

December 18, 2016
Fourth Sunday of Advent

Prelude: Vom Himmel hoch Alec Wyton/Luther
Chiming of the Hour

***Hymn:** #93 *Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates*

Welcome

Joys and Concerns

Choral Introit: *Prepare Ye The Way of the Lord*

Lighting of the Fourth Advent Candle – Love

One: Love. Everything begins with Love.

All: From the beginning of creation to the end of time, God's love colors everything.

One: Open your hearts to love and you will recognize hope shining in the most ancient of promises.
(The candle of Hope is lit.)

One: Love. Everything continues with Love.

All: From strangers across oceans to neighbors next door, God's love dwells in everything.

One: Live love as a way of being and you will see peace shining in each and every face that images: beloved.
(The candle of Peace is lit.)

One: Love. Everything ends with Love.

All: From the most challenging struggle to the most wondrous delight, God's love flows through everything.

One: Give love with open hands and you will find joy shining in the surprises that undo us and transform us.
(The candle of Joy is lit.)

One: Love. Everything leans toward Love.

All: From the greatest ruler to the tiniest baby,

God's love changes everything.

One: Prepare the way for love and you will find love shining in each and every breath that whispers: Emmanuel.

(The candle of Love is lit.)

Advent Response: *Light Four Candles*

Call to Worship

One: Come away from times of weariness. Dare to accept the energy God offers you.

All: Restore our energy, O source of all power. Let your goodness flow through us.

One: Come away from all your insignificant distractions. Dare to let God show you a larger picture.

All: Help us to examine the flow of our lives. Reveal to us what is really important.

One: Come away from the scorn of enemies. Dare to laugh with those who have laughed at you.

All: Lead us to think of others in new ways. Let us find grace and peace in Emmanuel.

One: Come, let us worship God together!

Prayer of Invocation (in unison)

Holy God, Generous Lover of all, we come to worship longing to abide in love, as lavish and wide as the stretching ocean and still as intimate as a tear. We yearn to feel your presence flowing among us. Emmanuel, the promised one, we know you are as near to us as our breathing. As we sing and pray, speak and listen, let the light of love shine in our midst, for it is through this world-changing love that we witness you moving in and among us. God-with-us, be with us, in this hour and every hour. Amen.

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession (in unison)

O God, you have called us to be apostles of your grace, but we have been judgmental instead of gracious. We condemn in others what is also, all too often, in us. We refuse to listen to other's pain or to understand the source of their tears. We avoid those who are angry or scornful or embittered. It is easier to dismiss the feelings of others than to offer true empathy. We would rather reject than encounter them. Yet you come to us, Emmanuel, and we want to repent. You reach out to us, and our hearts melt. We want to embrace this new life. Hear now our silent confessions as we turn to you seeking mercy, forgiveness and grace.

Moment of Silent Prayer

Assurance of God's Love

***Gloria Patri:** *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

Responsive Reading – Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

(Page 665 HS in the pew bible)

Reading from the Hebrew Scripture – Isaiah 7:10-16

(Page 759 HS in the pew bible)

Children's Message and Lord's Prayer (debts)

(Children will leave for Sunday School and Youth Discussion Group)

***Hymn:** #110 *Love Has Come*

Verse 1: Sung by choir – Verses 2&3: Sung by all

Offering of Gifts

Anthem: *How Far Is't to Bethlehem* Shaw and Parker

***Doxology:** *Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below; Praise God above ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

Prayer of Dedication

New Testament Reading – Matthew 1:18-25

(Page 1 NT in the pew bible)

Sermon: “God is with us”

Reverend Diane Monti-Catania

Pastoral Prayer, Silent Prayer

***Hymn:** #113 *Angels We Have Heard on High*

Benediction

Benediction Response: *Come and Worship*

Postlude: *Veni, Emmanuel* Alec Wyton

(*Please stand if able)

If you are visiting us today, Welcome! Please sign the guestbook at the front door and introduce yourself to our Pastor or to one of our Deacons.

Please join us in the Parish Hall for refreshments and fellowship following worship. All are welcome. Our host today is Nancy Rossi.

Please see an usher:

If you would like to use a hearing device;

If you would like to bring your child to the Nursery

Many thanks to:

The Choir for lighting the Advent Candle

Carol Magowan for serving as the lay reader

Sharon Tingley & Joe Catania for ushering

The Bok Family for donating the flowers

Prayer List

Will, Al, The Sosnoff Family, Wilma Tillerman, Emily, Leonard Kaufman, Laura Flores, Margie Vail, Gordon Weekly, Paul McAbee, Shirley Rogers, Jane Fitting, Nancy Tuckerman, Kit Kellogg, Barbara Jacquette, Gloria Buckley, Petie Robinson, Jeri Johnson, family and friends Trish Johnson.

CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK

Today	11:15 am Christmas Caroling 4 pm Chorus Angelicus
Tuesday	5:15 pm Bell Choir Rehearsal
Wednesday	7:15 pm Choir Rehearsal
Thursday	4:30 pm Women’s Bible Study
Saturday	Christmas Eve 5:30 pm Bell Choir Prelude 6:00 pm Christmas Eve Worship Service
Sunday	10 am Service of Lessons and Carols
Monday	Office Closed

OPPORTUNITIES

CHRISTMAS CAROLING AFTER WORSHIP TODAY

This Sunday, December 18, we will board a school bus after coffee hour and take Christmas Carols to church members and friends who live at Geer Village and Noble Horizons. Join us ~ All ages welcome!

CHORUS ANGELICUS ~ TODAY at 4:00 P.M.

Chorus Angelicus, of Joyful Noise, Inc., will perform their annual concert this afternoon at 4pm in our Meetinghouse. The choir will perform a blend of traditional and contemporary carols, hymns and seasonal selection. Come and experience the joy of "those singing angels"! Tickets are \$30 for general seating, \$45 for priority seating and \$10 for students.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

Join us for Christmas Eve Worship on Saturday, December 24. The Bell Choir prelude will start at 5:30 p.m.

**THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
OF SALISBURY**

**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
SALISBURY, CONNECTICUT**

*GATHERED IN 1744
INCORPORATED IN 1949*



CREATED BY GOD
CALLED BY JESUS CHRIST
GUIDED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT
DEDICATED TO LOVING AND SERVING GOD AND NEIGHBOR

The Reverend Diane Monti-Catania, *Pastor*