

The Federated Church of Wauconda

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Youth Coordinator..... Val Lucius

Office Staff:

Custodian..... Panuncio Gonzalez
Secretary..... Judy Pinkonsly

Serving in Worship this week:

Director of Music/Organist..... Geri Meyer
Worship Assistant.....
Greeters..... John & Cathy Mate
Nursery Attendant..... Nancy Lucius
Usher..... Louise Bundy, Ann Petersen, Tony Rake, Ruby T.
Usher Chairperson..... Dave Fehlman
Acolytes.....

We Welcome you to
THE FEDERATED CHURCH OF WAUCONDA
December 24, 2017
Christmas Eve Morning Worship

We are committed to God through Christ to enrich the world
through worship, mission, witness, and service.

The Fourth Sunday in Advent: Love



“Grace, mercy and peace from **God** the Father and from **Jesus**
Christ, the Father’s Son, will be with us in truth and **love**.”

2 John 1:3

GATHERING TO WORSHIP

Welcome

Announcements

Opening Prayer

Prelude

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Batson Family

Responsive Reading for Advent

We live in a world that needs love.

We confess that we need your love in our lives.

Help us to see our Savior is coming to bring us God's love.

Prepare our hearts and minds to receive the love of Christ.

He says: "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth." (Isaiah 49:6)

*Opening Hymn **"Light the Advent Candle"** vs. 4 No. 2090

(Please sign the attendance sheets)

Children's Talk

Pastor Crystal

Choir Anthem

"The Very First Christmas"

Poorman

Stories of Christmas Love

Hymn: We will be asking for your favorite Christmas Carols

Joys and Concerns of our Fellowship

Community Prayer

First Scripture

Matthew 1:18-25

Stories of Christmas Love

Hymn: We will be asking for your favorite Christmas Carols

Second Scripture

Luke 2:8-20

Stories of Christmas Love

Hymn: We will be asking for your favorite Christmas Carols

Offering

Offering Response

"The Doxology"

No. 95

Hymn: We will be asking for your favorite Christmas Carols

Benediction

Postlude

Matthew 1:18-25 Common English Bible (CEB)

¹⁸This 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. ¹⁹Joseph her husband was a righteous man. Because he didn't want to humiliate her, he decided to call off their engagement quietly. ²⁰As 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. ²¹She will give birth to a son, and you will call him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." ²²Now all of this took place so that what the Lord had spoken through the prophet would be fulfilled: ²³*Look! A virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will call him, Emmanuel. (Emmanuel means "God with us.")* ²⁴When Joseph woke up, he did just as an angel from God commanded and took Mary as his wife. ²⁵But he didn't have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to a son. Joseph called him Jesus.

Luke 2:8-20 Common English Bible (CEB)

⁸Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. ⁹The Lord's angel stood before them, the Lord's glory shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰The angel said, "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. ¹¹Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. ¹²This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger." ¹³Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, ¹⁴"Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors." ¹⁵When the angels returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go right now to Bethlehem and see what's happened. Let's confirm what the Lord has revealed to us." ¹⁶They went quickly and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they reported what they had been told about this child. ¹⁸Everyone who heard it was amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹Mary committed these things to memory and considered them carefully. ²⁰The shepherds returned home, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. Everything happened just as they had been told.

OPPORTUNITIES TO WORSHIP

SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Worship service – 9:30am; Sunday School (Sept. – May) – 9:45am;
Fellowship – 10:30am

PRAYER MEETINGS

Our prayer meetings are a time to gather with other believers to lift our needs and our praises to God. We meet on the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Thursdays of each month at 7:00pm.

OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN

BIBLE STUDY SERIES

Join us for one of our Bible Study series called Bible Story Cafe. We have two Bible Study classes on Monday mornings at 10:00am and Tuesday evenings at 6:00pm.

We are taking a break from Bible Study and will start again on Jan. 8.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

COMMITMENT CARDS

If you haven't yet turned in your commitment card, please prayerfully consider what you can give in 2018. You can put it in the offering plate, drop it off or mail it to the church office. There are additional cards on the table by the window if you need one.

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

ALTAR FLOWERS

The flowers on the Altar today are given in celebration of Bob & Virginia Reardon's 66th wedding anniversary.

NO CHOIR PRACTICE

There will be no choir practice on Tuesday, December 26. We will meet again on January 2.

