



FIRST UNITED CHURCH

Swift Current, SK
Sunday, December 24, 2023

Advent Four - Love

Leading Worship: Rev. Annette Taylor

Music Director: James McLauchlan

Pianist: Mary Anderson

Organist: Patti McCleary

Reader: Harold Lapuz



GATHERING

Moment for Reflection

*And suddenly we see
that love costs all we are
and ever will be.
Yet it is only love
which sets us free.
— Maya Angelou*

Land Acknowledgement & Announcements

Lighting the Advent Candles — Jovey & Jaevy Perrera

Advent Hymn: *We wait for God* (verse 4 – sung twice)

— Words by William S. Kervin, Music by Deborah Park and Tom Reynolds
(please remain seated)

Call to Worship

Children: Are we there yet?

All: Yes, we are in the place of birth and new life.

Children: Are we there yet?

All: Yes, we are listening for the voice of God.

Children: Are we there yet?

All: Yes, God is with us even in the darkness.

Children: Are we there yet?

All: Yes, God is in the storm and the calm.

Children: Are we there yet?

All: Yes, we see clearly where we are through our tears.

Children: Are we there yet?

All: Yes, we are at home with the holy.

Children: We are home! Yeah!

Written by: Naramata Centre, Summer Community Worship, August 21, 2002, Naramata, B.C.

Opening Hymn: VU #76 *See amid the Winter's Snow*

(please stand as you are able)

Opening Prayer

**Holy Mystery,
Ground of our Being,
your vision of justice and wholeness
comes to us in sweeping revelations
and in tiny signs of love.
Kindle our hearts
that we might be a loving people.
Keep us from growing weary of waiting,
lest we miss the wonder of your appearing.
Even so, come quickly. Amen.**

Adapted from *Celebrate God's Presence*, page 82.

The Lord's Prayer

WORD

Hymn: MV #94 *Love Knocks and Waits* (verses 1 & 2)
(please remain seated)

Community Learning Time - Melanie Davis

Hymn: MV #94 *Love Knocks and Waits* (verses 3 & 4)

Scripture Readings: Luke 1:26-38

ONE: We read this text so that in it we may find wisdom for life.

ALL: May we be open to the Wisdom we understand and hear.

Poem: *Love's Exquisite Freedom* by Maya Angelou

Reflection: *Only Love*

Choral Offering: *Kneel With the Shepherds*

- Words by Herb Frombach; Music by Patti Drennan

RESPONSE

Minute for Mission: *Nourishing Spirits through Tradition*

Offering Invitation

Prayer of Dedication:

**Take the gifts we offer,
not as a means to rescue others,
but as a means for relationship and for connection,**

**as a means to build bridges between strangers,
as a means to embody the good news. Amen**

Adapted from: Gord Dunbar, *Gathering*, Pentecost 2 2015, page 40.

Prayers of the People (306-750-8925)

Closing Hymn: VU #17 *O Ancient Love*
(please stand as you are able)

Commissioning & Benediction

Choral Closing: MV #221 *I Am Walking a Path of Love*

Postlude

Prayer Cycles

Ministerial

St. Olaf Lutheran Church

Living Skies Regional Council

Watrous Young

Regina: Westminster

White Bear

Lectionary Readings for December 31, 2023

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

Psalm 148 (VU p. 871)

Galatians 4:4-7

Luke 2:22-40

Worship Schedule

Dec 24	<i>Christmas Eve</i> (7 p.m.)	- Rev. Annette Taylor
Dec 31	<i>1st after Christmas</i>	- Norma Hain
Jan 7	<i>Epiphany Sunday</i>	- Rev. Annette Taylor
Jan 14	<i>God Calls</i>	- Rev. Annette Taylor
Jan 21	<i>Jonah</i>	- Sunday School

Wishing You a Blessed Christmas (from General Council Staff)



And he shall be called Emmanuel—God with us.
Wishing you peace and joy this Christmas.

[Text: Paraphrase of Matthew 1:23]

[Image credit: Image by Hanneke Visschers from Pixabay]

Two Letters, Two Leaders: Responses to Middle East Conflict



Last week, Moderator Carmen Lansdowne and Leeann Shimoda, Chair of the National Indigenous Council, [wrote to Prime Minister Trudeau](#) to express their gratitude for Canada's change in position regarding a ceasefire in the Middle East.

[Read other joint statements](#) by the United Church and partners. To lend your voice to the growing calls for peace and justice in the Middle East, please:

- [ADVOCATE](#) by sending a letter to your MP, using our new advocacy tool.
- [DONATE](#) to our Mission and Service partners who are currently responding to those impacted by the conflict in West Bank and East Jerusalem.
- [PRAY](#) for peace and justice in the Middle East.

[Photo credit: iStock/Warchi]