



The 2nd Sunday of Advent – “Love Incarnate”
December 6, 2020

Prelude

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus, Martha Main

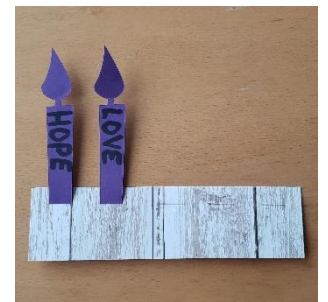
LIGHTING OUR ADVENT CANDLE

In both the Gospel of Matthew and Isaiah, a messenger appears as a sign from God, heralding a new era. In each passage, the words “do not be afraid” appear... offering a clue that the messenger—whether prophet or angel—was referencing something that induced fear in the recipient. A new way of being together, of relating and loving takes courage—eschewing the present order of things so that a new and better day can be born.

Advent Prayer - Holy One, we thank you for the glimpses we catch of your gift of daring love. Even in the midst of fear, of challenge, of struggle—even when we cannot yet see a better day when we will act like the human family we are, ignite the flame of love within us, that we might glow with its brilliance from the inside out. Help us face this fear of difference and dare to see what love can do.
Amen.



For those following along with our @ Home Advent Wreaths, take some time to prayerfully write the word “love” on your second purple candle and place it in the first slot of your wreath. A little piece of tape on the back will help your candle shine tall.



A TIME OF PRAYER

You are welcome to send prayer requests to Pastor Sarah. Spend a few moments connecting with God and lifting up your prayers.

The Lord's Prayer (unison)

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

Isaiah Reading—Isaiah 7:1-14 (CEB)

In the days of Ahaz (Jotham's son and grandson of Judah's King Uzziah), Aram's King Rezin and Israel's King Pekah (Remaliah's son) came up to attack Jerusalem, but they couldn't overpower it.

When the house of David was told that Aram had become allies with Ephraim, their hearts and the hearts of their people shook as the trees of a forest shake when there is a wind. But the Lord said to Isaiah, "Go out to meet Ahaz, you and your son Shear-jashub, at the end of the channel of the Upper Pool, by the road to the field where laundry is washed, and say to him, 'Be careful and stay calm. Don't fear, and don't lose heart over these two pieces of smoking torches, over the burning anger of Rezin, Aram, and Remaliah's son. Aram has planned evil against you with Ephraim and Remaliah's son, saying, "Let's march up against Judah, tear it apart, capture it for ourselves, and install Tabeel's son as its king." But the Lord God says: It won't happen; it won't take place. The chief of Aram is Damascus; the chief of Damascus is Rezin (in sixty-five more years Ephraim will be shattered as a nation); the chief of Ephraim is Samaria; and the chief of Samaria is the son of Remaliah. If you don't believe this, you can't be trusted.'"

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz: "Ask a sign from the Lord your God. Make it as deep as the grave or as high as heaven." But Ahaz said, "I won't ask; I won't test the Lord." Then Isaiah said, "Listen, house of David! Isn't it enough for you to be tiresome for people that you are also tiresome before my God? Therefore, the Lord will give you a sign. The young woman is pregnant and is about to give birth to a son, and she will name him Immanuel.

Gospel Reading—Matthew 1:1-25 (CEB)

A record of the ancestors of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham:

Abraham was the father of Isaac.

Isaac was the father of Jacob.

Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers.

Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah,

whose mother was Tamar.

Perez was the father of Hezron.

Hezron was the father of Aram.

Aram was the father of Amminadab.

Amminadab was the father of Nahshon.

Nahshon was the father of Salmon.

Salmon was the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab.

Boaz was the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth.

Obed was the father of Jesse.

Jesse was the father of David the king.

David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been the wife of Uriah.

Solomon was the father of Rehoboam.

Rehoboam was the father of Abijah.

Abijah was the father of Asaph.

Asaph was the father of Jehoshaphat.

Jehoshaphat was the father of Joram.

Joram was the father of Uzziah.

Uzziah was the father of Jotham.

Jotham was the father of Ahaz.

Ahaz was the father of Hezekiah.

Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh.

Manasseh was the father of Amos.

Amos was the father of Josiah.

Josiah was the father of Jechoniah and his brothers.

This was at the time of the exile to Babylon.

After the exile to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel.

Shealtiel was the father of Zerubbabel.

Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud.

Abiud was the father of Eliakim.

Eliakim was the father of Azor.

Azor was the father of Zadok.

Zadok was the father of Achim.

Achim was the father of Eliud.

Eliud was the father of Eleazar.

Eleazar was the father of Matthan.

Matthan was the father of Jacob.

Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary—of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Christ. So there were fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen generations from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen generations from the exile to Babylon to the Christ.

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. When Mary his mother was engaged to Joseph, before they were married, she became pregnant by the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband was a righteous man. Because he didn't want to humiliate her, he decided to call off their engagement quietly. As he was thinking

about this, an angel from the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, don’t be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because the child she carries was conceived by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you will call him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” Now all of this took place so that what the Lord had spoken through the prophet would be fulfilled:

*Look! A virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son,
And they will call him, Emmanuel.
(Emmanuel means “God with us.”)*

When Joseph woke up, he did just as an angel from God commanded and took Mary as his wife. But he didn’t have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to a son. Joseph called him Jesus.

