

Macon United Methodist Church
190 W Bell Street, Macon, IL 62544; (217) 764-5133
Pastor Terry McDorman; 630-390-0414; accesstogodshouse@gmail.com
December 22, 2024 **Fourth Sunday of Advent Sunday**

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

“Joy is prayer; joy is strength; joy is love; joy is a net of love by which you can catch souls.” Mother Teresa

RINGING OF THE CHURCH BELL
welcoming all to come and behold Him

PRELUDE

GATHERING **Words of welcome and announcements**

***SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

***CALL TO WORSHIP (responsive)**

Our hearts are filled with joyful anticipation, awaiting Jesus:

God is with Us.

As a family we worship and praise and look for the One who is coming:

God is with Us.

We hear the word of our Still Speaking God proclaiming:

God is with Us.

We gather here today knowing that no matter who we are
or where we are on life's journey:

God is with us

LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE—Joy

Ross, Susannah, Grace and Henry Moyer

Reader 1:

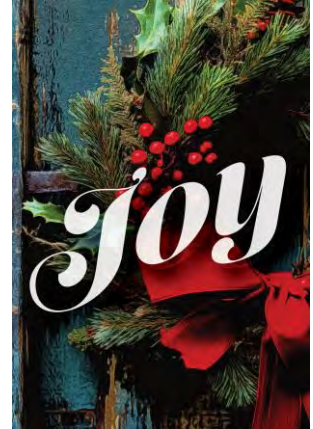
The prophet Isaiah tells us that a young woman shall bear a son and shall call Him Emmanuel--God with us.

Reader 2:

God is no longer a distant God, but is in the here and now.

Reader 1:

As Joseph trusted in the message of God's angel, so we can trust in God's message of redemption and love.



Reader 2:

Rejoice! God is lavishing us with God's love and peace.

Reader 1:

Today we light four candles, first Hope, then Peace, then Love and finally Joy.

Reader 2:

Let us rejoice in the lights, God is with us!

***OPENING HYMN**

"Angels from the Realms of Glory"

(UMH # 220)

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Present One today we gather with hearts full of joy. Yet this season can also bring stress and anxiety. Many of us are busy making plans with family and friends while others struggle with loneliness. We ask that you help all of us free our hearts and minds of the planning, worry, stress, and anxiety that takes our focus away from the coming of Christ. During this time of worship let your Spirit flow through this place. May She empower us to open our hearts and minds so that we will hear your Word and know what you call us to do. Amen.

COMMUNITY PRAYERS

Let us lift our prayers in thoughts of praise.

SILENT PRAYER

Let us share our doubts with God.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (all)

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Mary got up and hurried to a city in the Judean highlands. She entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. With a loud voice she blurted out, "God has blessed you above all women, and he has blessed the child you carry. Why do I have this honor, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. Happy is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill the promises he made to her."

Luke 1:39-45 (CEB)

**As soon as I heard
the sound of
your greeting,
the child
in my womb
leaped for joy.**

Luke 1:44, NRSV



PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

Holy God, you promised to do great things for us, yet we do not trust you. You extend your mercy to us, yet we do not trust you. You lift up the humble, you fill the hungry with good things, and yet we still do not trust you. Forgive us, and help us to trust in the promises you have given us. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 1:46b-55 (CEB)

Mary said,

“With all my heart I glorify the Lord! In the depths of who I am I rejoice in God my savior. He has looked with favor on the low status of his servant. Look! From now on, everyone will consider me highly favored because the mighty one has done great things for me. Holy is his name. He shows mercy to everyone, from one generation to the next, who honors him as God. He has shown strength with his arm. He has scattered those with arrogant thoughts and proud inclinations. He has pulled the powerful down from their thrones and lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty-handed. He has come to the aid of his servant Israel, remembering his mercy, just as he promised to our ancestors, to Abraham and to Abraham’s descendants forever.



MESSAGE

“The Gift of Joy”

Rev. Terry McDorman

HYMN

“What Child Is This?”

(UMH # 219)

INVITATION TO SHARE

Everything that we have is a gift from God. One way that we show God how thankful we are is by giving back a portion of what God has given us so that we can continue the work that we have been called to do.

PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

*DOXOLOGY

(UMH # 94)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia!

Praise God, the source of all our gifts! Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!

Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION (Unison)**

Creator God, we thank you for everything that you have given us, especially for the joy that Emmanuel brings to us. Help us to use these blessings in a way that brings honor and glory to you, and brings joy to a people that so desperately need it. We ask that you take today's gifts—great or small, money, time or talent—and use them to continue the work that you have called us to. Amen.

MUSICAL REFLECTION

CLOSING PRAYER (responsively)

Slowly and surely, we are finding hope, peace, love and joy.

Today is a day of joy.

The branch on our worship center was bare; then suddenly there were signs of hope in the emergence of little leaves.

Look carefully! What do you see? Can you see the bud beginning? It is only a little show of the flower yet to come. It will happen. Just wait.

Yes, there are buds--almost like the budding of joy at this time.

The joy will burst into full flower in the fullness of God's time. Just wait. It will happen.

All the wrappings and trimmings cannot compete with the gift of new life.

Praise be to God who surprises us with hope, peace love, and joy. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN**

“Away in a Manger”

(UMH # 217)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

(Please be seated and silent during the Postlude)

ATTENDANCE LAST WEEK: 47

ATTENDANCE GOAL: 70

Our sincere appreciation to all those that contributed to this worship experience!

Be certain to check the church website, <https://maconilumc.net/> for updated information about the church, events and news. Please use webmaster.maconumc@gmail.com to submit updates or additions to the church website.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will begin at 4:30pm on Tuesday.

This Tuesday is Christmas Eve and the sanctuary will be open during the day so that if you wish come, pray, just be in a place of quiet thought to simply consider the gifts of Christmas from the perspective of Jesus, Our Savior.

Macon is taking donations to support the heifer project again this Advent season.

Worship next Sunday, December 29, will be a Christmastime Hymn Sing. Bring your outside voice as together we share the joy of the gifts of Christmas in song.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRESENCE AND SERVICE

Tues. Dec. 24 4:30 pm Christmas Eve Service

Sun. Dec. 29 9:00 am Sunday School

Sun. Dec. 29 10:00 am Worship and Zoom Service—Hymn Sing

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Dec 23 Ron Spires

Dec 24 Leah Hinkle

Dec 26 Betty Nicholas

Dec 28 Joe Puckett

MISSIONS



Items requested by the food pantry are: Any kind of cereal, cereal bars and/or oatmeal, canned fruit, canned soup, canned pasta, shampoo, bar soap and dish liquid. Cash donations are always welcome.

Macon's month to volunteer is January. Volunteer schedule:

Jan 4--Darlene Spires, Tim and Charmin Copenhaver, Kim Belskamper

Jan 11--Chad and Sheila Rappe, Christine and Garry Cutler

Jan 18--Lori Nixon, Russell Hedges, Marsha Baker, Donna Hayes

Jan 25--Brad, Denise, Isaac, and Nicholas Hunt

Please arrive at 8am