

Worship December 20, 2020

Welcome

I welcome you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Today children of the Mora United Methodist church present their telling of the Christmas story. This program was recorded many weeks ago and is ready for viewing today and any time after. You can find the program on the Mora United Methodist YouTube Channel. Settle in and enjoy the story as seen through the “Stars” of the program.

Opening Prayer

Holy God, the whole meaning of Christmas can be explained in one little four-letter word...LOVE. You sent your gift of pure love to us that first Christmas. Love descended from heaven to be born of a virgin. Love lay in the scratchy hay of a manger in a meager barn in Bethlehem. All of your love, God, was robed in the delicate skin of a baby and wrapped in swaddling clothes. This final week of Advent helps us to reflect on the magnitude of love that was made manifest in Jesus.

The greatest gift of all came that first Christmas. It wasn't wrapped in a beautiful package and set under a decorated tree. The greatest gift came wrapped in the flesh of baby Jesus and laid in the rough wood of a manger. Our perfect gift would later be rewrapped in the scars of our sin and nailed to the rugged wood of a cross on Calvary, all because of love. Father, this final week of Advent, fill our hearts and minds with the significance of that truth. Thank you, Lord, for loving us enough to send Jesus. In Jesus' precious name we pray. Amen.

Advent Wreath Candle Lighting

Today the fourth advent candle, the candle of love, is lit by Robin Stegeman, Daren and Holly Stegeman and Ian Stegeman. Once the candle is lit, we will join in singing *There's a Song in the Air* (all verses)

Now we continue with the lighting of the candle of Love

Script

Reader 1: Today we light the fourth Advent candle.

Reader 2: Let us pray.

O Emmanuel, our king and lawgiver, the Savior of the nations.

Come and save us, O Lord, our God. Amen.

Reader 3: The first candle reminded us of hope.

The second candle reminded us of peace.

The third candle reminded us of joy.

The fourth Advent candle is the candle of love — the love of Mary for her child, the love of God of all humankind.

Reader 4: May the light of hope, peace, joy, and love burn brightly in our hearts all our days.

Copyright © 2005 Preston Price. Published by Discipleship Ministries, this script may be reproduced and used in congregational worship — with the inclusion of the above copyright statement.

Hymn UMH # 249

There's a Song in the Air (all verses)

'The Christmas Story' as told by the Mora UMC children

UMH # 245

The First Noel (verses 1,2,3)

Pastoral Prayer and The Lord's Prayer

This Advent, Lord, come to the manger of my heart and fill me with your presence.

As I prepare for the holidays and gifts to be given, remind me of the gift You gave when You sent Your Son from Heaven.

The first Christmas gift, it was the greatest gift ever.

You came as a baby born in a manger.

Wrapped like the gifts I find under my tree,

Waiting to be opened, to reveal Your love to me.

Restore to me the wonder that came with Jesus' birth,
When He left the riches of Heaven and wrapped Himself in rags of earth.
Immanuel, God with us, Your presence came that night.
And angels announced, "Into your darkness, God brings His Light."
"Do not be afraid," they said, to shepherds in the field.
Speak to my heart today, Lord, and help me to yield.
Make me like shepherd, obedient to Your call.
Setting distractions and worries aside, to You I surrender them all.
Surround me with Your presence, Lord, I long to hear Your voice.
Clear my mind of countless concerns and all the holiday noise.
Slow me down this Christmas, let me not be in a rush.
This Christmas, Jesus, come to the manger of my heart.
Invade my soul like Bethlehem, bringing peace to every part.
Dwell within and around me, as I unwrap Your presence each day.
Keep me close to You, Lord. It's in Your wonderful Name I pray as you taught me
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 trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen

Offering and prayer of Dedication

In this busy season, our most important preparations will happen here in our hearts when we make a way for God to come into our lives, when we "prepare the way of the Lord." In the midst of our preparations, we bring gifts to share so that God's love will shine brightly through the ministry of this church and in our own lives as well. Your giving to the church is a way to show your hope, peace, joy and love in all that you do.

Holy One, this Advent season we wait with love, and we give with love.
Love for you, our God; Love for your beautiful people.
Receive these generous offerings and use them for your works of love in our world. Amen.

Hymn UMH #217

Away in a Manger

Benediction

Be people of love.
Let love live in your heart and share the love of Christ with all you meet.
Share love by loving those you see regularly. Start by loving your community.
Share love by loving those you do not know.
Share love by praying for our world.
In this Advent season, we need to see, feel, and share love.
As you go out into the wonder of God's creations, share love, joy, peace, and hope with those you meet. Amen.

Announcements

- Thank you to the Stegemans for participating in worship
- Special thank you to all the children for bringing us the message today. As a grandparent tells the Good News of the birth of Jesus Christ to their grandchildren so our "Stars" told us that same Good News. We thank Carmel Gorham, Bruce Mosher, and Rod Schaffran for the creation, coordination, taping, editing, and premiering of the program. Of course none of this is possible without the parents, thank you parents.
- This Wednesday, December 23, is the last day the Mora Sanctuary will be open for personal prayer and communion from 2-6.

- The Ogilvie Sanctuary is open Sundays between 9-9:30 for personal prayer and meditation.
- The virtual Christmas Eve Service premieres on YouTube at 5pm and anytime thereafter.
- The live outdoor Christmas Eve service is at the Mora UMC at 7pm. This service is an abbreviated service of scripture and carols and concludes with lighted candles and the singing of Silent Night.

Program Participants

Stars: Alayna Sundet and Brooklyn Munkberg

Stars: Jude Houglum and James Gravning

Stars: Grace Bumann and Megan Hanson

Stars: Nola Klinkner and Jayce Wylie

Stars: Missy Hanson and Aubrey Bumann

Star Vocalists: Abby Merkwan and Rowan Merkwan