**December 24, 2023**

**Fourth Week of Advent – LOVE**

A drawing of a wreath of candles

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**Crescentville United Methodist Church**

**A Changing Church for Changing Times**

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***Crescentville United Methodist Church***

**4th Sunday of Advent *LOVE* - Christmas Eve Morning December 24, 2023**

**Welcome & Prayer**

**Announcements**

*Please stand*

**Chorus of Welcome** *“The Family of God”*

I’m so glad I’m a part of the family of God—I’ve been washed in the fountain, cleansed by His blood!

Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod; for I’m part of the family, the family of God.

**Call to Worship** *Luke 1:46b-55*

L: "My soul magnifies the Lord,

**R: and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,**

L: for He has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

**R: Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;**

L: for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is His name.

**R: His mercy is for those who fear Him from generation to generation.**

L: He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

**R: He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly;**

**He has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.**

L: He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,

**R: according to the promise He made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."**

**Worship Song** **Joy to the World**

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King!

Let every heart prepare Him room, and heav'n and nature sing,

and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let men their songs employ,

while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,

repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,nor thorns infest the ground;

He comes to make His blessings flowfar as the curse is found,

far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove

the glories of His righteousness and wonders of His love,

and wonders of His love, and wonders, wonders of His love.

Please be seated

**Advent Candle Lighting** (based onLuke 1:34, 46-49)

**Reader 1:** When the angel Gabriel visited Mary, announcing God’s plan for her to conceive and give birth to the Messiah, “Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I am a virgin?’” (Luke 1:34) And yet, only a few months later, Mary sings to Elizabeth,

My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name (Luke 1:46-49).

**Reader 2:** We, like Mary, hear God’s call to be part of making God’s dream for our salvation and flourishing a reality, and we question, “How can this be? I am only…” Yet, like Mary, the “onlys” that make us hesitate are gifts God can and will use as God’s love transforms us into bearers of good news.

**Congregation:** We wait as people who have encountered divine Love that disrupts the status quo and ushers us into abundant life marked by mutual love and peace that flows from the flourishing of all people.

**Reader 1:** We light these candles as signs of our shocking hope, our just peace, our fierce joy, and the love that transforms us. May Love grow within us, transforming us into bold witnesses of God’s salvation with our voices and our lives. Amen.

*Light the four outer candles of the Advent wreath.*

**Choral Response**

**Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts Shine through the darkness**

**Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today**

**Opening Prayer**

**Jesus thank you for lowering yourself to be with us. Lord, you are a God who chooses the poor, the hungry, and the lowly. Lord, you are a God who chooses us when we are at our weakest. Thank you Jesus for living WITH us. Thank you Jesus for making yourself so despised, and so poor, and so relatable, that no matter what our circumstance, we feel you next to us. You’re not too proud to walk with us in the highs and the lows. Thank you Emmanuel for being, “God With Us”. Jesus, may we feel you with us today and every day. Jesus, may we see your light shine in our life and may we shine your light of hope, peace, joy, and love wherever we go. Thank you Jesus for loving us so much that you couldn’t help but come down and be with us. Thank you Jesus. Amen.**

*Please be seated*

**Children’s Message**

**Joys & Concern…..*Gathered Prayer***

*Please stand*

***Singing of the Lord’s Prayer -*** *Our Father, which 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, forever. Amen*

*Please be seated*

**Gifts and Offerings**

**The Offertory Solo “O Holy Night” Edwina Paye**

*Please stand*

**The Doxology** *“Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow”* [TUNE: VENI EMMANUEL]

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

praise God above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

**The Offertory Prayer**

**Hymn**  “Away In A Manger” [vs 1,2,3] # 217

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.

The stars in the sky looked down where He lay, the little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes;

I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay close by me forever, and love me, I pray;

bless all the dear children in Thy tender care, and take us to heaven to live with Thee there.

And take us to heaven to live with Thee there.

