God calls us to

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 21, 2025

Salem-Zion Mennonite Church

Advent 4: "God Calls us to Love"
December 21, 2025

GATHERING TO PRAISE

Prelude – *Two settings: Lord, how shall I meet you* (Paul Manz) Ken Mannes
Welcome and Lighting of Advent Candle VT #917 Malynda Penner
Call to Worship
L: For God so loved the world that he sent his son.
P: Angels announced the birth of the Savior to the shepherds as they watched their flocks at night.
L: Love came down at Christmas in the form of the Baby Jesus.
P: We shout for joy, praising God for the gift of his son!
L: Love casts out fear and allows us to live joyfully!
All*: *Let us lavishly share the love of Jesus with others!
Prayer of Invocation
* Singing our Praise – *Joy to the World* VT #240
Greeting each other
Children's Story Lacey Friesen
Offering – Mennonite Church USA; 4 new bath towels (medium weight, dark or bright colors preferred) approximately 28 in. x 50 in. for Buckets for Relief
Offertory – *Good Christian Folk, Rejoice!* (Marcel Dupré)

HEARING GOD'S WORD

Hearing the Old Testament Isaiah 57:14-19
Special Music – *Hope is a Candle* Estelle Waltner, Cadence & Reeslyn Hofer
Hearing the Gospel Luke 2:1-7
Luke 2:8-14
Luke 2:15-20
Before the Marvel of This Night – Rolf Olson
Sermon – "Love Came Down" Corey Miller

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Song – *Love Has Come* VT #258
Love: Mary's Song of Praise Luke 1:46-55 Clara Beseman
Sharing and Congregational Prayer

SENT OUT TO PROCLAIM GOOD NEWS

* Sending Song – *The First Noel, the Angel Did Say* VT #250
* Benediction
Postlude – *Comfort, comfort you my people* (Harold Rohlig)

Church Calendar

Deadline for bulletin submissions is 8:30 a.m. Tuesday; salemzion@gwtc.net

TODAY

God calls us to Love. On this fourth Sunday of Advent, we recall Jesus' birth which is the greatest gesture of love that God has given us. God became one of us! God's fingerprints of love are all over the sacred birth narrative and today we marvel at the wonders of God's love. Welcome to our time of worship! You are God's beloved and we are glad you are here.

Thanks to Carol Eisenbeis for writing our Call to Worship.

The offering that we are celebrating today is for **Mennonite Church USA**.

9:30am – Sunday School
9:00-10:15am – Children's Choir in the sanctuary
10:30am – Worship Service
2:00pm – Fuente de Vida church service

TONIGHT: Salem-Zion's choirs will offer their gifts of music tonight at our annual Christmas choirs program. Come enjoy beautiful music, hear the timeless message of hope, and experience wonderful fellowship with friends near and far. The service begins at 7:00pm.

THIS WEEK

Dec. 23 (Tues) – Fellowship Hall/Kitchen private reservation from 10am-3pm
Dec. 23 (Tues) – Christmas Eve dress rehearsal at 3:30pm
Dec. 24 (Wed) – Children's Christmas Eve Program: 6:45pm children's prelude and 7:00pm program
Dec. 25 (Thurs) – Christmas Day worship service at South Church at 10:00am
Dec. 26 (Fri) – Fuente de Vida church service at 7:00pm

Pastor Corey and Nancy will leave for Kansas on December 26th to spend Christmas with Nancy's family. They will return back to SD on Monday, December 29th. Contact deacon chair Gwen Ortman if any pastoral needs arise.

NEXT SUNDAY – December 28

Next Sunday continues our Christmas season with the theme, "***God Calls***." The focus of the morning is "*God calls us to Give*." The texts are Luke 2:22-38. Nathan Epp will be preaching and the chancel choir will be singing. We will be receiving items (4 adult-sized toothbrushes in manufacturer's packaging, 2 wide-toothed combs 15-20 cm (6-8 in), 1 nail clipper) for MCC's Relief Buckets. The offering will be for Mennonite Central Committee (Immigration Support).

Salem-Zion Prayer Requests & News

Happenings over the past week:

- Sonja and Nick Schrag rejoiced in the birth of their daughter, Katja Marie, last Saturday, December 13th in Sioux Falls. They were able to return home

this week on Tuesday and are doing well. Information regarding meals for the family will be sent out by email.

Remember to praise God for:

- the special gift of Katja Marie and the joy her birth represents to Nick, Sonja, Olan and Reed and Susan.
- the ways that the Christmas story still captures our hearts and instills faith in us all.
- the gift of love that God has freely poured out onto all humanity in the birth of Jesus.

Remember to pray for:

- those who cannot be here today: Delano and LaVonne Tieszen.
- those who are traveling over the holiday season and for honest and sometimes difficult conversations with family members. May Christ's Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love cover all those moments in time.
- our choirs as they prepare for our program this evening and for the children on Christmas Eve.

Early bulletin deadline: Please submit this week's bulletin announcements by 8:30am on Tuesday, Dec. 23. Besides preparing the bulletin this week and next week, Lisa will take vacation time Dec. 24 through Jan. 3.

Relief Buckets for MCC: Please consider contributing to our offerings during Advent by bringing items for ***Relief Buckets***, an essential part of aid that MCC is sending to places around the world that have been traumatized by violence, war, and poverty. The list for these items is in the newsletter and will be included in the bulletin every week. Let's join together in bringing Advent Hope to God's beloved ones who are suffering.

To give to Salem-Zion or the missions we support through Venmo, please use the attached QR code or go through your Venmo app and search (under charity) for Salem-Zion Mennonite Church. If you want your donation to go somewhere other than the household treasury, please put that in the notes. Thank you!

Rural Revival will meet on Tuesday, December 30 at 8:00 p.m. at the Freeman library. All are welcome to attend.

God's Love in Jesus' Birth: *"I (almost) always come limping into Advent, desperate for light, but almost too tired to look for it. Then I remember: The Light came looking for me, and that's the whole point."* - Annie B. Jones

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