

LOVE

What Child IS This?



"Enthroned by Love"

4th Sunday of Advent

December 21, 2025



Ascension Lutheran Church
1105 N. Washington Blvd.
Ogden, UT 84404
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Welcome to Worship...

Welcome to all God's guests, especially those who are here for the first time or who call yourselves "visitors" among the people of this community. It is at God's invitation, through worship, the Holy Spirit calls each of us to come to a place of **community, communion** and **commitment**. Each of us brings a different lens to worship, and yet, in a worshiping community, these differences become celebrations of diversity.

Children are always welcome in worship services;
however please know the cry room at the back of the sanctuary is available
for parents who need to tend to their little ones.

Like the iconic figures gathered around the Christ Child in our nativity scenes, we gather together because we want to know Jesus more as we seek to bring his Reign of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love on earth.

Welcome to Worship

Please silence your cellphones

LOVE

P As we have ventured "beyond the lullaby" to unpack the circumstances surrounding the birth of Jesus, we have encountered a continuing human saga—one in which lullaby is met with lament for all that is not right with this world. But as we prepare for the celebration of the birth soon upon us, we are reminded that what also endures in the human story is the presence of hope beyond hopelessness, peace beyond understanding, and joy beyond despair. This is all made possible through the steadfast love of God-with-us.

*All So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh,
Come, peasant, king to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.*

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

WA When we hear “let loving hearts enthrone him” in our theme carol, we are encountering the “essence of the message.” Love is at the heart of this beloved story of the birth of Christ. It is love that is the true definition of “kingdom,” of “kinship.” No one exemplifies this more than Joseph’s love for Mary and for the child. He is protector of Love; he is hospitality incarnated. Not only the very life of Jesus was in his hands, but his own character and sacrifice were influential in the way that Jesus went on to live his life and center “love for all” as his message.

R1 We light this candle of Love for those who need it most.

R2 For all who feel they are on the outskirts of love.

R1 For all who know the loss of a love.

R2 For all who are rejected because of who they are.

R1 Our question for today at the scene of the nativity is this:
“How will we make sacrificial love our aim in our time?”

R2 What child IS this?
This, this, is the babe who was swaddled in love
and wraps us all in love forever.

All *This, this is Christ, the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary!*

Prayer for This Day

P Let us pray:

Here, at the nativity of your birth,
give us the courage to face this moment
with a steadfast love that casts out fear.

All **Open us to new understandings of
the unfolding story of your presence among us.
Show us how to be with and for one another
in ways that add to the flourishing of all creation.
We pray in the name of the Child,
the Love Enthroned in our hearts and lives. Amen.**

An Israelite and Aramean military coalition presented a serious threat to King Ahaz of Judah. In response, Ahaz decided to secure his throne and kingdom by seeking Assyrian help. Isaiah reminds Ahaz that human attempts to establish security will fail. The prophet gives the sign that is the only source of true safety: Immanuel, God is with us!

A Reading from Isaiah, the 7th chapter

¹⁰ The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹ “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” ¹² But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” ¹³ Then Isaiah said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. ¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶ For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.”

Isaiah 7:10-16

L Word of God, Word of Love.

All Thanks be to God!

A Responsive Reading from Psalm 146

- ⁵ Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help,
whose hope is in the LORD their God;
- ⁶ **who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;
who keeps promises forever;**
- ⁷ who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who
hunger.
The LORD sets the captive free.
- ⁸ **The LORD opens the eyes of the blind;
the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;
the LORD loves the righteous.**
- ⁹ The LORD cares for the stranger;
the LORD sustains the orphan and widow,
but frustrates the way of the wicked.
- ¹⁰ **The LORD shall reign forever,
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!**

Psalm 146:5-10

Gospel Acclamation

Please stand in body or spirit.

Em - man - u - el, _____ Em - man - u - el, _____

_____ His name is called _____ Em - man - u - el: _____

_____ God with us, _____ re - vealed in us! _____

_____ His name is called _____ Em - man - u - el. _____

Gospel Reading

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 1st chapter.

All **Glory to you, O Lord.**

The story of Joseph is told most clearly in the Gospel according to Matthew. Today we join the story as Joseph must decide what to do when Mary becomes pregnant. Joseph entered into her disgrace... They shouldered the shame together... God had invited him into the heart of the divine deliverance operation—along with its social stigma. Indeed, following the unborn Christ already had consequences. Hear now the beginning of the story of Jesus' saving love.

