



**PRELUDE**

**WELCOME**

**LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE**

Congregational prayer:

God of hope, Prince of peace, Spirit of joy, Lord of love: your goodness is beyond our imaginings. You give us more than we can think to ask, coming to us with impossible possibility in the union of God and humanity. Teach us to love this world and all people as you love us in Jesus Christ.

**CAROL #105 *People, Look East***

**PRAYER OF PRAISE**

Loving God, as we approach the day when we celebrate the birth of Jesus, we grow in our awareness that we need you. We bring our grief and our joy, our disappointments and our delights, our fears and our faith, and the chaos of our world, and we lay all that before you in this time of worship. As Jesus embodied your love for the world and became God-with-us, so this morning we pray that you would again come, oh come, Emmanuel. Amen.

**CAROL #88 *O Come, O Come Emmanuel,*  
verses 1-2, 6-7**

**OPENING OUR HEARTS TO GOD**

God of grace and love,  
we confess our willingness to be loved  
but also our reluctance to love.  
We confess our readiness  
to accept your forgiving love  
but also our refusal to forgive.  
We confess our eagerness to grasp your offer  
of redeeming love  
but also our resistance to follow you  
without question.

In this Advent time, forgive us our failure to respond as we should.  
Come to us anew, and by your grace help us to open our hearts to receive you—  
with joy, as the shepherds;  
with gratitude, as Simeon;  
with willingness, as Mary;  
with love, as you have loved us.

(time for silent prayers and reflection)

**WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

The love of God is always offered to us,  
freely, joyfully, for all eternity.  
Rejoice, beloved,  
this is the Good News of our Lord!

**Thanks be to God!**

**CAROL #96 *On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry***

**SOLO *Mary, Did You Know?***  
Dan Woodworth, soloist

**SCRIPTURE READINGS** 1 John 4:9-10, 16-17,  
John 3:16-17

**MESSAGE** For God So Loved...

**CAROL #110 *Love Has Come***

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER**

*Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your 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 yours is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory  
now and forever. Amen.*

**HYMN #93 *Lift Up Your Heads***

**BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE**

*"As the Father has sent me, so I send you."* John 20:21