



PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH
Advent 2
“I Believe in Love: Daring Right Relationship”

December 6, 2020

*Connecting with the Community,
Growing Disciples, and Serving Jesus Christ*

Our Worship can be viewed on our website
PantherValleyChurch.org

FRIENDS ~ FAMILY ~ FAITH



PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: Make yourself ready!

ALL: Raise your voices, change your hearts,

ONE: get ready to be transformed, because now is the time.

ALL: Let us embrace love that we can do what needs to be done to bring more light into the world.

LIGHTING THE CANDLE OF LOVE

Reader One: Because too many people are wandering in the wilderness, because too many people are sitting in the valley of the shadow of death, because too many of our conversations are laced with conflict and rancor, we light candles...

Reader Two: Because people all over the world are suffering, and we're too often distracted to notice, we light candles...

Reader One: Today we stop everything and light these candles: one for hope, and one for love... (Light the second candle in your Advent wreath.)

Reader Two: May the light from these candles overwhelm the world.

Reader One: May the light from these candles illuminate the valley of the shadow of death.

Reader Two: May the light and fire from these candles burn away everything that is preventing God's love from being born among us.

Reader One: Brother and sisters, be not afraid, even now — even now — God's love is overwhelming the world, on earth as it is in heaven!

OPENING 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,
**People: ... that we might glow with its brilliance
from the inside out.**
**I believe in love,
I believe in love,
even when... even when...
I don't feel it.**

Choral response.

Pastor: Help us face this fear of difference
and dare to see what love can do.

Amen.

SONG *Love Has Broken Down the Walls*

SCRIPTURE 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.

Matthew 1: (1-15) 16-25

¹⁶Jacob 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.

MESSAGE *Do You Hear What I Hear – 2nd movement - Love*

SONG *It Came Upon A Midnight Clear*

PRAYERS FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD

One: I invite you to get in a comfortable position of rest. I invite you to get as quiet and still as you can. I invite you to a deep breath and a deep listening posture—perhaps eyes closed or fixed on a candle—as we prepare for a time of prayer.

[pause for a breath]

ALL: The gentle pull of God is often lost amidst the rush of all the obligations which lay a claim on us.

Yet just beyond the frantic pace our restless feet have trod lie deep still pools of quietness— the dwelling place of God.

Meet me in the stillness, Lord Be the air I breathe Meet me in the stillness, Lord

Free me to receive

O take me to that secret place where lost in wonder and in awe, the moment comes and I rejoice to be and be with God.

Meet me in the stillness, Lord Be the air I breathe Meet me in the stillness, Lord

Free me to receive

We invite you at this time to lift up Prayers for the World.

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass 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

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**Believe, with a loving heart!
Believe, and shine your light!
Believe, because the song we sing is sung for all!**

**And now let the weak say, "I am strong;"
let the poor say, "I am rich
because of what our God has done for us."
Believe!**

BENEDICTION

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

- Credits: Today's Liturgy is adapted from: Worship Design Studio, Advent Candle liturgy and Matthew scripture is from SALT Project, *Opening Prayer*, "Singers for *Crossing the Threshold*" Haylee Coburn, Jared Pugh, Katie Ledsinger, Ryan Rose; music by Mark A. Miller; mixed by Jared Pugh, Claremont UMC. Used with permission. www.worshipdesignstudio.com, *Love Has Broken Down The Walls*, Music by Mark Miller. Used with permission. Choir: Vestry Choir First Congregational Church, Boulder, Ann Tucker, Director, Barbara Thorsen, Piano, Used with permission. *It Came Upon A Midnight Clear*, ©2020 Chuck Bell, All Rights Reserved. Used with Permission. *I Believe* Handbell Benediction, Mark A. Miller/ arr. Stephanie Rhoades, used by permission. Played by the PVEC Handbell Choir.

Hanging of the Greens Open House

Today! Sunday December 6, 10:30am – 12:30pm

As you start to prepare for this Christmas Season take a journey to know, understand and enjoy the meanings of the Christmas symbols! You are welcome to arrive at any time. Invite a friend! (We suggest allowing 20 – 30 minutes.)

PVEC Annual Congregational Meeting

HAS BEEN MOVED TO: Sunday January 10, 11:30am

Via Zoom Meeting ID: 827 5185 6086 Passcode: 1490

Blue Christmas Open House

Friday December 18, 6:00pm – 8:00pm

People have undergone unprecedented loss this year. Family and friends have succumbed to death in this pandemic, millions have lost economic security through loss of jobs, some have lost businesses they built over a lifetime. Most of us have lost our beloved rhythms of life that felt familiar and gave our lives the richness of gatherings and adventure.

Throughout Advent we proclaim hope, love, joy, and peace. This is the church's gift to the world—that our faith story is grounded in the presence of God that came and dwelt among us, during hardship. But on this night we gather to acknowledge and remember what we have lost. It is important to name that sometimes hope, love, joy, and peace are distant feelings when we have encountered so much loss.

Come when you can and stay as long as you wish.

PANTHER VALLEY ECUMENICAL CHURCH

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