

# Worship Leader Guide

DATE: Sunday, December 22, 2024

Series Title: Gift Exchange

**Preacher: Pastor Amy**

Liturgist: Linda W

Accompanist: Leigh Ann C

Greeters/Ushers:

Media Technicians: Tammy M

Nursery Attendant: Shirley C

## Gathering Music:

Sue Rollins, Oboe & Leigh Ann C, Piano

*[9:55 AM]*

**PRELUDE** “Angels We Have Heard on High” arr. by Ted Smith & Don Hustad

Duet: Judy T/Organ; Leigh Ann C/Piano

*[10:00 AM]*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### WELCOME & WORDS OF GRACE

**Amy:** The Lord be with you!

What a joy to see you all today. My name is Amy Sell, I use she/her pronouns and am the pastor at Grace UMC. It is a joy to welcome you today, whether you are in our sanctuary or joining us on livestream. We know we have a wonderful, diverse group of folks who come to worship with us online.

Friends, no matter where you come from today, or where you go at the close of this service, no matter what you believe or doubt, no matter what you feel or don't feel today, no matter your immigration status, no matter whom you love, you're welcome to come just as you are to be met by our God who knows you by name and who loves you and who wants to have an ever closer relationship with you. You are welcome here.

Let's pray: God, we see your face when love appears. God, we see your face when love is shown by words and actions. Help us to be love to all, even those that we find difficult to love. Help us to love, for when we love you are present. Help us to live in love no matter what and in so doing to live into your presence. Amen.

## CALLING ON GOD

Leader: In a world craving connection, we gather to celebrate love.

**All: For love comes from God, and God is love.**

Leader: Love one another, my friends.

**All: For God is love in us.**

Leader: There is no fear in love, for perfect love casts out fear.

**All: We are called to love everyone, for God is love in us.**

Leader: Let us worship the God who is love and live as a people of love,

**All: We worship and thank the One who loved us first.**

Please join me as we lift our voices together in our opening hymn Angels We Have Heard on High found in your red hymnal on page 238.

## OPENING HYMN UMH #238 Angels We Have Heard on High

Angels we have heard on high,  
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
And the mountains in reply  
Echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain:

Gloria in excelsis Deo.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee?  
Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be  
Which inspire your heavn'ly song? [Refrain]

Come to Bethlehem and see  
Him whose birth the angels sing.  
Come, adore on bended knee  
Christ the Lord, the newborn King. [Refrain]

See him in a manger laid,  
Whom the choirs of angels praise.  
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid  
While our hearts in love we raise. [Refrain]

## ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

The Baccus Family

## CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

### SCRIPTURE READING Luke 1:35-55

**Liturgist:** Please rise in body or spirit as you are able or comfortable to hear today's Gospel lesson.

Today's first lesson comes from the Gospel of Luke.

The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born<sup>[a]</sup> will be holy; he will be called Son of God. <sup>36</sup> And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. <sup>37</sup> For nothing will be impossible with God." <sup>38</sup> Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

<sup>39</sup> In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, <sup>40</sup> where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit <sup>42</sup> and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your

womb. <sup>43</sup> And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? <sup>44</sup> For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup> And blessed is she who believed that there would be <sup>[b]</sup> a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.”

<sup>46</sup> And Mary <sup>[c]</sup> said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord,

<sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

<sup>48</sup> for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.

Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed,

<sup>49</sup> for the Mighty One has done great things for me,

and holy is his name;

<sup>50</sup> indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him

from generation to generation.

<sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

<sup>52</sup> He has brought down the powerful from their thrones

and lifted up the lowly;

<sup>53</sup> he has filled the hungry with good things

and sent the rich away empty.

<sup>54</sup> He has come to the aid of his child Israel,

in remembrance of his mercy,

<sup>55</sup> according to the promise he made to our ancestors,

to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

One: This is the word of God, for the people of God.

Many: Thanks be to God.

**ANTHEM** “Rise Up Shepherd and Follow” arr by Ed Lojecki

### **PASSING OF THE PEACE**

**Amy:** Now, let us pass the peace of Christ with one another.

### **JOY & CONCERNS**

**Amy:** As we make our way back to our seats, we will move into a time of prayer. Are there joys and concerns that you would like to lift up, so that we can be in prayer and praise with each other today and in this coming week?

**CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE** UMH #242 Love Came Down at Christmas vs.1

Love came down at Christmas,

Love all lovely, Love divine;

Love was born at Christmas;

star and angels gave the sign.

### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Holy God, you reveal yourself in so many ways, especially in your son, Jesus Christ. We gather up the prayers of this community for the church, the world, and all in need, confident that you know our deepest thoughts and will refresh our spirits. We pray in the name of the One who transforms principalities and powers and renews the heavens and the earth.