This is how the birth of Jesus came about. When Jesus' mother, Mary, was engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Joseph, her husband, an upright person unwilling to disgrace her, decided to divorce her quietly. This was Joseph's intention when suddenly the angel of God appeared in a dream and said, "Joseph, heir to the House of David, don't be afraid to wed Mary; it is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived this child. She is to have a son, and you are to name him Jesus—'Salvation'—because he will save the people from their sins." All this happened to fulfill what God has said through the prophet:

"The virgin will be with child
and give birth,
and the child will be named 'Immanuel'
—a name that means 'God is with us.'"

When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of God had directed, and they went ahead with the marriage. He did not have intercourse with her until she had given birth; she had a son, and they named him Jesus.

Matthew 1:18-25 (Inclusive Bible)

P The Gospel of our Lord.

All **Praise to you, O Christ.**

[You may be Seated](#)

Children's Sermon & Noisy Offering

Message

Pr. Debra Jimenez

Hymn of the Day

Please stand in body or spirit.

Love Came Down at Christmas

Words and Music by
Roger Copeland



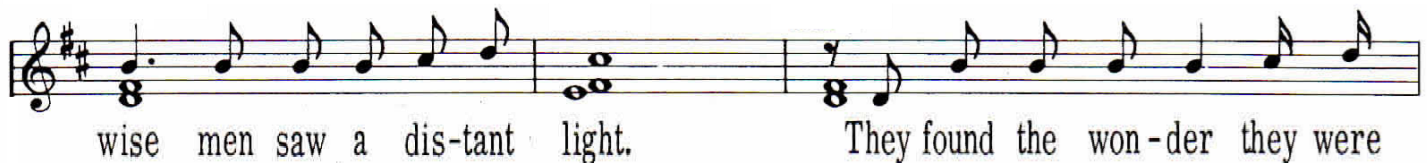
1. 3. Love__came down at Christ-mas,___ Love,___ all love di - vine;
2. Love___ was in a man-ger,___ In___ a cat-tle stall,



Love__came down at Christ-mas,___ And I know, I know that love is mine.
And___while an- gels hov - ered,___Love was born to be the King of



all._____ The shep-herds heard the choirs of an - gels, The



wise men saw a dis-tant light. They found the won-der they were



search - ing for, And wor - shipped Him that ho - ly night._____ (to Vs. 3)



mine._____ And I know, I know that love is mine._____

Profession of Faith

P Let us join together with the saints across the ages confessing our faith.

It is good, Holy One, to give thanks to you, always and everywhere.
You created us, you loved us into being,
you delivered us, and you spoke to us through prophets.
And then the time came for you to be with us, Emmanuel.

***All* In a time of trouble, poverty, and pain,
so many lived in grief, fear, and desperation,
without hope to light their way.
Still, you heard the people's cries. In a weary nation,
Mary gave birth to a boy.**

P Mary's boy became a man, compassionate and kind.
He invited everyone to follow the way of your kingdom,
the commonwealth of God
Wherever he went, he tended to those who were suffering.

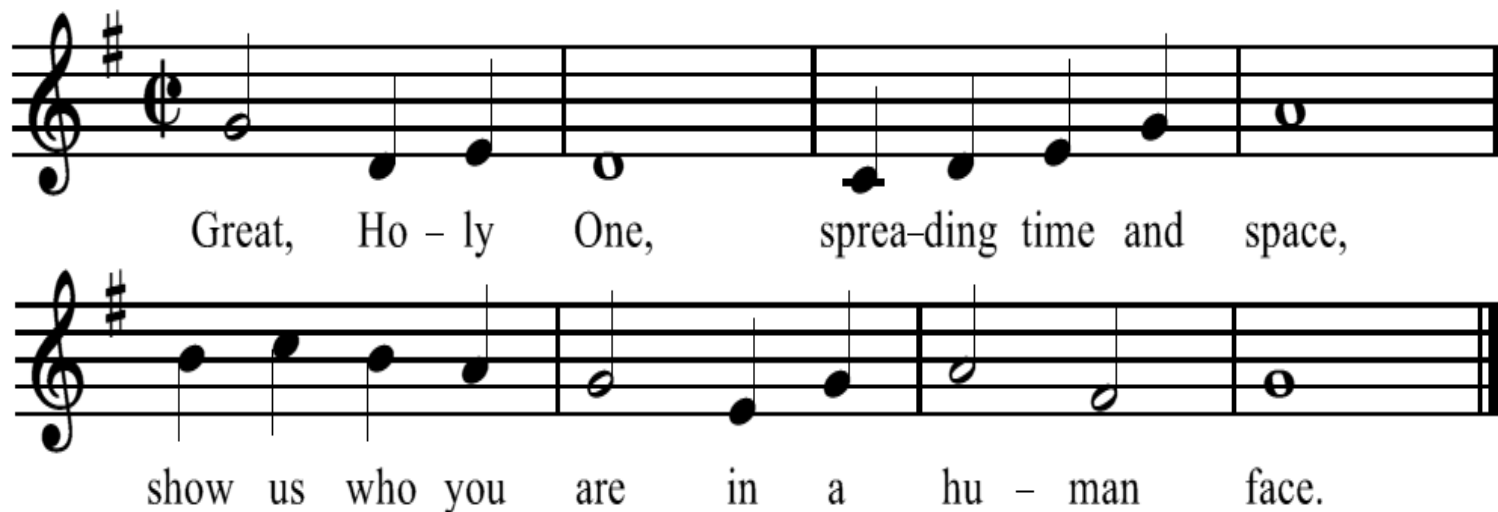
***All* Teaching, feeding, healing, Jesus showed us the way,
Sacred love revealing day by day by day,
Practicing resistance to hatred, fear, and oppression, cultivating care,
Centered in persistence, every act a prayer.**