FREE WIRELESS INTERNET

Feel free to use our wireless internet: ATT318 - password 8687285296

CONTINUED PRAYERS ARE ASKED FOR:

Pete Ambrosio, Florence Burton, Donna Gallmeyer-Dixon, Howard Ficht, Mickie Kisselburg, Marion Knoff, Scott Matthews, Lisa Morrison, Laura Peroutka, Dolores Prusinski, Arb Swanson, Dorothy Wheelock, Linda Wicker, Lisa Wineski, Brian Zinkel

CALENDAR ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR – DEC. 24 - 31		
TODAY: Dec. 24	9:30 am 4:00 pm & 11:00 pm	Christmas Eve Services
MON: Dec. 25		Merry Christmas
TUES: Dec. 26		Pastor Jason and Pastor Crystal out of office
WED: Dec. 27		Beacon gets mailed
	6:00 pm	T.O.P.S. Meeting
	7:00 pm	Outreach Meeting
THURS: Dec. 28	8:00 pm	Alanon Meeting
FRI: Dec. 29		
SAT. Dec. 30		
SUN: Dec. 31		New Year's Eve

LAY MINISTRIES: Next Sunday – December 31

Worship Assistant..... Ruby Thacker
 Ushers..... Raj & Rose Bhatt, Tom & Peggy Martin
 Acolytes..... Hero Lucius & Madison Lucius

Greeter for January..... Mary Taylor

Fourth Week of Advent Devotional: Love by Sarah Becker

What is love? Many pages have been filled by poets, song writers, playwrights, psalmists, and philosophers trying to answer it. “Love” is hard to describe but we know it when we see it. No matter how we might misuse or overuse the word, “love” refers to something so deep, profound, mysterious, and wonderful that all we can do is point to it and say: “that’s love.” So, “love” is almost indefinable.

Almost. John tells us: “God is love.” (1 John 4:16) So, the starting point for understanding love is God. We know what love is by seeing how God loves us.

C.S. Lewis, Christian writer and author of the Chronicles of Narnia book series, says this:

“Love is not affectionate feeling, but a steady wish for the loved person’s ultimate good as far as it can be obtained.”

Madeleine L’Engle, writer and author of the series which begins with *A Wrinkle in Time*, and a Christian says:

“Love isn’t how you feel. It’s what you do.”

But I think it is unreasonable to completely divorce feeling and affection and enjoyment from love. Love can be the “feeling-est” of all feelings. So, if your love for someone brings you pleasure, then by all means enjoy it! Revel in it. Let it help lead you to new and ever deeper levels of love. Yet if those feelings are not there, if in fact there are *other* feelings very different from pleasure, we who follow Christ must still love, and love well. Below are some examples from the Bible on how we are to love.

We know how much God **loves** us, and we have put our trust in his **love**. God is **love**, and all who live in **love** live in God, and God lives in them. ... We **love** each other because **he loved us first**. (1 John 4:16,19)

And you must **love** the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. (Deuteronomy 6:5)

“‘You must **love** the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.’ And, ‘**Love** your neighbor as yourself.’” (Luke 10:27)

This is my commandment: **Love** each other in the same way I **have loved you**. (John 15:12)

You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, **love your enemies** and pray for those who persecute you. (Matthew 5:43-44)

So how can we do it? How can we love like this?

C.S. Lewis, again says, "Do not waste time bothering whether you "love" your neighbor; act as if you did. As soon as we do this we find one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you loved someone you will presently come to love [them]."

My favorite book is *Ender's Game*, by Orson Scott Card. (Don't pay any attention to the movie. Read the book.) The following quote is spoken by Valentine Wiggin, Ender's sister, "Perhaps it's impossible to wear an identity without becoming what you pretend to be." For his part, Ender says, "I think it's impossible to really understand somebody, what they want, what they believe, and not love them the way they love themselves."

This is empathy, essential in love, and means that you pretend you are that person to then feel as that person feels.

We pretend to love those God puts in our lives the same way we pretend God's Kingdom has arrived. The Kingdom is really here, but not fully, not completely. We are living like Kingdom citizens now *and* looking forward to the Kingdom coming. We are waiting for it in hope, knowing that the peace and joy we have and bear witness to will then be complete. It will be whole. *We* will be whole.

1 Corinthians 13 has become known as the "Love Chapter" of the Bible. The chapter ends: "And now these three remain: faith, hope and **love**. But the greatest of these is **love**."

Andrew Peterson sings in his song *No More Faith*, "I say faith is a burden/It's a weight to bear/It's brave and bittersweet/And hope is hard to hold to/Lord, I believe/Only help my unbelief/'Til there's no more faith/No more hope/I'll see your face and Lord, I'll know/That only love remains."

Faith is completed when it is replaced by sight. Hope is completed when what we hope in arrives. Love *never ends*.

"For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know **fully**, even as I am **fully known**." (1 Corinthians 13:12)

In Advent, we light the candle of love remembering God's great love for us, perfectly pictured and at its pinnacle in the coming of Jesus Christ, and we look forward and wait and prepare for the day

when Jesus will return and our love for God and each other will be pure and complete. And we all will live in the love of God.