

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 God: Ode to Joy”

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, December 13, 2020
Fifth Sunday of Advent
Celebration of Divine Worship

WELCOME

MOMENT OF SILENCE

INTROIT

I Believe

W&M: Mark Miller

LMUMC Voice Choir feat. Juliet Hannafin

*I believe in the Light, I believe in the Light,
That has come, that has come, and is coming. (2x)*

OPENING PRAYER [responsive]:

We see the star rising

We see the star rising

We hear the glad tidings

We hear the glad tidings

We know we are not alone

We know we are not alone

Holy One,

we thank you for the glimpses we catch
of your gift of peace on earth.

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

even when we aren't sure that

goodwill among us can be found,

ignite the flame of peace within us,

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

I believe in God,

I believe in God,

even when... even when...

God is silent.

Help us face the pain of life

and embrace the assurance that light is already here,

and always coming.

1 *O come, O come, Immanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.*

[Refrain:]

***Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.***

2 *O come, O Wisdom from on high,
who ordered all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show
and teach us in its ways to go. **Refrain***

3 *O come, O Bright and Morning Star,
and bring us comfort from afar!
Dispel the shadows of the night
and turn our darkness into light. **Refrain***

4 *O come, O King of nations, bind
in one the hearts of all mankind.
Bid all our sad divisions cease
and be yourself our King of Peace. **Refrain***

READING OF SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 9:2-7; John 1:1-6, 14-18 (CEB)

Juliet Hannafin & Tom Huetteman

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.

On those living in a pitch-dark land, light has dawned.

You have made the nation great;
you have increased its joy.

They rejoiced before you as with joy at the harvest,
as those who divide plunder rejoice.

As on the day of Midian, you've shattered the yoke that burdened them,
the staff on their shoulders,
and the rod of their oppressor.

Because every boot of the thundering warriors,
and every garment rolled in blood
will be burned, fuel for the fire.

A child is born to us, a son is given to us,

and authority will be on his shoulders.

He will be named

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

There will be vast authority and endless peace

for David's throne and for his kingdom,

establishing and sustaining it

with justice and righteousness

now and forever.

(John's genesis story of Jesus)

In the beginning was the Word

and the Word was with God

and the Word was God.

The Word was with God in the beginning.

Everything came into being through the Word,

and without the Word

nothing came into being.

What came into being

through the Word was life,

and the life was the light for all people.

The light shines in the darkness,

and the darkness doesn't extinguish the light.

A man named John was sent from God. He came as a witness to testify concerning the light, so that through him everyone would believe in the light. He himself wasn't the light, but his mission was to testify concerning the light.

The Word became flesh

and made his home among us.

We have seen his glory,

glory like that of a father's only son,

full of grace and truth.

John testified about him, crying out, "This is the one of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is greater than me because he existed before me.'"

From his fullness we have all received grace upon grace;

as the Law was given through Moses,

so grace and truth came into being through Jesus Christ.

No one has ever seen God.

God the only Son,
who is at the Father's side,
has made God known.

SERMON *"I Believe in the Light: Illuminating Peace"*
Rev. Pamela Kurtz, *Pastor*

HYMN OF REFLECTION **When Angels Sing**
LMUMC Choir
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
peace for the world.

I believe that humans seem to have a penchant for conflict AND
I believe that we are capable of learning non-violent ways
to negotiate difference.

I believe that we have perpetrated deep suffering upon each other AND
I believe that we can face up to the facts of privilege and work for equity.

I believe that our fear has told us that we must “win” in order to survive AND
I believe that “winning” at the cost of others can be called out and changed.

We believe, even when we are discouraged.
We believe, that when we are discouraged,
raising our voices for justice will offer us peace!

TIME OF SILENCE FOR PRAYERS OF FORGIVENESS & HOPE

ASSURANCE OF GRACE *[responsive]*:

Hear the Good News my siblings: When we acknowledge our penchant for
conflict and privilege to God, God forgives our silence and inaction.
Renewed with the courage of God, we go to break the chains of injustice,
sharing the Good News that God’s light is here among us and in us as we
act for peace for all.

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 **Go, Tell It On the Mountain** UMH 251

Refrain:

***Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain,
that Jesus Christ is born.***

*1 While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
behold throughout the heavens there shown a holy light. (Refrain)*

*2 The shepherds feared and trembled, when lo! above the earth,
rang out the angel chorus that hailed the Savior's birth. (Refrain)*

*3 Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. (Refrain)*

BENEDICTION

Pastor: I invite you to light your candle and hold it high for the Benediction:

In this season of waiting know this...

We wait for justice but we do not wait to work for change;

We wait for restored health but we do not wait to work to heal;

We wait for wholeness but we do not wait to work at binding
brokenness;

We wait for peace but we do not wait to work to eliminate hatred.

And so, my friends, like bells ringing out the news
that the light has dawned and shines on all people,
fill the night left by sadness with messages of peace.

Go into your lives humming the tunes that keep that peace 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

LMUMC Chimes Choir