

# Lake Merritt United Methodist Church



An Inclusive Christian Community of Oakland

*Sustaining a vibrant and growing congregation through Christian spiritual transformation, making our work and the church relevant and visible.*

(510) 465-4793      [www.lakemerrittumc.org](http://www.lakemerrittumc.org)

1255 First Avenue      Oakland, CA 94606

## LIVESTREAM WORSHIP SERVICE



### “I Believe in the Sun: The Light in the Darkness”

Lake Merritt United Methodist Church celebrates the longer 7-week season of Advent, its historic length, as do many churches in the United States and other parts of the world.

Rev. Pamela Kurtz, *Pastor*  
Joan Miller, *Music Director*  
Neil Wade, *Office Administrator*

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Sunday, November 15, 2020  
*First Sunday of Advent*  
*Celebration of Divine Worship*

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WELCOME

MOMENT OF SILENCE

INTROIT

**I Believe Even When**

*W&M: Mark Miller*

LMUMC Voice Choir

*I believe in the sun, I believe in the sun,  
even when, even when it's not shining. (2x)*

OPENING PRAYER [responsive]:

Judi & Wayne Fabrizio

The depth of night

**The depth of night**

The fear of the “other”

**The fear of the “other”**

The loneliness of fear

**The loneliness of fear**

Holy One,

we thank you for the glimpses we catch  
of your gift of light.

Even in the midst of fear,  
of challenge, of struggle---

even when our future seems overshadowed  
by the veil of today,  
ignite the flame of light within us

**... that we might glow with its brilliance from the inside out.**

*I believe in the sun,  
I believe in the sun,  
even when... even when...  
it's not shining.*

Help us face the dimness of the future  
and embrace the assurance that the light is already there,  
and will always be.

1. *Blest be the God of Israel, who comes to set us free,  
who visits and redeems us, who grants us liberty.  
The prophets spoke of mercy, of rescue and release;  
God shall fulfill the promise to bring the gift of peace.*
2. *Now from the house of David a child of grace has come,  
a Savior who will lead us to our eternal home.  
Before him goes his herald, forerunner in the way,  
the prophet of salvation, the messenger of day.*
3. *On prisoners of darkness the sun begins to rise,  
the dawning of forgiveness up on the sinner's eyes,  
to guide the feet of pilgrims along the paths of peace.  
Oh bless our God and Savior with songs that never cease!*

## READING OF SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 11:1-4a; 61:1-3a (CEB)

A shoot will grow up from the stump of Jesse;  
a branch will sprout from his roots.  
The LORD's spirit will rest upon him,  
a spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
a spirit of planning and strength,  
a spirit of knowledge and fear of the LORD.  
He will delight in fearing the LORD.  
He won't judge by appearances,  
nor decide by hearsay.  
He will judge the needy with righteousness,  
and decide with equity for those who suffer in the land.

The LORD God's spirit is upon me,  
because the LORD has anointed me.  
He has sent me  
to bring good news to the poor,  
to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim release for captives,  
and liberation for prisoners,  
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor  
and a day of vindication for our God,  
to comfort all who mourn,

to provide for Zion's mourners,  
to give them a crown in place of ashes,  
oil of joy in place of mourning,  
a mantle of praise in place of discouragement.

SERMON

***"I Believe in the Sun: The Light in the Darkness"***

Rev. Pamela Kurtz, *Pastor*

HYMN OF REFLECTION

**Rise Up**

*by: Andra Day*

CNUMC Bay District Members

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Pastor: "Lord,"

**People: "Hear our Prayers."**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

*\*We invite you to use any other name to refer to the Divine with which you are comfortable ~ God, Father, Mother, Creator, etc.*

***Our \*Creator in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.***

***Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.***

***Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.***

***For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and  
forever. Amen.***

## OFFERING OUR GIFTS TO GOD

*Please prepare your checks for mailing, or cash for drop off at the church office while our Music  
Director leads us in our Thanksgiving Song.*

THANKSGIVING SONG     **We Believe** (sung to 'Give Thanks') TFWS 2036

**Believe, with a hopeful heart!**

**Believe, and shine your light!**

**Believe, because the song we sing is sung for all!**

**And now let the weak say, "I am strong;"**

**let the poor say, "I am rich**

**because of what our God has done for us."**

**Believe!**

## CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION & RESOLVE *[responsive]*

Advent is a period of waiting, but we are not bound by waiting patiently. We wait with the hopeful impatience of a people who know that the world is not as it should be. And with this hopeful impatience, we also recognize that we are complicit in the wrongdoings of this world, we are inherently sinful beings, and especially as people of privilege, we have an obligation to name our sins and to ask God to forgive us.

