



DOUGLAS UCC
A JUST WORLD FOR ALL

Order of Service for Sunday, December 24, 2023

4th Sunday of Advent: Love

Thank you for joining us today.

For Announcements, Birthdays, Anniversaries, and Prayer List, [visit this week's E-Pistle here](#), where you can also subscribe to receive it by email, if you like.

***- stand if you wish to, and are able.**

Congregational Responses in Bold

Prelude *Mary Did You Know*

Peter Black

(arr. by Craig Curry)

(Please use this time for quiet reflection and preparation for worship)

Welcome & Announcements

Lighting of Altar Candles & Ringing in the Hour

Let us recognize the light of the world within us and ring in the hour of worship.

Introit (please stand) *Lighting of Advent Candle*

A candle is burning, a candle of Love;

a candle to point us to heaven above.

A baby for Christmas, a wonderful birth;

For Jesus is bringing God's Love to our earth.

Call to Worship

Reader: Eric Lejeune

One: Mary said, "My soul magnifies God and my spirit rejoices in God,

Many: For God has looked with favor on me.

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

Many: For God has done great things for me and holy is God's name.

One: God has lifted up the lowly;

Many: God has filled the hungry with good things.

One: My soul magnifies God and my spirit rejoices in God,

Many: For God has looked with favor on me. Holy is God's name."

Opening Hymn *I Am For You*

(Green Gather Hymnal No.704)

See music at the end of this document

Unison Prayer

Source of all light and love, today, on this fourth and final Sunday of Advent, we light a candle for love. Thank you, God, for the flame of love. As we anticipate the Light of the World, help us to share your love with others. We light these candles as reminders of the everlasting love of the Christmas story. We pray in the name of the one who is the good news of great love for all people. Amen.

Assurance of Grace and Peace

One: Peace be with you.

Many: ***And also with you.***

One: Let us offer one another a sign of Peace.

Passing the Peace

Lord, Listen to Your Children

***Lord, listen to your children praying,
Lord send your spirit in this place.
Lord, listen to your children praying,
send us love, send us pow'r, send us grace.***

(repeat after verse)

Words of Integration & Guidance

Rev. Dawn Hutchings

The popular image of Mary paints her as the ideal woman that none of us could ever live up to, that of both virgin and mother, meek and mild, obedient and perfect. She is impossible as a role model and totally unreal. But Mary's prayer, the Magnificat, reveals her to be very real and quite revolutionary. The Magnificat is a song Mary sings, but the radical nature of this song has been lost as successive generations have prettied it up as best they can. The Magnificat is a song of revolution which proclaims the downfall of the prevailing order. The Magnificat is a rallying cry to overturn the established order, a tune intended to rouse the troops. The church has told the story of Mary in its own particular way for centuries, holding up the image of the perfect woman, both virgin and mother. That image may have suited the purposes of an institution that had a vested interest in having women behave in a certain way, but the time has come to tell Mary's story differently. For in a world where over half the population is still oppressed, isn't it time to hear the story of God told in ways that liberate and empower? Isn't it time to hear Mary's story told in ways that proclaim God's plan for justice? We can re-inscribe the image of Mary as the passive handmaiden of the Lord, or we can tell the story of Mary who with steely grit and courage struggles to raise her son as a child of God. The choice of how we read and tell Mary's story will affect how we read the whole Christian story. We, like Mary, are part of God's plan to bring down the powerful from their thrones and to lift up the lowly. Mary had the courage to say yes, to trust God. Mary had the courage to let something grow inside her. Do we have the courage to harbor Christ in our bodies? Do we have the courage to be bearers of God to the world? This story challenges us to be at God's disposal, to become filled with God's life for the sake of the world. When God sends a messenger to you, will you have the courage, like Mary, to say "Here I am, Lord. Let it be done to me according to your will"?

Birthing a Promise

The Words of Holy Scripture

One: A Reading of Scripture from Psalm 89:1-4

One: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

Many: Thanks be to God.

The Gospel Lesson

One: The Holy Gospel according to Luke 1:26-38

Many: Glory to you, O Christ.

One: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

Many: Praise to you, O Christ.