P His own suffering at the hands of those with earthly power
gave birth to a movement of your Spirit, O God,
that would forge a new covenant of **Love**.
Jesus promised to be with us always,
in the power of your Word and Holy Spirit.

***All* Amen**

Prayers of the People

WA In this moment of silent contemplation, we lift up our hopes for the world, for its people, for the kind of kingdom embodied by the child who was the son of a strong and wise woman.



Solo *Awesome one, how shall we meet you?
“In the wisdom of a child, in opponents reconciled?
When you meet with sudden kindness,
find my holy place in your neighbor’s face.”*

All ***Great, Holy One, spreading time and space,
show us who You are in a human face.***

WA Holy Living One, Child of Love, Spirit of Acceptance,
we come to you today weary of the divisions
perpetrated by those who profit from fear,
weary of continued violence by those
who refuse to acknowledge the right to love and life for all people.
We know you are with us, for you came to our human story when we
needed your message so much.
We still do.

We ask, “what child is this that we follow,
and who are we in the scene of this unfolding story?”

All *Great, Holy One, spreading time and space,
show us who You are in a human face.*

WA As the manger awaits the arrival of the child,
 we pray for a hospitality like Joseph's,
 and we again plead for your presence to break into our lives
 and show us the light of love.
And we ask for the courage to step into the scene,
 preparing the way for your kingdom. Amen

All *Great, Holy One, spreading time and space,
show us who You are in a human face.*

*Sharing the **Love** of Christ*

In our continued physical distancing out of love for the health of one another, we will share the love of our risen Lord by "speaking" that love through sign language.

P Christ become **Love** with you.

All And also with you.

Offering [You may be Seated](#)

*Offering plates are available at the entrance to receive your offerings.
We will lift them up in thanksgiving before the throne of grace.*

All *So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;
 come peasant, king, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
 let loving hearts enthrone him.*

Offertory Prayer

P What gifts are adequate for the Child Enthroned by Love?
Our theme song says, “so bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come peasant, king, to own him.”

Whether what we have to give is simply the gift of our presence and gratitude, or if we are privileged with coffers of precious resources, we give what we can. In this way we “take ownership” of our role in the scene, in the unfolding story of Love.

Let us pray:

Eternal God,
you make the desert bloom
and send springs of water to thirsty ground.

All Receive these simple gifts of time, talent, and treasure
and make us messengers of your mercy and love
for all in need of your healing and justice.
We ask this through Christ our Savior. Amen.

Confession and Assurance

P We are captive, exiled, O God because we have, each in our own way,
chosen our own path, away from you.

All We are hungry for wisdom and knowledge, because we have,
too often, substituted our judgement for yours.
We are lost, in need of guidance.

Come, Lord Jesus; forgive us and restore us.
Come, Lord Jesus; guide us and deliver us.
Come, Lord Jesus; teach us and renew us.
Come, Lord Jesus.

P God, our kind and loving Savior God, has stepped in and saved us.

All God gave us a good bath, and we came out of it new people,
Washed inside and out by the Holy Spirit.
Our Savior Jesus poured out new life so generously.

P God's gift has restored our relationship with God
and given us back our lives.
And there's more life to come—an eternity of life!
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, ✝ and of the Holy Spirit.

All Amen

! *The Great Thanksgiving and Words of Institution* !

P The Lord be with you.

All And also with you.

P Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them up to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P On the night in which he gave himself up for us,
he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread,
gave it to his disciples, and said:

“Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.”

When the supper was over, he took the cup,
gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:

“Drink from this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for all
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

P And so, in remembrance of your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves as a holy and living sacrifice,
in union with Christ's offering for us,
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

All *♪ ♪ Christ came to uplift us, by his life we give. ♪ ♪*
Christ gave up his lifeblood, by his death we live.
Christ comes to us now, still, as we gather here.
Christ will come again, so, nothing shall we fear.

P Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,
and on these gifts of bread and wine.
Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ,
so that we may be for the world the body of Christ,
redeemed by his blood.
By your Spirit, make us one with Christ, one with each other,
and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory
and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Amen.

All *♪ ♪ So, my friends and neighbors, now it's up to us. ♪ ♪*
May we welcome strangers, building faith and trust.
May we live like Jesus in our time and place
'Til this weary nation knows amazing grace.

⋯⋯⋯
⋮ *The Lord's Prayer* ⋮
⋯⋯⋯

P Let us approach the throne of grace as we pray as Jesus taught us:

All **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 and ever. Amen.**

The Invitation

P In this meal, righteousness and love meet together.
Come, take your place at the table.

Note: the communion cups on the periphery of the tray contain red wine while the cups in the center contain white grape juice.

Gluten Free wafers available –ask the communion attendant

Communion Songs

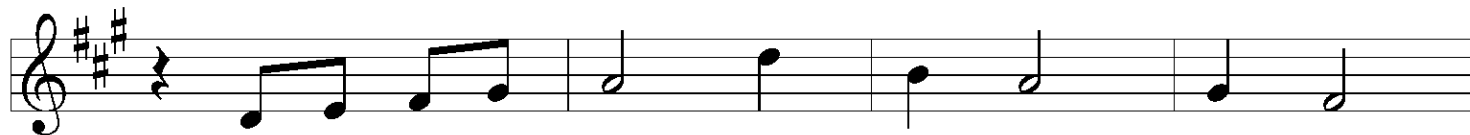
Night of Silence



1 Cold are the peo - ple, win - ter of life; we
2 Voice in the dis - tance, call in the night; on
3 Spir - it a - mong us, shine like the star; your



trem - ble in shad - ows this cold end - less night.
wind you en - fold us, you speak of the light.
light that guides shep - herds and kings from a - far



Fro - zen in the snow lie ros - es sleep - ing,
Gen - tle on the ear you whis - per soft - ly
shim - mer in the sky so emp - ty, lone - ly,



flow - ers that will ech - o the sun - rise;
ru - mors of a dawn so em - brac - ing;
ris - ing in the warmth of the Son's love;



fire of hope is our on - ly warmth:
breath - less love a - waits dark - ened souls:
star un - know - ing of night and day:

“Silent Night, Holy Night” may be sung simultaneously with “Night of Silence.”

1 Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace.

2 Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar,
heav'nly hosts sing, alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born!
Christ, the Savior, is born!

3 Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from your holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

Away in a Manger

1 A - way in a man - ger, no crib for his bed, the lit - tle Lord
2 The cat - tle are low - ing; the poor ba - by wakes, but lit - tle Lord
3 Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask you to stay close by me for -

Je - sus laid down his sweet head; the stars in the sky looked
Je - sus no cry - ing he makes. I love you, Lord Je - sus; look
ev - er and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear chil - dren in

down where he lay; the lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.
down from the sky and stay by my cra - dle till morn - ing is nigh.
your ten - der care and fit us for heav - en, to live with you there.

Post Communion Blessing and Prayer

P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you
and keep you in his grace.

All Amen

P Generous God,
in bread and cup you have revealed your glory
for all people to see together.

**All Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim
your good news of liberation and release,
brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior.
Amen.**

Stewardship of Life and Ministry Announcements

We ask, We Answer

[Please stand in body or spirit.](#)

WA As we prepare to go into the world,
let us ask and answer the question we came with.

All What child IS this?

WA This is the one surrounded by sacrificial love.

All What child IS this?

WA This is the one who would go on to great sacrifice in the name of love.

All

What child IS this?

WA This, this is the one “Enthroned by Love”
who invites us into more love than we thought was possible.

Benediction & Sending

P May the Womb of Life,
 the Child of Love,
 the Spirit of Resistance to Injustice
 be with you now and as you go.

In the name of the Father,
And of the Son,
and of the ✝ Holy Spirit

All Amen

All *This, this is Christ the king,
 whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
 haste, haste to bring him laud,
 the babe, the son of Mary!*

Dismissal

WA Go in peace. The Gift of Love is near.

All Thanks be to God.



What Child IS This?

Readings for next Sunday,
December 28th
Sunday after Christmas

Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12 (Inclusive Bible)

Revised Common Lectionary

First Reading: Isaiah 63:7-9

Psalm: Psalm 148

Second Reading: Hebrews 2:10-18

Gospel: Matthew 2:13-23

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