENSEMBLE

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
Give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today;
Ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now.
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
Now ye heed not fear the grave; Jesus Christ was born to save;
Calls you one and calls you all to gain his everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
Now ye hear of endless bliss; Jesus Christ was born for this;
He has opened heaven's door, and we are blest forever-more.
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!

DISMISSAL

Leader: Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

POST SERVICE MUSIC

Instrumental Improvisations

KATY KRISTOFFERSEN

UCSJ ENSEMBLE: *Alice Goertz, Vince Snowbarger, Marge Quist, Fred Quist, Lisa Young*
ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTERS: *Hannah Beauregard and Tyler Caruso*

Flowers are given in by Ivan and Loree Cameron in honor of their 65th anniversary.



OUR MISSION

We are a loving and compassionate church family that respects the dignity and integrity of each individual. We find our joy and meaning through faith in God and Jesus and the Holy Spirit. We seek to promote Christian unity and to encourage understanding and cooperation with those from different traditions. We seek to foster deeper relationships with God and each other through worship, fellowship, growth and service.

WE ARE AFFILIATED WITH:

❖ THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA ❖ THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH USA
❖ THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST ❖ THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH ❖

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Tuesday - Thursday 9:00 AM to Noon

CHURCH STAFF

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