

# 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.*

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**LIVESTREAM WORSHIP SERVICE**



## “I Believe in Love: Daring Right Relationship”

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*  
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Sunday, November 29, 2020

Third 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 feat. Judi Fabrizio

*I believe in love, I believe in love,  
even when, even when I don't feel it. (2x)*

OPENING PRAYER [responsive]:

The emptiness of loneliness

**The emptiness of loneliness**

The wounds inflicted

**The wounds inflicted**

The fear of the "other"

**The fear of the "other"**

Holy One,

we thank you for the glimpses we catch  
of your gift of daring love.

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

even when we cannot yet see a better day

when we will act like the human family we are,  
ignite the flame of love within us,

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

*I believe in love,*

*I believe in love,*

*even when... even when...*

*I don't feel it.*

Help us face this fear of difference  
and dare to see what love can do.

1. *Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates;  
behold, the King of glory waits;  
the King of kings is drawing near;  
the Savior of the world is here!*
2. *Fling wide the portals of your heart;  
make it a temple, set apart  
from earthly use for heaven's employ,  
adorned with prayer and love and joy.*
3. *Redeemer, come, with us abide;  
our hearts to thee we open wide;  
let us thy inner presence feel;  
thy grace and love in us reveal.*
4. *Thy Holy Spirit lead us on  
until our glorious goal is won;  
eternal praise, eternal fame  
be offered, Savior, to thy name!*

## READING OF SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 7:1-14; Matthew 1: 1-25a (CEB)

Judi &amp; Wayne Fabrizio

In the days of Ahaz (Jotham's son and grandson of Judah's King Uzziah), Aram's King Rezin and Israel's King Pekah (Remaliah's son) came up to attack Jerusalem, but they couldn't overpower it.

When the house of David was told that Aram had become allies with Ephraim, their hearts and the hearts of their people shook as the trees of a forest shake when there is a wind. But the Lord said to Isaiah, "Go out to meet Ahaz, you and your son Shear-jashub, at the end of the channel of the Upper Pool, by the road to the field where laundry is washed, and say to him, 'Be careful and stay calm. Don't fear, and don't lose heart over these two pieces of smoking torches, over the burning anger of Rezin, Aram, and Remaliah's son. Aram has planned evil against you with Ephraim and Remaliah's son, saying, "Let's march up against Judah, tear it apart, capture it for ourselves, and install Tabeel's son as its king." But the Lord God says: It won't happen; it won't take place. The chief of Aram is Damascus; the chief of Damascus is Rezin (in sixty-five more years Ephraim will be shattered as a nation); the chief of Ephraim is Samaria; and the chief of Samaria is the son of Remaliah. If you don't believe this, you can't be trusted.'"

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz: "Ask a sign from the Lord your God. Make it as deep as the grave or as high as heaven." But Ahaz said, "I won't ask; I won't test the Lord." Then Isaiah said, "Listen, house of David! Isn't it enough for you to be tiresome for people that you are also tiresome before my God? Therefore, the Lord will give you

a sign. The young woman is pregnant and is about to give birth to a son, and she will name him Immanuel.

*(Matthew's genesis story of Jesus)*

A record of the ancestors of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham:

Abraham was the father of Isaac.

Isaac was the father of Jacob.

Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers.

Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah,  
whose mother was Tamar.

Perez was the father of Hezron.

Hezron was the father of Aram.

Aram was the father of Amminadab.

Amminadab was the father of Nahshon.

Nahshon was the father of Salmon.

Salmon was the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab.

Boaz was the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth.

Obed was the father of Jesse.

Jesse was the father of David the king.

David was the father of Solomon,  
whose mother had been the wife of Uriah.

Solomon was the father of Rehoboam.

Rehoboam was the father of Abijah.

Abijah was the father of Asaph.

Asaph was the father of Jehoshaphat.

Jehoshaphat was the father of Joram.

Joram was the father of Uzziah.

Uzziah was the father of Jotham.

Jotham was the father of Ahaz.

Ahaz was the father of Hezekiah.

Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh.

Manasseh was the father of Amos.

Amos was the father of Josiah.

Josiah was the father of Jechoniah and his brothers.

This was at the time of the exile to Babylon.

After the exile to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel.

Shealtiel was the father of Zerubbabel.

Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud.

Abiud was the father of Eliakim.

Eliakim was the father of Azor.

Azor was the father of Zadok.

Zadok was the father of Achim.

Achim was the father of Eliud.

Eliud was the father of Eleazar.

Eleazar was the father of Matthan.

Matthan was the father of Jacob.

Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary – of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Christ. So there were fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen

generations from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen generations from the exile to Babylon to the Christ.

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. When Mary his mother was engaged to Joseph, before they were married, she became pregnant by the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband was a righteous man. Because he didn't want to humiliate her, he decided to call off their engagement quietly. As he was thinking about this, an angel from the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because the child she carries was conceived by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you will call him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." Now all of this took place so that what the Lord had spoken through the prophet would be fulfilled:

*Look! A virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son,  
And they will call him, Emmanuel.  
(Emmanuel means "God with us.")*

When Joseph woke up, he did just as an angel from God commanded and took Mary as his wife.

SERMON

***"I Believe in Love: Daring Right Relationship"***

Rev. Pamela Kurtz, *Pastor*

HYMN OF REFLECTION

**Love Has Broken Down the Wall**

*W&M: Mark Miller*

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*]

In times when humanity disappoints,  
perhaps when even our own thoughts and behaviors disappoint,  
it is an important act to call out, name and claim, the consequences of our  
wrongs.

And in times of distress it is a prophetic act to call out,  
name and claim, our belief in the hope for tomorrow.

**I believe that we have been taught to fear one another AND**

I believe that we are capable of learning to love.

**I believe that our society is built on a foundation of oppression of some  
over others AND**

I believe that we can speak this truth and move to act in ways that balance  
this inequity.

**I believe that we are afraid AND**

I believe that we can lean on each other and God for courage to face  
anything.

**We believe, even when we are discouraged.**

We believe, that when we are discouraged,  
raising our voices for justice will bring about more love in the world!

## TIME OF SILENCE FOR PRAYERS OF FORGIVENESS & HOPE

ASSURANCE OF GRACE [*responsive*]:

Hear the Good News my siblings: We are being freed even now of the fear that binds us. As forgiven people who are being changed, and we go into a world that is also being changed. With the courage of God, we go to share the Good News that Love breaks down the walls that separate us.

**In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Amen!**

### 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      **It Came Upon the Midnight Clear**      UMH 218

- 1. It came upon the midnight clear,  
that glorious song of old,  
from angels bending near the earth  
to touch their harps of gold:  
"Peace on the earth, good will to men,  
from heaven's all-gracious King."  
The world in solemn stillness lay,  
to hear the angels sing.*
- 2. Still through the cloven skies they come  
with peaceful wings unfurled,  
and still their heavenly music floats  
o'er all the weary world;  
above its sad and lowly plains,  
they bend on hovering wing,  
and ever o'er its Babel sounds  
the blessed angels sing.*
- 3. And ye, beneath life's crushing load,  
whose forms are bending low,  
who toil along the climbing way*

*with painful steps and slow,  
look now! for glad and golden hours  
come swiftly on the wing.  
O rest beside the weary road,  
and hear the angels sing!*

4. *For lo! the days are hastening on,  
by prophet seen of old,  
when with the ever-circling years  
shall come the time foretold  
when peace shall over all the earth  
its ancient splendors fling,  
and the whole world send back the song  
which now the angels sing.*

## BENEDICTION

*Pastor:* 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