

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
**December 22, 2024**  
United Church of Christ - Neillsville  
Pastor Julie Ruegsegger

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**RINGING OF THE CARILLON**

**PRELUDE** *“Infant Holy, Infant Lowly”* with *“Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring”* arr. Anna Laura Page Karen Mohr

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**MOMENT OF CENTERING**

**LIGHTING ADVENT CANDLES** Howie & Kathy Mathis  
...We light this candle in love.

**ALL: On this day, we remember God is Love.**

**HYMN** *“When God is a Child”* Brian Wren  
**#165 W&R verse 1-4**

*Refrain:*

**When God is a child there’s joy in our song,  
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,  
And none shall be afraid.**

**1 Hope is a star that shines in the night,  
Leading us on till the morning is bright. [Refrain]**

**2 Peace is a ribbon that circles the earth,  
Giving a promise of safety and worth. [Refrain]**

**3 Joy is a song that welcomes the dawn,  
Telling the world that the Savior is born. [Refrain]**

**4 Love is a flame that burns in our heart,  
Jesus has come and will never depart. [Refrain]**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Our souls proclaim your greatness, O God.  
**And our spirits rejoice in you.**

We will praise you as long as we live.

**We will sing praises to you our whole lives long.**

We will not trust in the powerful of this world,

**But will trust in you—Creator of heaven and earth,  
the One who gives food to the hungry,  
the One who enacts justice for the oppressed.**

Our souls proclaim your greatness, O God  
**So let our souls magnify the Lord our God this day.**

**OPENING PRAYER** (All)

**This Advent, we hope and pray for:**

**Joy as we journey together,  
Sight for the blind and healing for the sick,  
Freedom for the prisoners and good news for the  
poor,**

**Release for the oppressed with justice for all  
and love for each other.**

**And the coming of God’s topsy-turvy, inside out,  
upside-down Kingdom. Amen**

**HYMN** *“Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn”*  
**#107 NCH (verses 1,2,4)**

**1 Awake! Awake and greet the new morn,  
for angels herald its dawning.  
sing out your joy, for Jesus is born,  
behold! the Child of our longing.  
Come as a baby weak and poor,  
to bring all hearts together,  
to open wide the heavenly door,  
and lives now inside us forever.**

**2 To us, to all in sorrow and fear,  
Emmanuel comes a-singing,  
whose humble song is quiet and near,  
yet fills the earth with its ringing.  
Music to heal the broken soul  
and hymns of loving kindness,  
the thunder of the anthems roll  
to shatter all hate and injustice.**

**4 Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night,  
though cold the winter and cheerless,  
the rising sun shall crown you with light,  
be strong and loving and fearless;  
Love be our song and love our prayer,  
and love, our endless story,  
may God fill every day we share,  
and bring us at last into glory.**

## PASSING OF THE PEACE

As forgiven and blessed children of God, let us share with one another signs of hope, peace, joy and love.

One: May the Love of God be with you.

**Many: And also with you.**

All are invited to greet one another with words such as "*May the Love of Christ be with you,*" and the response: "*And also with you*".

**PRAISE RESPONSE:** "*Glory to God*"

**#756 NCH (sing twice)**

**Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo!**

**Gloria, gloria alleluia, alleluia!**

## CHILDREN'S TIME

### SCRIPTURE READINGS OLD TESTAMENT

**Micah 5:2-5a (NLT)**

*A Ruler from Bethlehem*

<sup>2</sup> But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah.

Yet a ruler of Israel, whose origins are in the distant past, will come from you on my behalf.

<sup>3</sup> The people of Israel will be abandoned to their enemies

until the woman in labor gives birth.

Then at last his fellow countrymen will return from exile to their own land.

<sup>4</sup> And he will stand to lead his flock with the Lord's strength,

in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.

Then his people will live there undisturbed, for he will be highly honored around the world.

<sup>5</sup> And he will be the source of peace.

**Luke 1:39-55**

*Mary Visits Elizabeth*

<sup>39</sup> A few days later Mary hurried to the hill country of Judea, to the town <sup>40</sup> where Zechariah lived. She entered the house and greeted Elizabeth.

<sup>41</sup> At the sound of Mary's greeting, Elizabeth's child leaped within her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

<sup>42</sup> Elizabeth gave a glad cry and exclaimed to Mary, "God has blessed you above all women, and your child is blessed. <sup>43</sup> Why am I so honored, that the mother of my Lord should visit me? <sup>44</sup> When I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy.

<sup>45</sup> You are blessed because you believed that the Lord would do what he said."

*The Magnificat: Mary's Song of Praise*

<sup>46</sup> Mary responded,

"Oh, how my soul praises the Lord.

<sup>47</sup> How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!

<sup>48</sup> For he took notice of his lowly servant girl, and from now on all generations will call me blessed.

<sup>49</sup> For the Mighty One is holy, and he has done great things for me.

<sup>50</sup> He shows mercy from generation to generation to all who fear him.

<sup>51</sup> His mighty arm has done tremendous things! He has scattered the proud and haughty ones.

<sup>52</sup> He has brought down princes from their thrones and exalted the humble.

<sup>53</sup> He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands.

