

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

9:30AM, December 21st, 2025

Asterisk (*) indicates standing, as able. Bold/colored type indicates text spoken in unison.

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP Responsive

Beloved, God calls to us - like Joseph - through angels and messengers, inviting us to listen for the Spirit's guidance in the midst of half-truths and distractions.

We listen faithfully for the day that all the earth awaits.

Sometimes, angels surprise us (as they did Mary) with good news too fantastical to believe and yet too real - realer than real - to ignore.

We listen faithfully for the day that all the earth awaits.

For generations, God has sent signs of God's coming kingdom in unexpected places - the birth of a child, the wisdom of the lowly, the faithfulness of a carpenter.

We listen faithfully for the day that all the earth awaits.

Come! Let us worship God who calls out to us, inviting us to faithfulness as we watch, wait, and work for the day when the whole world knows the abundant love and grace of Emmanuel, God-with-us.

Come! Let us worship as we listen faithfully for the day that all the earth awaits.

*HYMN "All Earth Is Waiting to See the Promised One" UMH # 210

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH Apostles' Creed UMH # 881

OPENING PRAYER Unison

O Christ, we long for your coming. Hasten that day when those who seek you in every nation will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit at the table in your kingdom. Hasten the day when your kingdom will come in all its glory, and suffering and pain and sickness and oppression and death will be overcome forever. Hasten the day when we will be resurrected as a great multicultural family and live in peace, harmony, joy, and love together in your kingdom. Amen.

ADVENT CANDLELIGHTING RITUAL

Elaine Warren

PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND PARDON Unison

O Holy God of Promise, we so often place our trust in the things we can see, and touch, and easily believe. But you did not ask us to believe what is easy; you have asked us to believe what is true! Forgive us, Holy One, when we doubt the ways you work. Forgive us when we find it hard to believe an ancient story. Forgive us when we question how you chose to enter the world, born as one of us. Forgive our lack of faith and belief in ways which seem so impossible to believe. Help us to look in faith, open our belief, and set aside our doubts that you sent your Son, born of a virgin – the one who has come to set us all free. We offer these prayers in the name of your Son, Emmanuel, God with us. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Hear the good news: The God who promised to be with us has never turned away from us. Even when our faith falters and our doubts feel heavy, God comes near—full of mercy, full of truth. In Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, God entered our world not because our belief was strong, but because His love is stronger still. Through Him, we are forgiven, renewed, and set free. So lift up your hearts and know this truth: In Christ, your doubts are met with grace, your sins are forgiven, and your life is made new. **Thanks be to God! Amen.**

JOYS, CONCERNS AND PASTORAL PRAYER

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 1:18-25 (NRSV)

- 18** Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit.
- 19** Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly.
- 20** But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.
- 21** She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

22 All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

23 "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."

24 When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife,

25 but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

MESSAGE "Emmanuel" Rev. Dongkue Jee

RESPOND TO THE WORD

* HYMN "Emmanuel, Emmanuel" UMH # 204

THE LORD'S PRAYER UMH # 895

OFFERING

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

*DOXOLOGY "Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow" UMH # 95

*PRAYER OF OFFERING Unison

Faithful God of unfolding plans, when our certainty falters and our expectations collapse, you are still at work, inviting us into grace that redefines and redeems. Like Joseph, we bring our gifts and lay down our plans, trusting that your Spirit can shape our offering into something greater than we imagined. Let these gifts and our lives be signs of obedience, humility, and hope. May they help carry Christ into a world still longing for peace, hungry for love, and needing redemption. We pray in the name of the one who is Emmanuel—God with us. Amen.

SENDING FORTH

*HYMN "O Come, All Ye Faithful(v. 1, 3 & 6)" UMH # 240

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

* The offering plate is located at the entrance of the sanctuary. Please feel free to participate.

* Fellowship follows the worship service. Please join us for refreshments and fellowship in the Parlor.



Welcome to
Mendham United Methodist Church

www.mendhamumc.org

10 East Main Street, Mendham, NJ 07945

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Sunday, December 21st, 2025



Classic Banner, Year A, Fourth Sunday of Advent, 1997,
Vanderbilt Divinity Library staff,
Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN, United States

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