*Please be seated*

**Gospel Reading** Luke 2:1-20 NASB

Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all *the people* were on their way to register for the census, each to his own city. Now Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, in order to register along with Mary, who was betrothed to him, and was pregnant. While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in strips of cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

In the same region there were *some* shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock at night. And an angel of the Lord *suddenly* stood near them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. And *so* the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people;for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this *will be* a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army *of angels* praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest,  
And on earth peace among people with whom He is pleased.”

When the angels had departed from them into heaven, the shepherds *began* saying to one another, “Let’s go straight to Bethlehem, then, and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” And they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger. When they had seen *Him*, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. And all who heard it were amazed about the things which were told them by the shepherds.But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.

**Sermon** *"God in Tattered Cloths"*

*Please stand*

**Affirmation of Faith** *The Apostles’ Creed*

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth;

And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord:

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,

suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried;

the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven,

and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;

from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead;

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church,

the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

**Hymn**  “Love Came Down At Christmas” [vs 1,2,3] # 242

Love came down at Christmas, Love all lovely, Love divine;

Love was born at Christmas, Star and angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead, Love incarnate, Love divine;

Worship we our Jesus: But wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token, Love be yours and love be mine,

Love to God and neighbor, Love for plea and gift and sign.

**Benediction**

**Choral Benediction “**Sing We Now of Christmas” [verse 1] # 237

Sing we now of Christmas, Noel, sing we here! Hear our grateful praises to the babe so dear.

Sing we Noel, the King is born, Noel! Sing we now of Christmas, sing we now Noel!

A group of presents and ornaments

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**Joys & Concerns: Keep those prayers going and thank God for His answers! To add a prayer request or share a joy, *please call the church and leave a message. (215) 745-7115.***

Does God need us to pray to work in other people’s lives? Of course not. But God wants us to pray. Prayer brings us closer to God, it strengthens our relationship with Him.

**Prayer Requests from December 17th**

Prayers for Mallory as she is at a swim meet.

JOY - Today is the birthday of Adelle's Mom.

JOY - to have Jim Creevey with us today.

Prayers for Sue's shoulder surgery on Tuesday.

Prayers for Jahcuries' friend Ryan who broke his leg.

Prayers for Kathleen Kling - recovering from a stroke.

Carol Evans is still in the hospital and hopes to go home on Monday.

JOY - This is Pastor Brendan's first Christmas with us.

JOY for Marina's granddaughters, Marina passed exam, Mariah did well with cheerleading, and Malloy's team is in the championship.

Prayers for peace in Sierra Leone and the world

Claudia Johnson's son got engaged. Traveling mercies as they visit Claudia for Christmas.

Traveling mercies for Kass's son, David and his wife Felicia are traveling to Barbados to chaperone a group of young people.

Prayers for Meghan Riley. She fell and broke bones, including some in her neck. Prayers for recovery and strength.

JOY - Zoramya (Pastor's Daughter) will be 3 years old on the 23rd.

**Continuing Prayers:**

Pastor Brendan Van Gorder & family The Stefanescu & Mc Manus Families

Zilpha and James Browne Dorothy Buzzard Eva Baumgartel

Scott Meyer Cass Quigley Betty Sauerwald & family

Martha & Wondor Korto The Spotts Family Marva Jiselle & Family

Prayers for the Ukraine and Russia - for world peace. Prayers for our city and an end to violence. Prayers for peace and stability in Sierra Leone. Please praise and pray for our youth – they are the future of our church!

**Lectionary Scripture Readings** A stick figure holding a book

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Christmas is a season of spiritual reflection on the foundations of the Christian faith. It’s also a celebration of the arrival of Jesus. Christmas is a time for Christians to praise God’s love for the world through the birth of the Christ child: Jesus. The Bible tells of His birth hundreds of years before, fulfilling prophecies from the Old Testament.

**December 31, 2023 – 1st Sunday after Christmas Day**

Luke 2:22-40 – Isaiah 61:10-62:3 – Psalm 148 – Galatians 4:4-7



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| Sunday, December 24th PM | **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 7:00 PM** |
| Sunday< December 31st | **10:30 Worship including Christmas Carol Singing** |