We pray for our sisters and brothers in Christ who gather as we do on this day all over the world, in house churches and storefronts, on reservations, in townships and base communities, among immigrants, in hospital chapels and prisons, and with persons who are

dying. Wherever the church is found on frontiers of mission and service, empower its witness to strengthen and stretch the vision of your people.

We pray for the healing and well-tending of all that you have given us; for water and air, soil and stars; for creatures that roam the seas and those that fly thousands of miles in migrations; for mammals and reptiles, insects and microbes in swamps and forests and in our own homes. Show us their beauty and our need for them.

For the end to violence, oppression, and injustice we pray for all who sing with Mary a song of joy for deliverance; for all people who long to hear your promise of good news; for all the peacemakers; for governments that hold at the heart of their work the needs of people otherwise invisible; for all people left homeless and destitute by the greed of others.

We pray for all people who face the enormous vocation of raising children; for biological parents and adopting parents, for grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends; for children who long for a parent's or guardian's love and care, for children who will be born today; and especially those born into hunger and insecurity. Let the light of your desire for our well-being shine through all children.

For those who hold so dear and who have asked for prayers we pray for those who are in need, for the lonely; for all the people who are anxious at this time of year, for our elders in nursing homes; for people whose work is not life-giving for them; for those names we now pray.

We pray that Mary's song of joy and Joseph's loyalty will be magnified in us. Fill us with the breath of Advent. Stir us to extend ourselves beyond what we thought possible. Show us that like Mary, we need not fear. We pray in the name of Jesus, Messiah, Emmanuel, God with us, who taught us to pray: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on Earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever, Amen.

## **CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE** UMH #242 Love Came Down at Christmas vs.2

Worship we the Godhead,  
Love incarnate, Love divine;  
worship we our Jesus,  
but wherewith for sacred sign?

## **OFFERING OUR GIFTS AND OURSELVES**

**Stewardship Moment: John Kennedy, Treasurer**

**Amy:** Dear Friends, in this Advent season, God has called us to exchange our despair for hope, anxiety for peace, sorrow for joy, fear for love. They will know we are Christians by our love. Since God loved us, we love one another.

Thank you for giving to support the ministries and mission of Grace. We cannot be a beacon of hope to this community and to each other without your faithful giving.

There are many ways that you can give today. There is an offering box at the back of the sanctuary. You can give online at [graceumcbillings.org/give](http://graceumcbillings.org/give) or you can text to give as well. You can text (406) 660-3699 and follow the prompts to give that way as well. Whatever you give, great

or small, thank you for giving so we can continue to spread God's love for all people to all the folk we meet.

Let's Pray: Loving God, you give generously of your love and Spirit. Receive these gifts of our hearts and bless them to share your love with our community, we pray. Amen.

**CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE** UMH #242 Love Came Down at Christmas vs.3

Love shall be our token;  
love be yours and love be mine;  
love to God and others,  
love for plea and gift and sign.

**SECOND LESSON 1 John 4:7-19**

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. <sup>9</sup> God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us.

<sup>13</sup> By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup> And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup> God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. <sup>16</sup> So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. <sup>17</sup> Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. <sup>18</sup> There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. <sup>19</sup> We love<sup>[a]</sup> because he first loved us.

Leader: This is the Word of God for the people of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

**SERMON** "'Fear For Love"

**CLOSING HYMN** #3059 (GREEN Hymnal) Love Has Come

Love has come, a light in the darkness!  
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.  
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;  
hear how their song of joy arises: Love! Love!  
Born unto you, a Savior! Love! Love!  
Glory to God on high.

Love is born! Come, share in the wonder.  
Love is God now asleep in the hay.  
See the glow in the eyes of his mother;  
what is the name her heart is saying? Love! Love!  
Love is the name she whispers. Love! Love!  
Jesus, Immanuel.

Love has come and never will leave us!

Love is life everlasting and free.  
Love is Jesus within and among us.  
Love is the peace our hearts are seeking. Love! Love!  
Love is the gift of Christmas. Love! Love!  
Praise to you, God on high!

### **BENEDICTION & BLESSING**

Go in peace, trusting in the promises of God.  
May the God of love be your path,  
Jesus our Love your guide,  
And the Spirit of mercy be your light,  
This day and forevermore. Amen.

Postlude: "A Joyous Air" arr. by Jon Spang

Leigh Ann Corcoran, Minister of Music

### **WORSHIP NOTES**

<https://billingsgrace.breezechms.com/form/virtualpewcard>