

“Where the Spirit Is Alive”

AGAWAM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

745 Main Street, Agawam, MA 01001

“A place to call home. ~ A people to call family.”

December 24, 2023

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

“The Candle of Love”



Welcome: We greet you in the name of our Lord. It is our hope that the Holy Spirit will touch your spirit today and that you know God loves you.

Agawam Congregational Church December 24, 2023

The Fourth Sunday of Advent ~ Love

THE SERVICE OF THE WORD

RINGING OF THE CHURCH BELL

PRELUDE

“Follow that Star”

Choir

GREETING AND WELCOME

Nancy Mitchell

Good morning and welcome to this worship service of the Agawam Congregational Church in Agawam Massachusetts on this Fourth Sunday of Advent. We greet you in the name of the Lord. It is our hope that the Holy Spirit will touch your spirit today and that you know that God loves you. This is a church “Where the Spirit is Alive”. It is “A place to call home and a people to call family.” I am Deacon Nancy Mitchell. Preaching today is the Rev. Dr. Susanne Hayes. Ann Tapply is our organist. We thank our choir for singing our anthems today.

PASSING OF PEACE

“The Peace of Christ be with you.”

“And also with you.”

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Nancy

*HYMN

“Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”

(NCH 345)

CALL TO WORSHIP

Nancy

Leader: The time is coming when people will sing praise to the Lord.

People: We come to praise “God With Us,” and give thanks for the coming of Jesus.

Leader: Come, let us rejoice together,

People: As fresh water brings joy to the thirsty, so we rejoice in the God of our salvation.

All: Praise be to God!

GATHERING PRAYER AND LORD’S PRAYER (in unison)

Nancy

O God, our Father, who has brought us again to the season of Love, when we commemorate the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant that his Spirit may be born anew in our hearts this day and that we may joyfully welcome him to reign over us.

We pray together as Jesus taught us: 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, the power and the glory forever. Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE OF LOVE

Nancy Mitchell and Michelle Noel

GOSPEL READING

Luke 1.26-38

Nancy

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.”

But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give

to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” 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 will be holy; he will be called Son of God. 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. For nothing will be impossible with God.” 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.

ANTHEM *“Peace, Peace, Peace”* Choir

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE Dr. Hayes
Leader: Let this be our prayer. Response: Lord hear our prayer.

PASTORAL PRAYER Dr. Hayes

SHARING OF GIFTS AND OFFERINGS

*DOXOLOGY

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

SCRIPTURE READING Luke 2.1-14 Dr. Hayes

SERMON *“A Celebration of Love”* Dr. Hayes

*HYMN *“Now Bless the God of Israel”* (NCH 110)

COMMON COMMISSION (in unison)

Let us go forth into the world in peace, being of good courage, holding fast to that which is good, rendering to no one evil for evil, strengthening the fainthearted, supporting the weak, helping the afflicted, honoring all persons, loving and serving the Lord, and rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE *“Go Now in Peace”*

Go now in peace. Never be afraid.
God will go with you each hour of every day.
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true.
Know He will guide you in all you do.

Go now in love, and show you believe.
Reach out to others so all the world can see.
God will be there watching from above.
Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.



LET US FOLLOW THE LIGHT OF CHRIST INTO THE WORLD!



ALTAR FLOWERS

In LOVING MEMORY of CAROL HALLOCK, Mother of SUE TAPPLY
(2) In LOVING MEMORY of RONALD & MURIEL ATWATER, parents of
SANDRA, DONNA, MARSHA & BRUCE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Join us tonight, Christmas Eve at **10pm**

Merry Christmas!!

Isaiah 9:6

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

and the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

December 25-January 1st

Monday	OFFICE CLOSED	<i>MERRY CHRISTMAS!</i>
Tuesday	All day	OFFICE CLOSED
Saturday	All day	<i>Happy birthday Dick!</i>
Sunday	10am	Worship New Year's Eve
Monday	All day	OFFICE CLOSED Happy New Year!