Song 2

Love Came Down at Christmas, YouTube

A poem by Christina Rossetti that was set to an Irish tune, © Public Domain

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 all men, Love for plea and gift and sign.
--	--	---

MEDITATION

Love Incarnate

WE RESPOND TO GOD’S WORD WITH OUR GIVING

Love is an emotion that must be shared. When love is returned we experience belonging, happiness, joy. Jesus said we are to love our neighbor as God loves us. Have you loved your neighbor today? Have you loved God? May these offerings demonstrate our commitment to love others as God loves us.+

You’re invited to take out your checkbook in these moments. As you write out your offering, be prayerful with each letter and number. In times such as these, when money becomes tight and our economy is under strain, God

invites us to be generous and give what we can. These are gifts we freely give, as we are able and as we are called.

We ask that you please mail in your offerings to our office.
Zion United Church of Christ
8916 E. Troy Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46239

You can also submit your offerings on our website through a secure PayPal donation button by using your credit or debit card or a PayPal account. Please know that PayPal receives a 2.2% processing fee and a \$0.30 transaction charge. You are able to set up reoccurring, monthly payments. Check it out on our website at www.zionuccindy.net/donate.

We Give Thanks – O Holy God, the love we receive from you is beyond our comprehension. Accept these gifts of love returned to you from grateful hearts. As your love has no limits, may this offering be infinite in compassionate outreach to others. Amen.+

WE GATHER AT THE TABLE



Set Your Place at the Table—Communion was first celebrated in the homes of those in the early church. Friends and family would gather together to pray, singing songs, and break bread. We carry on that tradition today. Whatever you have on hand to celebrate communion will work just fine, because this ancient ritual is not about what we use for this meal or where we partake of it. Instead, it is about the act of remembrance. So, gather around the table, prepare your place, and remember that Christ is in our midst.

Our Invitation— The prophets foretold it: the desert burst into bloom. Angelic messengers delivered news: a priest lost his speech; a young woman found her voice. In this season of Advent, the scriptures revive old stories and bring new understandings. In the face of critics and skeptics, our faith cries out, resilient, like a baby from a manger bed. From that Bethlehem beginning, Jesus, baptized in the Jordan, spent his life serving others that all might know the compassionate attention

of a loving God. Today, Jesus serves us yet again, as we gather at this Table he prepares for us.+

The Words of Institution—We remember that on the night of betrayal and desertion, and on the eve of death, Jesus gathered the disciples for the feast of Passover. Jesus took bread, and after giving thanks to God, broke it, and gave it to the disciples, saying: “This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying: “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” Therefore we proclaim the mystery of our faith.-

Our Confession— Faithful God, we know that you are always there to guide us, yet we often make plans without listening to you and discover that our human agendas can drown out our ability to hear your will for us. We repent of these faults and turn to you in love. Forgive our offenses and pardon our sins, that our lives may magnify your holy name forever. Amen.=

Assurance of Grace—Siblings in Christ, by the faith of Christ, your sins are forgiven. Blessed be the God of our salvation, whose mercy is everlasting.=

Blessing Our Meal— Dear Jesus of Advent, you remain a sacred mystery to us. You have brought Good News for all the people and we will not be afraid, for you are here. We are hungry for your love which surpasses all our understanding; we are thirsty for your spirit that never runs dry. In this meal nourish our souls, feed our minds, quench our deepest longings and forgive our transgressions, that we may glorify you every day of our lives. Pour out your Holy Spirit upon this meal that it might in it we might taste and know the goodness of your love. Amen.+

We Share the Bread and the Cup – As you eat the bread, remember, that God’s love became incarnate, Emmanuel, God with us. This is the body of God’s incarnate love broken for you. Take and eat. As you drink the cup, remember, “This is the blood of Christ shed for you and the forgiveness of sins.” Take and drink.

We Give Thanks—Holy Creator, Bread of Life, Everlasting Salvation, a light shines in the night and the night will not overcome it. In this meal we have been replenished and strengthened, the light of your love rekindled within. We will be bold to carry this light into the world. Thank you for recharging our batteries and

reviving your ambient glow within us. You are the power source that never gives out - eternally renewable and sustainable. Thank you God! Thank you Christ! Thank you Spirit! Amen.+

CAROL OF LOVE *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*, Zion Virtual Choir
Our Carol of Love was written in 1849 by a Massachusetts Unitarian minister, Rev. Edmund Hamilton Sears. One verse has been left out of several hymnals over the decades since then but the new hymnal, *Glory to God*, restores this powerful verse that refers to the love-song of the angels being drowned out by our warring nature:

*Yet with the woes of sin and strife
the world has suffered long;
beneath the angel-strain have rolled
two thousand years of wrong;
and we at war on earth hear not
the love-song which they bring;
O hush the noise and cease the strife,
and hear the angels sing.*

Let us be reminded that we are to listen to the angel chorus and then join it, raising our voices with the message that love, not hate, is the answer.

WE ARE SENT FORTH WITH A BLESSING

We wait for justice
but we do not wait to work for change;
We wait for restored health
but we do not wait to work to heal;
We wait for wholeness
but we do not wait to work at binding brokenness;
We wait for peace
but we do not wait to work to eliminate hatred.

And so, my friends, like bells ringing out the news
that God is with us, Emmanuel.

And continue to fill the night left by sadness with messages of love.
Go into your lives humming the tunes that keep that love alive in you
and that spur you on in your work of justice and reconciliation.

Raise your voices and repeat after me...

“do not be afraid!”

“do not be afraid!”

Amen!

Postlude with Ringing of the Bell

Hark the Herald Angels Sing, Martha Main

Worship Notes: Worship series design © Worship Design Studio by Marcia McFee. Used, adapted, and live-streamed with permission. www.worshipdesignstudio.com. +UCC Worship Ways. -UCC Book of Worship =Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from Feasting on the Word ® Worship Companion. Copyright 2014.

Zion United Church of Christ, Worship @ Home, December 6, 2020, p. 8