

December 14- Written Service

Special Music: Choir with Julia Person, soprano

Advent Candle Readers: Mark and Jenny Pennings family

Advent Candle Soloist: Aubrey Pennings

Prelude

Welcome

Call to Worship

Leader: Beloved, let us love one another for love is from God.

All: For everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

Leader: God showed His love among us in this way: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him.

All: God is love. And if God so loved us, we also should love each other.

Leader: Let us worship God and on this third week of Advent, anticipate the coming of His Holy birth.

Choral Call to Worship: "A Call to Christmas," sung by the choir

Song: #278- Angels We Have Heard on High (vs. 1,3,4) (remain seated)

Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains
And the mountains in reply,
Echo back their joyous strains.

Glo----ria in excelsis Deo,
Glo----ria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.

Glo-----ria, in excelsis Deo,
Glo-----ria, in excelsis Deo.

See within a manger laid
Jesus, Lord of heaven and earth!
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,
With us sing our Savior's birth.

Glo-----ria, in excelsis Deo,
Glo-----ria, in excelsis Deo.

Prayer

Special Music: "O Come and Sing of Christmas," sung by the choir

Song: #272- While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks (vs. 1,2,3,5)

While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around,
And glory shone around.

"Fear not," said he, for mighty dread
Had seized their troubled mind,
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring
To you and all mankind,
To you and all mankind.

"To you, in David's town this day
Is born, of David's line,
The Savior who is Christ the Lord;
And this shall be the sign,
And this shall be the sign.

"All glory be to God on high
And to the earth be peace.
Goodwill hence-forth from heaven to men
Begin and never cease,
Begin and never cease.

Announcements

Advent Candle Reading by the Mark and Jenny Pennings family
Advent candle soloist: Aubrey Pennings

Congregational Prayer

Song: # 256- Love Has Come! (vs. 1,3)

Love has come--
A light in the darkness!
Love explodes
In the Bethlehem skies.

See, all heaven
Has come to proclaim it;
Hear how their song
Of joy arises:

Love! Love!
Born unto you,
A Savior!

Love! Love!
Glory to God on high.

Love has come--
He never will leave us!
Love is life everlasting and free.

Love is Jesus within
and among us;
Love is the peace
Our hearts are seeking.

Love! Love!
Love is the gift of Christmas!
Love! Love!
Praise to You, God on high!

Offering/Offertory

Offering Song: Glorify Thy Name

Offering Prayer

Children's Message

Scripture: I John 4: 7-12

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

Message

Intro- Spoiler alert: He dies

We cannot tell this story without keeping in mind what's going to happen

Without remembering the reason behind it all

Love, Sacrifice

Red-love and sacrifice

Scripture-1 John 4:7-12

Intersection of love and sacrifice

Christmas is about love

That feels familiar

Love from God

Gathering together with our loved friends and family

Love warming our hearts in the middle of the cold midwinter

It can be easy to connect Christmas with love

But according to our Scripture passage love necessarily manifests itself in sacrifice

Scripture ties those two together

Because this is about love

"This is how God showed His love among us, He sent" Jesus

And love is over and over again in Scripture (not just in this passage) about sacrifice

Giving oneself up for the sake of someone you love

Because Christmas is about love it is necessarily about sacrifice

Jesus doesn't stay in that manger forever

The manger was not His destiny, at least not His ultimate destiny

He didn't come here just to be born

He came to be a perfect, pure, spotless, once and for all, one man for all humanity
sacrifice

Why?

And why did God's love prompt sending His Son? What is this sacrifice for?

Sometimes around Christmas we fall into the pattern of sacrificing for wants

I'll just go a little further with the credit card this month for a few more presents

We work a few more hours to earn a little more for an especially expensive time
of year

And there's nothing wrong with wanting to do something nice for someone we
care about

But this is not that

The loving sacrifice we're talking about at Christmas wasn't about fulfilling
anyone's wants

This is about a cosmic, eternal necessity
We were by our very nature separated from a loving God
Unable to fix the situation and bridge the gap (because we aren't the newfallen snow)
We absolutely NEEDED God to do this
The only solution was for Him to send His son, to be a loving sacrifice on our behalf

The sacrifice of Christmas isn't Black Friday or Cyber Monday, it's Giving Tuesday

It's helping other people with needs
Feeding the hungry
Providing shelter for those out in the cold
Clothing for all those poor teenagers walking around in shorts in the middle of December
For us, Christmas is a time to remember God's sacrificial love and to look for ways that we, too, can give of ourselves to help those in need

Tie in to communion

Always feels a little awkward to celebrate communion during Advent
But it is important to remember that Jesus doesn't remain a baby in the manger for long
Soon, sooner than Mary can believe, Jesus grows up
Like children do
He becomes a man, He steps into the mission He was sent here to live out
He shows us what the love of God is
He sacrifices Himself for us
That's what we remember this morning as we move from the manger to gather again around this table

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Song: #244- Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

Come, Thou long expected Jesus,
Born to set Thy people free.
From our fears and sins release us;
Let us find our rest in Thee.

Israel's Strength and Consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear Desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.

Born Thy people to deliver,
Born a Child and yet a King,

Born to reign in us forever,
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.

By Thine own eternal Spirit,
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all sufficient merit,
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

Benediction

Postlude