Today, we will confess with our bodies.

Join me in our prayer of confession, our time of telling the truth and naming our complicity in sin.

I invite you to make your hands into fists.

**God, we confess in this season of Advent that our hands are the hands of oppressors. Our hands have been complicit in the enslavement and exploitation of peoples and this planet. Our hands have remained still, even as walls go up and guns pull triggers. Forgive us for all that we have done and failed to do.**

I invite you to clench your toes together tightly.

**God, we confess in this season of Advent that our feet walk on land that is not our own, land that has been stolen from indigenous people, land that has been stripped of its resources, land that is growing warmer every day. Our feet have walked this land without a second thought. Forgive us for our actions, and our failure to act.**

Now I invite you to close your eyes.

**God, we confess in this season of Advent that our eyes have failed to see the injustices all around us, especially the discrimination and mistreatment of people of color and our LGBTQ siblings. And we also confess that we have failed to speak helpfully against such injustice, remaining silent, or utilizing violent and alienating language rather than your powerful and convicting language of love. Forgive us for all that we have said and left unsaid, and all that we have overlooked.**

This is what sin feels like– living in tension, in pain, holding tightly to what we think is ours to claim, living in isolation with no ability to perceive the suffering of others.

## TIME OF SILENCE FOR PRAYERS OF FORGIVENESS & HOPE

ASSURANCE OF GRACE [*responsive*]:

Jesus is coming. Jesus is coming so that our sin no longer threatens our existence. Jesus is coming to end the oppression and tyranny of this world, to dry the tears of all those who weep, and to remind each and every one of us just how much we are loved.

So, open your hands and face your palms upward; unclench your toes and wiggle them freely, open your eyes and look into the faces of your neighbors and friends. You are forgiven; you are set free. So now, use your hands, your feet, your eyes and your words to remind this world that Jesus is coming, to remind this world that redemption is here, to remind this world that God's kin-dom is one of justice, mercy and the greatest love.

**Praise be to the God who reigns with justice and mercy. Amen!**

Jessie Light-Wells

## SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

As forgiven people living in anticipation of Jesus's coming, let us share peace with our siblings in the world.

*We go to our windows and doors and share with The world:  
"the peace of Christ be with you!"*

## GRATITUDE TIMES

CLOSING SONG      **Toda la Tierra (All Earth is Waiting)**      UMH 210

*1. All earth is waiting to see the Promised One,  
and open furrows await the seed of God.  
All the world, bound and struggling, seeks true liberty;  
it cries out for justice and searches for the truth.*

*2. Thus says the prophet to those of Israel:  
'A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel,'  
one whose name is 'God with us' our Savior shall be;  
with him hope will blossom once more within our hearts.*

*3. Mountains and valleys will have to be made plain;  
open new highways, new highways for the Lord.  
He is now coming closer, so come all and see,*

*and open the doorways as wide as wide can be.*

*4. In lowly stable the Promised One appeared;  
yet feel his presence throughout the earth today,  
for he lives in all Christians and is with us now;  
again, with his coming he brings us liberty.*

## BENEDICTION

I invite you to light your candle for the Benediction:

We light the Advent candles against the winter night,  
not “because of,” or “during,” but “against,”  
reminding us that the light of Advent,  
like the light of Christ, is a veritable protest to and resistance of  
the darkness that gathers all around us.

And so, my friends, like bells ringing out the news  
that the sun still shines even on cloudy days,  
fill the night left by sadness with messages of hope.

Go into your lives humming the tunes that keep that hope alive in you  
and that spur you on in your work of justice and reconciliation.

Raise your voices and repeat after me...

“do not be afraid!”

**“do not be afraid!”**

**Amen!**

## POSTLUDE

## **I Believe Even When**

LMUMC Chimes Choir