



WORDS
FOR THE BEGINNING
— HOPE IS WORTH THE RISK —

December 22, 2024
ADVENT 4

BEGINNING WITH LOVE

Prelude

Gathering Christmas Singing

To Us a Child of Hope is Born VT 259

Love Came Down at Christmas VT 255

Greetings & Announcements

Call to Worship*

In this weary world,
we sing of joy.

In this fragile world,
we lift each other up.

In this beautiful world,
we look for God.

In this tender world,
we hold onto hope.

This is the invitation of faith.

So in this time of worship,
may we sing, lift up, look for,
and hold onto our with-us God.

With hope in our hearts, amen!

HYMN *Bless'd Be the God of Israel* VT 223

Fellowship Greeting

(stand to share the peace of Christ with those around you)

HEAR GOOD NEWS OF GOD WITH US

HYMN *Prepare the Way! the Prophet Called* VT 220

Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession & Words of Forgiveness

Gracious God,

You paint pictures of what could be,

but we declare those visions impossible.

You speak of the lion lying down with the lamb,

but we spout skepticism and uncertainty.

You dream of a more just day,

but we poke holes in the plan,

unable to fathom that horizon.

Forgive us for losing sight of hope.

Forgive us for assuming that what we see

is all there is.

Open up our hearts to see the world as you see it.

Open up our hearts to risk hope, to dream dreams,

and to not be afraid of either.

With gratitude we pray, amen.

HYMN *Helpless and Hungry* VT 268/ *What Child is This* (267)

Children's Time

Prayer for Illumination & Scripture Reading

Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:46-55

Sermon

Music for Meditation

PRAYERS & A POEM

Prayers of the People (*with the Lord's Prayer*)

Poem: *Despite it All*

SENT TO BEGIN AGAIN

HYMN *Oh, How Shall I Receive Thee* VT 215

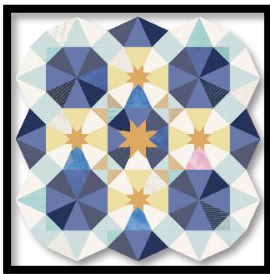
Benediction

Postlude

If you need a hearing assist device, please ask at the sound booth in the back of the sanctuary.

The Nursery is typically staffed with a volunteer care provider during worship (and Sunday School as needed). Children are also welcome to remain in the sanctuary! Worship bags with drawing/coloring materials are provided at the back of the sanctuary.

If you'd like to be added to our all-church email list to receive prayer requests and announcements (typically 2 emails/week), please contact the church office or Pastor Tonya.



Sound: Murray Reimer
Livestream: Jonathan Wenger
Ushers: Marlene Thode & Don Wiens
Nursery: Anna Crable & Jalen Crable
Organist: Pauline Buller
Song Leader: Magdalena Wenger
Worship Leader: Maggie Pounds
Advent Candle Reading: Dohn and Jeanette Fast
Scripture Reader: Pastor Tonya Ramer Wenger
Poem: Jean Gaeddert
Sermon: Pastor Jim Unruh

“As you light the final Advent candle, let it symbolize the hope that Christ brings into our world – a hope not just for peaceful times, but also for moments of darkness and difficulty.

May the steady flame of hope renew your courage and inspire you to act as you enter into an extraordinary story of redemption and love.”

(Kayla Craig – excerpt from Words for the Beginning Advent Devotional)

TODAY:

Fellowship with drinks in Common Grounds Room

- **Children’s Choir** rehearsal in the sanctuary @ 11:00am
- **Sunday School** @ 11:00am
 - Adult discussion – Salt & Light Bible Study (fellowship hall)
 - Connection & Conversation – basement classroomChildcare for infants/toddlers available most Sundays

LOOKING AHEAD:

- **Dec 24: 7:00pm** Christmas Eve Service to include dedication of Infant Care Bundles and offering to fund additional bundles and shipping to locations around the world. Service to be followed by Food & Fellowship (bring sweet or savory finger foods to share).
- **Dec 29:** 1st Sunday after Christmas – worship at usual time, no Sunday School – stay for fellowship.
- **Jan 5:** Epiphany – 2024 Star Word reflections + receiving a Star Word for 2025

Christmas Poinsettia at the front of the sanctuary is being shared by Sara Blodgett in memory of her husband Frank.

REJOICE! and ***Upper Room*** devotional books are available above the mailboxes. You are invited to take one to give focus to your personal/family devotional times.

Church Office Hours during the holiday break

- **Tues Dec 24: open 9am-2pm** (no office hours Wed or Thu)
- **Dec 30-Jan 3: no office hours**

- **Jan 7: return to scheduled office hours**

- Tue & Thu: 9am-2pm
- Wed: 10am-1pm



First Mennonite Church . Hutchinson KS

Arms Wide Open: To Serve & Be Served

Phone: 620-662-9385

Office Hours: Tues & Thurs 9-2pm; Wed 10-1pm

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Pastor Tonya Ramer Wenger: tonya@hutchfmc.org

Pastor Jim Unruh: jhunruh.ju@gmail.com