Homily

"Who Was Mary?"

Rev. Salvatore Sapienza

Offering

& Offertory Song

The Work of Christmas

Members of the Lakeshore Community Chorus

Composer: Dan Forrest

Joys & Concerns/Tibetan Prayer Bell

One: Thanks be to God!

Many: *Alleluia!*

One: O God,

Many: *Hear our prayer.*

***Doxology**

Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Praise God all creatures here below.

Praise God for all that love has done.

Creator Christ and Spirit One.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel, O come to us Emmanuel.

***Celebration of Holy Communion**

One: God be with you.

Many: *And also with you.*

One: Lift up your hearts.

Many: *We lift them up to God.*

One: Let us give thanks to God.

Many: *It is good to give God thanks & praise*

***Creation's Praise** *Sanctus for Advent*

*Holy, Holy, God Almighty.
Heav'n and earth your praises sing!
Shout Hosannas to the Savior.
Blessing, honor to the king!
In the name of the Lord, the bearer of light,
triumphs o'er the dark of night,
evermore and ever more!*

(Please be seated)

Breaking of the Bread *This is the Body of Christ*

*This is the body of Christ.
Broken that we may be whole;
this cup as promised by God,
true to the Word, cradles our Lord.
Food for the good of the soul.*

Sharing of the Bread & Cup

(grape juice only on both sides of the aisle)

Receive the Bread of Life. *Amen.*

The Cup of Love, the Drink of Compassion. *Amen.*

***The Lord's Prayer**

Our Mother/Father, always and everywhere, 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. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

***Hymn of Sending**

Peace Look East

(Green Gather Hymnal No.318)

(Find Music at the end of this program)

***Benediction**

Postlude

For Unto Us a Child is Born (from Handel's Messiah)

Peter Black

Keep up with the Douglas UCC community
and the work of our service groups here:

www.douglasucc.org

<https://www.youtube.com/douglasucc>

<https://www.facebook.com/douglasucc>

<https://www.instagram.com/douglasucc>

704 I Am for You



1. There is a moun - tain there is a sea.
2. There was a wom - an small as a star,
3. There was a man who walked in the storm,
4. We are a - noint - ed, ser - vants of God;
5. There is a world that waits in the womb;



There is a wind with - in all breath - ing,
 Full of the pa - tient dreams of her na - tion,
 Caught in be - tween the waves and the light - ning,
 We have been born a - gain of Spir - it.
 There is a hope un - born God is bear - ing,



There is an arm to break ev - 'ry chain,
 Wel - com - ing in an an - gel of God,
 Shar - ing his bread with those cast a - side,
 We are the word God speaks to the world,
 Though the powers of death prowl the night,



There is a fire in all things
 Wel - com - ing in God's bold in - vi -
 Heal - ing by touch the lost and the
 Free - dom and light to all who will
 There is a day our God is pre -



liv - ing. There is a voice that speaks from the
 ta - tion. "Let it be done," she sang, "un - to
 dy - ing. Send - ing us forth, he says to his
 hear it. So let us be the word of the
 par - ing. Sing 'round the fire to wa - ken the

People, Look East 318



1. Peo - ple, look East. The time is near
 2. Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare.
 3. Birds, though you long have ceased to build,
 4. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim
 5. An - gels an - nounce with shouts of mirth



Of the crown - ing of the year.
 One more seed is plant - ed there:
 Guard the nest that must be filled.
 One more light the bowl shall brim,
 Him who brings new life to earth.



Make your house fair as you are a - ble,
 Give up your strength the seed to nour - ish,
 E - ven the hour when wings are fro - zen
 Shin - ing be - yond the frost - y weath - er,
 Set ev - 'ry peak and val - ley hum - ming



Trim the hearth and set the ta - ble.
 That in course the flow'r may flour - ish.
 He for fledg - ing time has cho - sen.
 Bright as sun and moon to - geth - er.
 With the word, the Lord is com - ing.



Peo - ple look East and sing to - day:



Love the Guest is on the way.
 Love the Rose is on the way.
 Love the Bird is on the way.
 Love the Star is on the way.
 Love the Lord is on the way.