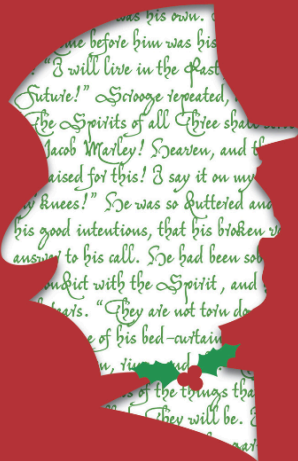




LA JOLLA
UNITED METHODIST

The Greatest Gift



The Redemption of Scrooge

Sunday, December 15, 2024

Third Sunday of Advent

www.lajollaunitedmethodist.org

WE GATHER IN THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST

Gathering Music

Carol Sing

Call to Worship

One: Children of God, our world is full of the fruit of humanity's greed, apathy, and neglect for the love of God, neighbor, self, and all creation.

All: What, then, should we do?

One: Our world is also full of the fruit of God's love that wells up all around us, sustaining us, saving us, reviving us to live as the people of God.

All: What, then, should we do?

One: God encircles us on every side, Love divine present with us in creation, in community, and in the anticipated arrival of the infant Emmanuel. What then, children of God, should you do?

All: We will live in joyful presence with God and neighbor, turning away from sin and toward a life with God and one another marked by joy, justice, and mercy. Amen.

Congregational Introit

Emmanuel, Emmanuel

UMH 204

Emmanuel, Emmanuel, his name is called Emmanuel.

God with us, revealed in us, his name is called Emmanuel.

Welcome

† Opening Hymn

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (v1-4)

UMH 211

1. O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.
2. O come, thou Wisdom from on high, and order all things far and nigh;
to us the path of knowledge show and cause us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.
3. O come, O come, great Lord of might, who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times once gave the law in cloud and majesty and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.
4. O come, thou Root of Jesse's tree, an ensign of thy people be;
before thee rules silent fall; all peoples on thy mercy call.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Lighting the Advent Candle of Joy – Joyce & Michael Theilacker

Prayers of the People

*A Pastor will begin a time of prayer and name those for whom our congregation is praying.
Online Worshipers may type prayer requests in the Live Chat, taking care for privacy.*

Pastoral Prayer

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 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 Response

How Great Our Joy

Arr. Donald Moore

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WE HEAR OF THE LOVE OF CHRIST

Scripture

Luke 2:8-20 (CEB)

Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. The Lord's angel stood before them, the Lord's glory shone around them, and they were terrified.

The angel said, "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said,

"Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors."

When the angels returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go right now to Bethlehem and see what's happened. Let's confirm what the Lord has revealed to us." They went quickly and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. When they saw this, they reported what they had been told about this child. Everyone who heard it was amazed at what the shepherds told them. Mary committed these things to memory and considered them carefully. The shepherds returned home, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. Everything happened just as they had been told.

Scriptural Response

One: The Word of God for the People of God.

All: Thanks be to God! Amen

Anthem

I Too Shall Walk to Bethlehem

John Rutter

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Message

The Greatest Gift

Rev. Bob Rhodes

WE RESPOND TO THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST

Response to the Word

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory

When Mary Sang Her Lullaby

Sally DeFord

Joyce Theilacker, Solo

©1999 Sally DeFord

† **Doxology**

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

UMH 94

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise God, all creatures here below;
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Praise God, the source of all our gifts!
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Prayer of Confession

All: Source of joy, you are the author of everlasting life. Touch us with the wonder of that holy night as we prepare once again for your Son's arrival in the world. For we yearn to leave the shadows behind and to walk in darkness no more. We long to behold your light shining in our lives, as it shined in the stars above on the night love came down at Christmas. Guide our steps in this season of preparation, and make us instruments of your justice and peace, that the gift of your salvation may reside in every corner of the globe. We ask this in the name of our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Amen.

One: Like the people of old, we, who walked in darkness, have seen a great light. We, who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on us light has shined. Live in this light and you will live indeed. In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

All: In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God! Amen.

WE FOLLOW CHRIST INTO THE WORLD

† **Closing Hymn**

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

UMH 213

1. Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates; behold the King of glory waits;
the King of kings is drawing near; the Savior of the world is here!
2. Fling wide the portals of your heart; make it a temple, set apart
from earthly use for heaven's employ, adorned with prayer and love and joy.
3. Redeemer, come, with us abide; our hearts to thee we open wide;
let us thy inner presence feel; thy grace and love in us reveal.
4. Thy Holy Spirit lead us on until our glorious goal is won;
eternal praise, eternal fame be offered, Savior, to thy name!

† **Benediction**

Postlude

Deck the Hall

Phillip Keveren
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Liturgical elements from *Discipleship Ministries (UMC)* and *The Abingdon Worship Annual*.

Flowers: flowers are in honor of Chee & Grace Chow's 52nd Anniversary!
Liturgists: Lon Showley
Organist: Robert Wuertz
Pianist: Rebecca Cosford
Ushers: Dave Grundies, Don Lincoln, Dan Martin, Peter McCreight, Lon Showley
Tech Team: AJ Prat, Cam Rhodes

LJUMC Ministry Team

Rev. Bob Rhodes, Lead Pastor; Bob Wuertz, Music Ministries Director;
Theresa Erb, Office Manager; Emilio Valente, Information Technology Director;
Erin Wyer, NS Executive Director