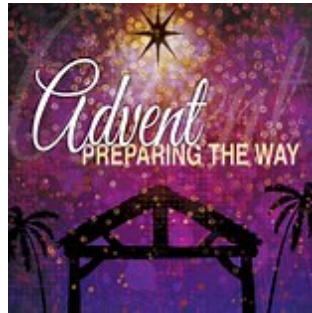




[Link to zoom worship at 9:00 on Sunday](#)

[Click Here For Onsite Bulletin](#)



December 24, 2023 + Fourth Sunday of Advent + LOVE

Welcome

The faith narrative is careful to show us a lineage from King David to Jesus. It is no ordinary lineage; it is one that began in the shepherding of sheep, of leading and delivering the people in search of a home. Mary becomes part of that lineage of love, offering the world the gift of God's presence in the flesh. As we enter the story of the birth of Love Among Us, we are invited to be present with love. We may think the perfect gift is outside our reach to give, but in reality we have all that we need... the heart's love and presence.

Prelude: Alex Seman

Call to Worship

Stop. Listen. Pay attention. Love is coming near.

We wait in the love of the coming Messiah.

The Hope Bringer, Peace Maker, Joy Sustainer grows and prepares to be born among us.

We wait in the love of the coming Messiah.

With Mary, we long for the coming of the Child who will transform the world, bringing justice where injustice reigns, fullness where hunger persists,

and favor to the ones the world calls lowly.

We wait in the love of the coming Messiah.

So let us join our voices and our lives in magnifying God, our Savior!

**We come to wait and to declare the coming
of the Love that is Jesus Christ, our Lord! Amen.**

Opening Prayer

O God, you so loved the world that you gave your only begotten son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Make ready our hearts for the brightness of your glory and the fullness of your blessing in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Advent Candle Lighting

Reader:

When God's people were surrounded by hardship, suffering, and grief, Isaiah proclaimed, "The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion; to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit."

Reader:

We come today as people who are also surrounded by suffering and grief. And yet, the Spirit hovers among us, tending and anointing, inspiring freedom where there is captivity, declaring blessing in places the world has cursed, and igniting joy where mourning and heartache prevail.

Congregation:

**We wait as people who experience hardship and pain,
yet we are called to witness to the persistent joy
that sustains our life as God's people.**

Reader:

We light these candles as signs of our hope, peace, and joy. May our lives shine with the tenacious joy of the Light who lives in our hearts as we wait and work for the coming of God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. **Amen.**

Congregation:

**We light this candle of Love as a sign that we will be present with
Love in the world.**

Prayer of Presence:

**Holy Living Light of God,
you are our Loving Presence.**

**Let this love grow in our lives each day,
so we can be a present of Love to others.**

Open our hearts.

May it be so.

Amen.

Song of Faith: Hovey Corbin

Affirmation of Faith UMH 889

Leader:

There is one God
and there is one mediator, Christ Jesus,
who came as a ransom for all,
to whom we testify.

All:

**This saying is sure
and worthy of full acceptance:
That Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners,
and was manifested in the flesh,
vindicated in the spirit,
seen by angels,
proclaimed among the nations,
believed in throughout the world,
taken up in glory.
Great indeed is the mystery of the gospel. Amen.**

Scripture: Luke 1:26-38

Message: Love

Rev. Blaine Wimberly

Song of Faith: Hovey Corbin

Generosity Moment: Mountainside Missions Video

Offertory Prayer:

Gracious and generous God: We offer our gifts to you, knowing that the energy exerted in our giving is tiny compared to what we've expended finding the gifts for our families and friends. You have given us a glimpse of the gift you truly seek in the angel's conversation with Mary: when told that she would give birth to our savior, she simply said, "Yes, let it be according to your word." May that affirmation of faith and obedience be the gift we offer this day. In Christ, we pray. **Amen.**

Musical Response

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and with your captive children dwell.
Give comfort to all exiles here,
and to the aching heart bid cheer.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come within as Love to dwell.

Announcements

Joys and Concerns

Prayer Song: *Believe with a Loving Heart*

Prayers of the People
Lord's Prayer

Song of Faith: Hovey Corbin

Benediction

Fellowship Time

Mountainside United Methodist Church

Mission: To make disciples of Jesus Christ
 for the transformation of our community and the world.

Vision: To be a thriving Christ-led people in the East Mountains,
 inviting all generations to a transforming experience of God's Grace.

WORSHIP + CONNECT + GROW + SERVE

Announcements and Calendar

We are glad you are online with us today!
*Please register your attendance and your joys and concerns in the
 chat box.*

Church Events

Today:

6:00 pm Candlelight Christmas Eve service in the sanctuary

Monday, December 25

9:30 Christmas Day service in the sanctuary

Wednesday, December 27

1:30 Line Dancing in the gym with Linda

Thursday, December 28

3:00 Teatime Online

Sunday, December 31

9:00 Sunday Morning Live

9:00 The Breakfast Club adult Sunday School

10:30 Worship in the Sanctuary

11:45 Choir practice in the Round Room

New Year's at Noon in the MAC

11:00pm Watch Night service on Zoom

Community Events

Acton Academy

on break

Twelve Step Groups

AA meets in the Fellowship Hall M, W, F noon; and T, Th 4:30 pm;
men's group on Wednesdays at 7:00 pm

Al-Anon meets in the Fellowship Hall Friday 10:00 am

Fitness

Dance Aerobics in the gym Wednesday 9:00 am

Dance Fitness in the gym Friday 9:00 am

Upward

Evaluation, Registration, and Training ongoing
practice sessions have Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays
games begin in January



Check us out on our website address:
www.mountainsidemethodist.org

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