

THE  
**United Church**  
OF THE **San Juans**

TOWARD THE NEW HORIZON - WORKING TOWARD A FUTURE OF FULLNESS



4TH SUNDAY  
OF ADVENT  
DECEMBER 22, 2024

**MEDITATION**

Whatever good things we build end up building us.

– Jim Rohn

Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.

– Henry Ford

All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence.

– Martin Luther King, Jr.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Pastor Melinda Veatch

**PRELUDE**

**The Angel Gabriel** (*Basque carol*)

UCSJ Quartet

**ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING**

Joan Moyer

*Each Sunday of Advent we light a candle signifying the light of Christ coming into the world. This Sunday we light the first, second, third, and fourth candles knowing that Christ's light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it.*

Leader:: From the smallest to the greatest,

**People: From the least to the most,**

Leader : We labor together for the light! Let us worship God!

**People: We labor together for the light! Let us worship God!**

**PRAYER**

Joan Moyer

**HYMN**

**Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence**

(*Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*)

**Hymn No. 232**

**All Verses**

Congregation

**READING**

**Micah 5:2-5a**

Gini Barker

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord

**People: Thanks be to God**

**A MOMENT FOR REFLECTION**

\*Indicates we stand - if it is comfortable

**ANTHEM: Who Comes This Night?** (*Sally Stevens, words; Dave Grusin, music; Arr. Sheldon Curry*) UCSJ Choir

*Who comes this night, this wintry night, as to the lowly manger?  
The shepherds and the kings did come to welcome in the Stranger.*

*Who sends this song upon the air to ease the soul that's aching;  
To still the cry of deep despair and heal the heart that's breaking?*

*Brother Joseph, bring the light fast, the night is fading.  
And who will come this wintry night to where the Stranger's waiting?*

*Who comes this night, with humble heart, to give the fullest measure?  
A gift of purest love to bring, what good and worthy treasure.*

*Brother Joseph, bring the Lamb for they are asking for Him.  
The children come this starry night to lay their hearts before Him.*

*For those who would the Stranger greet must lay their heart before Him,  
And raise their song in voices sweet to worship and adore Him.*

*Brother Joseph, bring the light fast, the night is fading.  
And who will come this wintry night to where the Stranger's waiting?*

*Brother Joseph, bring the Lamb for they are asking for Him.  
The children come this starry night to lay their hearts before Him.  
Pure of heart this starry night to lay their hearts before Him.  
O wondrous night.*

**READING**

**Luke 3:7-18**

Pastor Melinda Veatch

When crowds of people came out for baptism because it was the popular thing to do, John exploded: “Brood of snakes! What do you think you’re doing slithering down here to the river? Do you think a little water on your snakeskins is going to deflect God’s judgment? It’s your life that must change, not your skin. And don’t think you can pull rank by claiming Abraham as ‘father.’ Being a child of Abraham is neither here nor there—children of Abraham are a dime a dozen. God can make children from stones if he wants. What counts is your life. Is it green and flourishing? Because if it’s deadwood, it goes on the fire.”

The crowd asked him, “Then what are we supposed to do?”

“If you have two coats, give one away,” he said. “Do the same with your food.”

Tax men also came to be baptized and said, “Teacher, what should we do?”

He told them, “No more extortion—collect only what is required by law.”

Soldiers asked him, “And what should we do?”

He told them, “No harassment, no blackmail—and be content with your rations.”

The interest of the people by now was building. They were all beginning to wonder, “Could this John be the Messiah?”

But John intervened: “I’m baptizing you here in the river. The main character in this drama, to whom I’m a mere stagehand, will ignite the kingdom life, a fire, the Holy Spirit within you, changing you from the inside out. He’s going to clean house—make a clean sweep of your lives. He’ll place everything true in its proper place before God; everything false he’ll put out with the trash to be burned.”

There was a lot more of this—words that gave strength to the people, words that put heart in them. The Message!

Leader: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**A MOMENT FOR REFLECTION**

**RESPONSIVE SONG**

**Mary, Did You Know**

*(Mark Lowry, words; Buddy Greene, music)*

Hymn No. 192

All Verses

Congregation

**OFFERING OF OURSELVES**

Pastor Melinda Veatch

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**DOXOLOGY\***

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Christ, all people here below;  
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;  
Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.*

**LIFTING OUR PRAYERS**

Joan Moyer and Pastor Melinda Veatch

**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, forever. Amen**

**CLOSING SONG\***

**To a Maid Whose Name Was Mary**

*(Gracia Grindal, words; Rusty Edwards)*

Hymn No. 171

Congregation

Verse 1: **Katy**, soloist (I'll help you learn the melody!)

Verse 2: **All**

Verse 3: **Women**

Verse 4: **Men**

Verse 6: **All**

**CLOSING PRAYER**

Joan Moyer

Holy God, we thank you for this time to be in your Presence and to be with one another in your Spirit. As we go from this place, send us out with hearts turned to your Way. May the way we live bring your healing and justice to a hurting world, and may your love flow from our lives. We ask it in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**POSTLUDE**

**Rocking Carol** *(Czech Carol; Arr. Alan Cutts)*

UCSJ Women

**SENDING**

Pastor Melinda Veatch



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## 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 Christ 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 PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH USA ~ THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH ~ THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA



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