



Worship Service Theme: Second Sunday of Advent: **LOVE**

Helpful Elements:

Christmas hymnal and sing-along recordings
Purple table covering
Advent stand and electric candles
Advent banner
Nativity scene (separate table)

Welcome: Welcome! My name is _____ and I'll be leading our worship time today. Today is the second Sunday of Advent. The word "advent" comes from the Latin term "adventus" which means "arrival" or "coming," and it's the season when the church remembers and celebrates the coming of Christ to Earth, as well as anticipating his return.

(Turn on the candles of Hope and Love – or have someone in the front row "light" them.) Last week we lit the **PURPLE** candle of hope; today we light the **PURPLE** candle of love, remembering how the birth of Jesus brought both hope and love into the world. Please pray with me as we open our time together.

Opening prayer: God of hope, who brought love into this world,
be the love that dwells between us.

God of hope, who brought peace into this world,
be the peace that dwells between us.

God of hope, who brought joy into this world,
be the joy that dwells between us.

God of hope, the rock we stand upon,
be the center, the focus of our lives
always, and particularly this Advent time.
Amen.¹

Hymns:

¹ http://faithandworship.com/prayers_Advent.htm

Joy to the World
O Come O Come Emmanuel
God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen

First reading: Isaiah 40: 1-5

¹Comfort, comfort my people,
 says your God.
²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
 and proclaim to her
that her hard service has been completed,
 that her sin has been paid for,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
 double for all her sins.
³A voice of one calling:
“In the wilderness prepare
 the way for the Lord;
make straight in the desert
 a highway for our God.
⁴Every valley shall be raised up,
 every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level,
 the rugged places a plain.
⁵And the glory of the Lord will be revealed,
 and all people will see it together.
For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Hymns:
It Came Upon the Midnight Clear
The First Noel

Second reading: 1 Corinthians 13: 1-8. This is a famous passage about love written by the apostle Paul:

¹If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ²And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all

mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

⁴Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; love is not arrogant ⁵or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; love is not irritable or resentful; ⁶love does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. ⁷Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸Love never fails.

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Hymns:

Angels We Have Heard on High

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

Interactive Homily: Let's talk more about love.

- What kinds of love are there?
 - Love of a spouse; a friend; a thing; and God's love
 - Is love attached to something?
 - Yes: Love has an object, a target: we say we "love" a particular food or painting or piece of music
 - Is love just internal?
 - No: Love extends outward (even love for self)
- Scholars have identified four basic kinds of human love:
 - 1. Greek word: Storge ("STOR-gay"): This is a familiar kind of love, like the love for family members; a natural love and affection, like a love for a child or even a pet.
 - Did you have a pet? How did you feel about it?
 - 2. Greek word: Philia ("FILL-ee-ah"): This is the love found in friendship, between people who share common values, interests, or activities.
 - Did you have a best friend? What was he or she like?
 - 3. Greek word: Eros ("EH-rose"): Being "in love," romantically.
 - I wonder who here has felt this kind of love? (spouses, couples)

- 4. Finally, there is Agape (“ah-gah-pay”): That’s the word for God’s love, unconditional love – regardless of changing circumstances.
- How well do we do with love? Put your name in the 1 Corinthians 13 passage in place of “love” [*try this with your own name; read the parts of the passage aloud with your own name substituted for “love”*]
 - We don’t hit this description very often, do we? ☺
- But: What is God’s love like?
 - Constant; loves us despite our shortcomings; all-encompassing; never fails.
- So, here we are in the Christmas season. What does the birth of Jesus have to do with God’s love?
 - Here’s how the gospel of John describes it: “Because God so loved the world, he sent his only son...” (John 3:16)
 - Jesus’ birth shows God’s great love for us, and Jesus showed God’s love in the flesh – to everyone, especially those who didn’t feel they deserved it.

... Let’s take a moment to silently pray and reflect on God’s love.

(Silent Prayer) ... Lord, in your love and mercy, hear our prayers. Now let us pray the Lord’s prayer together:

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, the power, and the glory forever, Amen.

Hymns:

Go Tell it on the Mountain

Away in a Manger

Third Reading: John 13. This is a story from Jesus’ life, when Jesus wanted to demonstrate the most important lesson of all for his followers.

¹ It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ...⁴ Jesus got up from the meal, took off his

outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist.⁵ After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.¹² When Jesus had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" Jesus asked them.¹³ "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am.¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet.¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.³⁴ "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Hymns:

What Child is This

Silent Night

Fourth Reading: Luke 1:26-38: The Birth of Jesus Foretold

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary.²⁸ And the angel Gabriel came to Mary and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!"²⁹ But Mary was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.³⁰ And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

³⁴ And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

³⁵ And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.³⁶ And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God."³⁸ And Mary said, "Behold, I

am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Hymns:

O Holy Night

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

Closing Blessing: (Strike bell as you say the word “Lord”)

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and grant you peace. Amen.

Closing Hymns:

O Come All Ye Faithful

We Wish You a Merry Christmas

(optional) Doxology