<sup>54</sup> He has helped his servant Israel and remembered to be merciful.

<sup>55</sup> For he made this promise to our ancestors, to Abraham and his children forever."

**SPECIAL MUSIC** "Mary, Did You Know?" Jenna Ziegler

**SERMON** "Mary: Strong and Courageous" Pastor Julie

**HYMN** "*I Wonder as I Wander*"

**#119 Red UCC**

**1 I wonder as I wander out under the sky  
How Jesus the Savior did come for to die  
For poor ord'nary people like you and like I.  
I wonder as I wander out under the sky.**

**2 When Mary held Jesus close tight to her breast,  
Did she gasp in awe to see God in her arms?  
Did she know the suff'ring that would lie ahead?  
Still she sang of God's Hope and Light of the world!**

**3 The dreams sung by Mary should be our dreams,  
too -  
A world changed forever by God come to earth,  
When love and forgiveness and mercy will reign;  
We all come together as children of God.**

**MORNING PRAYERS**

## PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

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 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

## THE OFFERING SERVICE

### Invitation to Generosity

Offertory *"The Babe of Bethlehem"*

Van Denman Thompson

Doxology: *"In the Bleak Midwinter"*

#128 verse 4

What can I offer, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.  
If I were a wise one, I would do my part;  
But what can I offer: all my heart.

### Prayer of Dedication

Gracious God, you use what seems to be small change in the treasury of this world to make great changes in the lives of your people. By the power of your love, you magnify our gifts. So we pray with grateful hearts and with spirits growing in generosity. We await the coming anew of the Christmas Child, our beloved servant Savior. Amen.

HYMN *"Canticle of the Turning" (Magnificat)*

Words: Rory Cooney; Tune: Irish Melody

1 My soul cries out with a joyful shout  
That the God of my heart is great,  
And my spirit sings of the wondrous things  
That you bring to the ones who wait.  
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight,  
And my weakness you did not spurn,  
So from east to west shall my name be blest.  
Could the world be about to turn?

Refrain:

My heart shall sing of the day you bring.  
Let the fires of your justice burn.  
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,  
And the world is about to turn.

2 Though I am small, my God my all,  
You work great things in me,  
And your mercy will last from the depths of the past  
To the end of the age to be.

Your very name puts the proud to shame,  
And to those who would for you yearn,  
You will show your might, put the strong to flight,  
For the world is about to turn. [Refrain]

3 From the halls of power to the fortress tower,  
Not a stone will be left on stone.  
Let the king beware for your justice tears  
Every tyrant from his throne.  
The hungry poor shall weep no more,  
For the food they can never earn;  
There are tables spread, every mouth be fed,  
For the world is about to turn. [Refrain]

## JOYS AND CONCERNS

HYMN *"Canticle of the Turning" (Mary's Magnificat)*

Words: Rory Cooney; Tune: Irish Melody

4 Though the nations rage from age to age,  
We remember who holds us fast:  
God's mercy must deliver us  
From the conqueror's crushing grasp.  
This saving word that our forebears heard  
Is the promise which holds us bound,  
Till the spear and rod can be crushed by God,  
Who is turning the world around.

Refrain

My heart shall sing of the day you bring.  
Let the fires of your justice burn.  
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,  
And the world is about to turn.

## COMMISSIONING AND BEDICTION

### POSTLUDE



**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**RADIO BROADCAST**

11 AM Sunday radio broadcast  
on WCCN 98.5FM and 1370AM

This week's radio broadcast is sponsored by  
Howie & Kathy Mathis  
in honor of our family past and present.

YouTube link for Sunday, December 22, 2024  
<https://youtube.com/live/xHYLHwOfWwE>

**WELCOME**

We welcome you to our service of worship!  
We are glad that you have joined us on site,  
through the internet or on the radio.  
We pray that you will hear God's call,  
seek to follow Jesus, led by the Holy Spirit.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Sunday, December 22nd –**

- 10 AM Deacon Host – Byrl Buddenhagen
- Greeter(s) – Byrl & Sharon Buddenhagen
- Usher(s) – Ken Shoemaker, Russ Karl
- PowerPoint – Crispin Hediger

**Tuesday, December 24<sup>th</sup> – Christmas Eve**

- 1 PM ~~Bible Study~~ NO BIBLE STUDY
- 4:30 & 8:30 PM Candlelight Service - communion



Coffee fellowship after worship -  
Sign up on back bulletin board

Dec 22 – Voss'  
Dec 29 –  
Jan 5 –  
Jan 12 -

We need people to sign up



on Tuesday,  
December 24<sup>th</sup>  
- 4:30 and  
8:30 services  
Candlelight service  
with communion  
served.

4:30 service will be live streamed

<https://youtube.com/live/s7vAekm5So>

**2025 Radio Broadcast  
Sponsors Needed**

Would you like to sponsor a radio  
broadcast? You may choose to dedicate or  
honor someone for a particular service  
date. This is not a budget item in our  
church operations, so we would appreciate  
if all monies are in this year - 2024.

The cost remains the same - \$75  
Please contact Janice in the office or phone  
715-743-2147 to reserve a date.