

Knox Service Outline - Advent 4

12/21/25

Interim Moderator: The Rev. Daniel Martinez

Pastor: James Prette

Music: Connie Dunwoody

Elder: Anne Krauss

Reader: Harold McNabb

Prelude

Welcome/Announcements/Land Acknowledgement (Unison) Elder

As followers of Jesus, we are compelled to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God. It is our love of God and neighbour that leads us to acknowledge that we gather with gratitude on the traditional and unceded Coast Salish Territory of Lkwungen people. We pray that past and present injustices can be reconciled as we commit ourselves again to just and respectful relationships.

Gathering Song: (Advent Song): 119 Hope is a star

(Verse 4)

Lighting the Advent Candle: Love (Responsive)

Pastor

An angel of the Lord declared, "God is with us" - this is the greatest gift of love.

Yet even at Christmas, love is often measured by gifts and material things.

But God's love can come through people: a king named David, a prophet named Nathan, and Mary and Joseph. In a baby, God's love was made real among us.

Can we believe that God's love is revealed through people? On this fourth Sunday of Advent, we light the candle of love, a light for our world.

(The candle of love is lit.)

Let us pray together:

Living God, thank you for your deep and abiding love. May we see ourselves and others through your eyes, as we follow your way of love. Come, Lord Jesus.

First Hymn : 133 Go, tell it on the mountain

Gathering Prayer

Pastor

The light shines in the darkness,

We come to worship, seeking the love born among us in Christ Jesus.

Shine into our lives and your world this Advent.

Renew our trust in your undying love.

Emmanuel, God with us, we praise you for your presence throughout the amazing universe you have made. The shining stars sing your praise, which echoes in the depths of space. The smallest snowflake and a baby's tiny fingers reflect your intricate love for the details of every life. In Jesus Christ, you were born among us, one of a kind, yet one with a kind, to show us how your great love is lived out day by day. Inspire us with your loving Spirit as we move through Advent toward Christmas Day, so that our celebrations of love made flesh in Jesus will share the presence of your love with those who need it most. So may we live the praise we offer to you, Emmanuel, God with us, now and evermore.

Second Hymn: 159 O Come, all ye Faithful

Prayer for Understanding (Unison)

Reader

God of life and love, we turn to your Word to hear your will and your wisdom for our times. Open our hearts and minds by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit so that we might hear what you are saying to the church through Christ, your Love Incarnate.

Old Testament Reading : Isaiah 7:10-16

Reader

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, "Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." Then Isaiah said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? 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. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

New Testament Reading : Romans 1:1-7

Reader

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the gentiles for the sake of his name, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Scripture Response

Reader

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Sermon: LOVE

Pastor

Third Hymn: 164 O little town of Bethlehem

Offering and Prayer

Pastor

This Sunday we celebrate the Advent of Love, embracing us in Jesus Christ. Think of your gifts as seeds of that love which we can plant in the world God loves for Christ's sake.

Offering Song: 306 - Praise God from whom all blessings flow

Prayer of Dedication

Pastor

God, our Love and our Life, receive our gifts as seeds of gratitude for your gift to us in Christ Jesus. Bless these seeds with growth so that love will embrace people who feel lost and alone in this season, and places fearing they will be overlooked amid so much need. Be their love and their life, through Christ our Lord.

Prayer of Confession (Unison)

Pastor

Lord of love, We confess we sometimes find your love daunting. You called Joseph to honour his love for Mary, even when custom called him to break his engagement. We confess custom has a hold on us, too, and challenging expectations for love's sake makes us nervous. You call us to love our neighbour, but we resist your call if our neighbour does not please us. You call us to love our enemies, too, but that seems impossible in these contentious times. Forgive us for loving only in the safest situations. Dare us to love as Jesus loved, so he will be born joyfully in us.

Assurance of Pardon

Pastor

Receive the Good News in love. With great mercy, God forgives what we have confessed and offers us new life in Christ. Know that God's steadfast love is yours this day, and share that love with friend and enemy alike, so that the power of such love can change the world.

Pastoral Prayers (Responsive)

Pastor

Come, Christ Jesus, be a guest in our hearts and our homes this Christmas. Enter our lives today with your blessing. We are grateful for the wonder you bring into a world so full of anger and criticism. Draw near to us in friendship and faithfulness, so that in this season of celebration, we may know your presence and believe you love us.

God of all love

Hear our prayer

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Come, Christ Jesus, be our guide through the darkening days and the chill of winter. Show us the way to wisdom and gratitude. We are thankful for the kindness we know in friends and good neighbours, in warm houses and warm smiles. Encourage us to reach out to those who need your embrace and ours, so that together we may know your presence and believe you love us.

God of all love

Hear our prayer

Come, Christ Jesus, be our hope in the uncertain times in which we find ourselves. Touch us with your healing and grace. We remember before you those we know and those known to you alone who are living with loss or illness this season, those who face depression or discouragement, and any who will find it hard to be merry this year.

(Keep silence)

Shine the light of your courage and comfort into their lives So that together we may know your presence and believe you love us.

God of all love

Hear our prayer

Come, Christ Jesus, be our king and claim your rightful place in our hearts. Our world is struggling and yearning for the justice and mercy you bring. Draw near to all leaders and all citizens working for peace and justice. Encourage honourable action and co-operation on all sides. Give hope to people under oppression and those who live with fear or hunger day by day. Hasten the day when the world's peoples will live as neighbours, reconciled in your truth and freedom so that we may know your presence and believe you love us.

God of all love

Hear our prayer

With voices united in love and loyalty, we offer the prayer you taught us:

The Lord's Prayer (Unison)

Pastor

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, for ever. Amen

Fourth Hymn: 149 Away in a manger

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Blessing

Pastor

Go in love this day, to greet friend or enemy, neighbour or stranger with the warmth and wonder of Christ Jesus in your smile, and may the all-forgiving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the all-inspiring love of God, and the all-embracing communion of the Holy Spirit be yours this day and in each day to come, now and evermore. Amen.

Dispersal Song: PCU 314 Longing for Light

Verse 4

Postlude