

Lake Merritt United Methodist Church

An Inclusive Christian Community of Oakland



LAKE PARK

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

IN JOINT FELLOWSHIP

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

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"The Table of Hope"

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December 17, 2023
Third Sunday in Advent
CELEBRATION OF WORSHIP

WELCOME

Rev. Sunae Cho, *Pastor*

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

The Taharka Family

On this third Sunday of Advent, we remember the gift of hope we have in Christ. The prophets of Israel spoke of the coming of Christ, of how a savior would be born, a king in the line of David. They spoke of how he would rule the world widely and bless all nations. We remember that it was from the manger at Bethlehem that he came and gave light to the world. As we light this candle, we are reminded to be alert and to watch for the light of Christ even in the most unlikely places and people. Loving God, we thank you for the hope you give us. Help us prepare our hearts for the Lord's coming by being open to seeing the light of Christ in others. We ask this in the name of the one born in Bethlehem, Jesus our Lord. Amen.

INTROIT

O Come, O Come, Emanuel

LMUMC Bell Choir

OPENING PRAYER (*RESPONSIVE*)

The Taharka Family

Leader: In the midst of busy shopping, planning,
and end-of-year weariness,
we pause to hear the ancient stories.
We light a candle in the darkness
to celebrate a visitation.
**People: Gathered here for worship,
we declare our intention to live
as if the greatest gift in the world
were about to be placed into our hands
as if the Giver has understood
our deepest needs, our most heartfelt prayers,
our greatest hopes.**
All: Even now Jesus Christ is moving towards us. Amen.

Ann Siddall (adapt)

1. All earth is waiting to see the Promised One,
and open furrows, the sowing of the Lord.
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,”
for his name is “God with us,” our brother 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.

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Margaret LeWright

SCRIPTURE

Philippians 1:19-30 (CEB)

The Taharka Family

I know that this will result in my release through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. It is my expectation and hope that I won't be put to shame in anything. Rather, I hope with daring courage that Christ's greatness will be seen in my body, now as always, whether I live or die. Because for me, living serves Christ and dying is even better. If I continue to live in this world, I get results from my work. But I don't know what I prefer. I'm torn between the two because I want to leave this life and be with Christ, which is far better. However, it's more important for me to stay in this world for your sake. I'm sure of this: I will stay alive and remain with all of you to help your progress and the joy of your faith, and to increase your pride in Christ Jesus through my presence when I visit you again.

Most important, live together in a manner worthy of Christ's gospel. Do this, whether I come and see you or I'm absent and hear about you. Do this so that you stand firm, united in one spirit and mind as you struggle together to remain faithful to the gospel. That way, you won't be afraid of anything your enemies do. Your faithfulness and courage are a sign of their coming destruction and your salvation, which is from God. God has generously granted you the privilege, not only of believing in Christ but also of suffering for Christ's sake. You are having the same struggle that you saw me face and now hear that I'm still facing.

SERMON "HOPE: ALWAYS ROOM AT THE TABLE" Rev. Dr. Dale Tremper

RESPONSE *Deposuit potentes de sede* J. S. Bach (from Magnificat)
Israel Rangel-Mejia, Tenor

"He has brought down the mighty from their seats and exalted the humble"

PRAYERS & GRATITUDES

THE LORD'S PRAYER Ecumenical Version (UMH 894)

*Please feel free to use the name of your choice for God that speaks to your soul.

*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.*

PASSING THE PEACE

LIVING AS THE CHURCH

OFFERING & THANKSGIVING

He Came Down

TFWS 2085 (3x)

He came down that we may have hope;
he came down that we may have hope;
he came down that we may have hope;
Hallelujah forevermore.

CLOSING SONG *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus* (Please stand if able)
UMH 196 [organ]

1. Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.
2. Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne.

CLOSING PRAYER *(RESPONSIVE)*

The Taharka Family

Leader: The Advent story is one
of hope and mystery,
anticipation and preparation;
a kingdom
of this world and the next,
and a king
appearing when we least expect.

**People: Heaven touching earth,
the footsteps of the divine
walking dusty roads
as once they did in Eden,
and a people,
searching for a Savior,
and walking past the stable.**

**All: Open our eyes and hearts,
that this might be
an Advent of hope to the world. Amen.**

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POSTLUDE [organ]

O Come, All Ye Faithful

David Cherwien