



*December 18, 2022*  
*Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ*

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*Advent Thought*

“At this Christmas when Christ comes, will He find a warm heart?  
Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving the others with  
God's own love and concern.”

- **Mother Teresa,**  
**Love: A Fruit Always in Season**

Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ  
Mt Hope 8:30am                      Greenfield 9:50am  
4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent / Love / Ask A Sign

December 18, 2022  
Grace 11:00am

*Community News*

*Prayer List and Prayers of the People*

*Prelude/Lighting of the Candles*

\* *Call to Worship*

We come seeking a sign from You, the One who sits upon the throne.

**Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

We come seeking to worship You, the One who dwells with us always.

**Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

We come seeking to witness your might, a child to be born in a coming night.

**Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

\* *Invocation*

God of love - Ferocious love, fierce love, unending love, everlasting love - We gather in place with gratitude for the ways your love has called **us out of bleakest and into your marvelous.**

We know of your renown, and we stand in awe of your work.

In our own time revive it; in our own time make it known. Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel. Stir up your might in this place. Give us life, and we will call on your name as we worship you in spirit and in truth. Amen.

\* *Opening Hymn*

*“Away in a Manger”*

*Mt Hope PH #137*

*Greenfield CH #262*

*Grace TH #109*

*Advent Candle Lighting Litany*

As we gather around the Advent wreath today, we rejoice that Christmas is a time of prayer and of open hearts when we sing songs of joy. Christmas is a time of worship – the moment when the busiest of us pause in wonder. Christmas happens when God

comes to us in love through Jesus Christ and fills us with love for all humankind.

### *Advent Scripture*

**1 John 4:9-11 NIV**

<sup>9</sup>This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup>This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. <sup>11</sup>Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

### *Lighting the Fourth Candle of LOVE*

We light this candle to proclaim the coming of the light of God into the world. With the coming of this light there is *love*. Such great love helps us to love God and one another.

*<lighting of the candle>*

### *Advent Prayer*

**O God, we thank you that Jesus showed your love for every person - babies and children, old people and young, sick people and those who were strong, rich people and those who were poor. Come to us in this Advent season and give us love in our hearts for all people. Amen.**

### *\* Candle Lighting Hymn*

**“O How He Loves You and Me!”**

*Mt Hope VH #508*

*Greenfield CH #349*

*Grace VH #508*

### *Prayer for Confession*

We gather together in this season of Advent, anticipating hope, praying for peace, attempting to cultivate joy and share love amidst commotion, grief, despair, and uncertainty.

*<Moment of silence>*

God, our shepherd - Restorer of our souls, in a world full of hopelessness, we have sometimes forgotten that you have shown your hope in endless ways.

**Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may know your hope.**

In the mirey mess of the world, we have sometimes neglected to lean into your peace that transcends comprehension.

**Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may know your peace.**

In a culture shrouded in doom and despair, we have often forgotten how to fight for our joy.

**Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may know your joy.**

In a moment when it is easier to hate others because they believe differently, love differently, live differently, vote differently—we have forgotten how to love beyond the bounds of what separates us.

**Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may know your love. Stimulate our memory, O divine Creator. Remind us that even in our weakness, you are mighty.**

### *Words of Grace*

God has never left us nor forsaken us. God is Emmanuel in the face of crisis, Emmanuel, in the midst of calamity, Emmanuel, in the presence of tribulation. God with us, helping our unbelief, bringing us back to life, reminding us that we are light. Let that be good news. Amen.

\* *The Reading of the Holy Gospel*

Matthew 1:18-25 NIV

*Gloria Tibi (Glory be to Thee, O Lord.)*

TH #497

### *Joseph Accepts Jesus as His Son*

<sup>18</sup> This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

<sup>20</sup> But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will give birth to a son, and you are

to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

<sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: <sup>23</sup> “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

<sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. <sup>25</sup> But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

\* *Gloria Patri*

*Children's Message / Congregation Conversation*

\* *Meditation Hymn* “*While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks*”

*Mt Hope PH #146*

*Greenfield CH #272*

*Grace TH #106*

*Today's Message / Grace UCC Children's Christmas Pageant*

*“Christmas Road Trip”*

\* *The Apostle's Creed*

**I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:  
And in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son, our Lord; who was  
conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered  
under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he  
descended into hades; the third day he rose again from the dead;  
he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the  
Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick  
and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic/Christian church; the  
communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of  
the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.**

\* *The Lord's Prayer*

**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 debts as  
we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but  
deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the  
power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

\* *Sung Response*      “Hear Our Prayer, O Lord”      TH # 501

*The Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings*

Offertory Statement  
Offertory (MH & Grace)

\* Doxology      TH # 551  
\* Offertory Prayer

**We dedicate these gifts that have been shared for the fortification of the beloved community. Let these gifts do justice in the world so that all may know they are loved by God. Amen.**

\* *Closing Hymn*      “Angels from the Realms of Glory”  
*Mt Hope PH #117      Greenfield CH #259      Grace TH #104*

\* *Benediction*

Go forth knowing that you are loved by God  
Go forth leading a life that is a sign of God’s grace.  
Go forth with anticipation for the restoration that is to come.  
And in that going,  
May God bless and keep you  
May God’s face shine upon you  
May God be gracious to you  
And give you peace.  
Amen.

\* *Three-Fold Amen*      TH # 558

\* *Postlude/Extinguishing of the Candle*

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**Ask a Sign:** Service Prayers for the Fourth Sunday in Advent were written by Rev. Mia M. McClain is the Senior Pastor of Riverside Baptist Church in Washington D.C. She is an ordained UCC minister.