

Order of Worship Sunday, December 18, 2022

Fourth Sunday of Advent - The Heart of Christmas Is Love

Hear Pastor's Sermon by Phone 24/7 at 814-422-6238 - Website: PennsValleyParish.info

For the transformation of the world, we make disciples.

We study God's Word and offer praise and worship, strengthening each other for outreach beyond the church walls.

CENTERING WORDS Joseph responded to the angel by welcoming Jesus into his family. When new life is offered, we must be willing to *choose* it, *receive* it and earnestly promise to *live* it.

SERVICE OF THE ACOLYTE

† CALL TO WORSHIP

L: This is the fourth Sunday of Advent, a time to rejoice in the wondrous things that God is doing.

P: Our hearts are filled with the hope that is coming into the world.

L: The time is fast approaching, not for parties or presence, but for the awareness of God's loving gift to us-- the gift of the Christ child.

P: Help slow us down, Lord, that we may realize that your gift of love is at the center of our lives and our celebrations.

L: Thanks be to God who again reminds us of God's eternal love.

P: Open our hearts, O Lord, to receive your blessed gift. AMEN.

† CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP – Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming UMH #216

† LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE – We Light the Candle of Love

L: Isaiah said that the Lord spoke to the king and said, "Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven" (Isaiah 7:11 NRSV). But when the king refused, God would not be stopped.

"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" (*Isaiah 7:14 NRSV*).

P: God wants us to know, even when we aren't sure ourselves. God wants us to experience God's presence, even when we think we can handle life on our own. God sends us signs of God's presence with us; all we need to do is keep our eyes open and look.

L: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, 'God is with us.'" When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus (*Matthew 1:23-25 NRSV*).

P: We light these candles, the candle of joyous hope, of proclaimed peace, of deep everlasting joy, and today of presence that speaks of love, as a sign that no matter our circumstance, we know we are not alone. Light the purple and pink candles on the Advent wreath.

† OPENING PRAYER

Lord of all life and all seasons, help us open our hearts to hear the words of promise and love that you send to us. Like Joseph, may we trust in your abiding love and power. Prepare us to receive your gift of grace and peace. In Jesus' Name, we pray. AMEN.

† HYMN O Little Town of Bethlehem UMH #230

BLESSING OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS – DOXOLOGY

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

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE Help Is Here The Christmas Story from the Gospels

JOYS AND CONCERNS - (The Lord's Prayer "trespass")

SELECTED SCRIPTURE Galatians 4:4-5 // Ephesians 1:3-14 // 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

MESSAGE The Heart of Christmas Is Love

† CLOSING HYMN Love Came Down at Christmas UMH #242

† COMMISSION & BLESSING

Love Reflection and Discussion Questions:

- What kind of effect should God's love have on us?
- Why do you think Paul uses the imagery of a family to communicate how God feels about you?
- What benefit of being in God's family that is listed in Ephesians 1:3-14 is most exciting and encouraging to you? Why?
- What is one practical way to share God's love with someone else this week?

PENNS VALLEY CHARGE ANNOUNCEMENTS – Calendar also on PennsValleyParish.info

December 22 – Last Advent Study session, never too late to join, 7pm via Zoom. Details on our website.

December 24 – Christmas Eve Services; 3pm at Sprucetown UMC; 6pm at St. James UMC, Coburn

December 25 – 8:30am Worship at Faith Spring Mills and a message online and by phone at 814-422-6238.

December 27 – Soup Kitchen at St. James in Coburn. Contact Paula Smith for information.

January 1 – Unified Communion service to be held at 9:45am at St. James UMC in Coburn with live streaming via Zoom and message by phone 24/7 at 814-422-6238, 8:30am Worship at Faith Spring Mills.

January 4 – St. James Trustees meet at 6:30pm, Ad Board meets at 7pm. All are welcome!

January 5 – Ladies Coffee & Conversation at St. James UMC at 9:30am. All ladies in the valley welcome!

ABOUT OUR CHURCH:

Pastor Theresa M. Heiser; theiser@susumc.org; 814-883-9510; PO Box 211, Centre Hall 16828

District Superintendent: Rev. Brenda Leigy District Website: statecollege.susumc.org

Bishops: Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi and Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball Conf. Website: susumc.org

The Penns Valley Charge is part of the Penns Valley Cluster; State College District; Susquehanna Annual Conference; Northeastern Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church

CCLI #11541746 Several elements of today's worship are from Ministry Matters, Feasting on the Word, Trevor Miller through Outreach.com, the United Methodist Book of Worship, and The Abingdon Worship Annual 2022.