

Fourth Sunday of Advent
Little Prairie United Methodist Church
December 21, 2025, 9:30 a.m.



Love Shines Through

2980 130th ST E, Dundas, MN 55019
507.663-6150

www.littleprairieumc.org

Our vision: : Creating a welcoming community that worships well, disciples well, and serves well; transforming the world for Jesus Christ.

WELCOME AND GATHERING

Gathering Music *"Emmanuel" by Michael W. Smith arr. Mark Hayes*
Luann Alderks

Welcome
Centering Time

Pastor Penny Bonsell

Call to Worship

Beloved, God calls to us—like Joseph—through angels and messengers, inviting us to listen for the Spirit's guidance in the midst of half-truths and distractions.

We listen faithfully for the day that all the earth awaits.

Sometimes, angels surprise us (as they did Mary) with good news too fantastical to believe and yet too real—realer than real—to ignore.

We listen faithfully for the day that all the earth awaits.

For generations, God has sent signs of God's coming kingdom in unexpected places—the birth of a child, the wisdom of the lowly, the faithfulness of a carpenter.

We listen faithfully for the day that all the earth awaits.

Come! Let us worship God who calls out to us, inviting us to faithfulness as we watch, wait, and work for the day when the whole world knows the abundant love and grace of Emmanuel, God-with-us.

Come! Let us worship as we listen faithfully for the day that all the earth awaits.

Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, May 2025.

Emmanuel, Emmanuel (UMH # 204) by Bob McGee

Little Prairie Choir

Opening Prayer:

Into our troubles and weaknesses, Into the barren places of our souls, come, Lord,

Come down, come in, come among us and make us whole.

Into the war-torn and the refugee, Into those who live in conflict, come, Lord,

Come down, come in, come among us and make us whole.

Into the homeless and the unemployed, Into those who feel abandoned, come, Lord,

Come down, come in, come among us and make us whole.

Into the sick and the disabled, Into those with disease and illness, come, Lord.

Come down, come in, come among us and make us whole.

Into the poor and the starving, Into those who are oppressed or abused, come, Lord.

Come down, come in, come among us and make us whole.

Into the lives of loved ones, Into those from whom we are estranged, come, Lord,

Come down, come in, come among us and make us whole.

Into our joys and celebrations, Into our work and our achievements, come, Lord

Come down, come in, come among us and make us whole.

O Christ, we long for your coming. Hasten that day when those who seek you in every nation will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit at the table in your kingdom. Hasten the day when your kingdom will come in all its glory, and suffering and pain and sickness and oppression and death will be overcome forever.

Hasten the day when we will be resurrected as a great multicultural family and live in peace, harmony, joy, and love together in your kingdom. Amen.

Based on written prayers by Christine Sine on Godspace. Re-posted on the re:Worship website at <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2015/12/advent-intercessions.html>.

Hymn: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (UMH # 211)*

All

The Advent Wreath

Stoufis Family

Lighting of the fourth Advent candle of Love

First Reader: Today, we come face to face with the scandal of Advent: Mary, the unmarried mother; God Incarnate growing in Mary's womb as a vulnerable baby; Joseph contemplating leaving Mary because of her pregnancy; God's love at work in ways that society and propriety could not understand; God calling Mary and Joseph to faithfulness despite the fear of disgrace.

All: With Mary and Joseph, we choose to wait, watch, and listen for the way of Love instead of responding in fear to the world's judgment.

Second Reader: We light this candle of love as a sign of our faithfulness as we seek, find, and follow Emmanuel, God with us.

Sharing the Peace

Children's Moment

Light One Candle (Love)

by Natalie Sleethe

THE WORD

Scriptures:

Isaiah 7:10-16

Matthew 1:18-25

The Word of God for the People of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Message

Love Shines Through

Pastor Penny Bonsell

Kelli Podracky, Executive Director of Northfield Union of Youth

Hymn

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing (UMH # 240)

All

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

Joys and Concerns

Prayers of the People

O Holy God of Promise, we so often place our trust in the things we can see, and touch, and easily believe.

But you did not ask us to believe what is easy; you have asked us to believe what is

true!

Forgive us, Holy One, when we doubt the ways you work. Forgive us when we find it hard to believe an ancient story.

Forgive us when we question how you chose to enter the world, born as one of us.

Forgive our lack of faith and belief in ways which seem so impossible to believe.

Help us to look in faith, open our belief, and set aside our doubts that you sent your Son, born of a virgin –the one who has come to set us all free. We offer these prayers in the name of your Son, Emmanuel, God with us. Amen.

Written by Rev. Jan Brooks, Cottonwood Falls Presbyterian Church. Reposted on the re:Worship blog at <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2017/12/advent-prayer-of-confession.html>.

Offering

"Is Your Heart Prepared for a King?" by Robert Lau

Little Prairie Choir

Luann Alderks

Doxology

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow (UMH # 95)

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Faithful God of unfolding plans, when our certainty falters and our expectations collapse, you are still at work, inviting us into grace that redefines and redeems. Like Joseph, we bring our gifts and lay down our plans, trusting that your Spirit can shape our offering into something greater than we imagined.

Let these gifts and our lives be signs of obedience, humility, and hope. May they help carry Christ into a world still longing for peace, hungry for love, and needing redemption. We pray in the name of the one who is Emmanuel—God with us. Amen. (Matthew 1:18-25)

And the prayer which unites us...

The Lord's Prayer

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.

Hymn

O Come, All Ye Faithful (UMH # 234)

All

SENDING

Advent people, go now in the blessing of God to watch and wait, ready to receive the angels among us and to faithfully follow where God leads. May the love of Christ be fully present

in you, so that a stranger will see in you a friend and neighbor. God sends you. The Spirit fills you. Christ goes with you and you with Christ, always and everywhere. God Bless!
Go in hope, peace, joy and love. Shalom. Amen.

*Postlude "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" Tune: Veni Emmanuel arr. Mark Hayes
Luann Alderks*

INFORMATION

Pastor: Penny Bonsell, Administrator: Sara French, Music Director and pianist: Luann Alderks, Certified Lay Minister and Youth Director: Theresa Siemers, assistants Maddy Heinz-Kline and Kory Larson, Technology Administrator: Jesse Steed, Admin Council Chair: Kevin Larson, Admin Secretary: Sue Rollins, SPRC Chair: Deb Little, Treasurer: Lori Noreen, Finance Committee Co-Chairs: Kevin Larson and Mel Henrichs, Trustees Chair: Tom Stowe, Missions and Lay Servant: Karen Nelson, Soundboard Technician: Tom Hollenhorst

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sundays, Worship at 9:30 am

Tuesdays, 8:30 am: Breakfast Club, at L&M

Wednesdays, 9-10:30 am: Pastor Penny is at James Gang coffee shop

Saturdays 9-11 am Soul Sisters (see Theresa for details)

Wed. Dec. 24, 4:30 pm: Christmas Eve Candlelight service



Website



Online Giving



**Little Prairie
United Methodist
Church**

We are providing an on-going donation bin for CACand Wallflower House in our entrance way.

See our website for more details at www.littleprairieumc.org.

