



**LOVE**

**HIGHLANDS UNITED  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

CELEBRATION OF WORSHIP  
4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in the Season of Advent

December 24, 2017 – 10:00 a.m.

“Love is Coming...”

**HIGHLANDS UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

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Today is the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in the Season of Advent, which is traditionally known as "Love" Sunday because today we hear the good news of God coming to us which is evidence of how much God loves us.

Music as we prepare for worship is an instrumental version of "What Child Is This?"

Lighting the Advent Wreath today is the Sambito/Stewart Family .

Our opening Hymn is *Advent Hymns of Carolyn Winfrey Gillette* which we are using during Advent. This hymn is a kind of Advent affirmation of God's greatness in "There's Not A Thing That God Can't Do!" This is the angels response to Mary when she asked the most appropriate question, "How Can This Be?"

## HIGHLANDS UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CELEBRATION OF WORSHIP 4<sup>th</sup> of Advent – December 24, 2017

### MUSIC AND TIME OF PREPARATION

*(The 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Advent is 'Joy' Sunday. As we gather to share in God's joy coming to us take this opportunity to pause for a moment and pray for God's presence among us today, our worship leaders, our choirs, those who worship with you and for yourself.)*

### WELCOME AS WE GATHER & SHARING LIFE IN THE CHURCH

**PRELUDE** "People, Look East" arr. Krug  
The Highlands Handbell Choir

### CALL TO WORSHIP AND LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH Sambito/Stewart Family

**INTROIT** "Shine on Us, O God of Justice"  
(Tune: Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence)  
(Dr. Dave sings through 1 time, congregation joins on the second:)  
**"Shine on us, O God of justice; Guide our path through gloom of night;  
Bear within us Wisdom's glory; Come to us, O Christ the Light.  
Guide us through these days of Advent,  
'til your world returns to right."**

### A READING FROM THE NATIVITY STORY Luke 1:26-38

This is the Word of the Lord.

**God's love endures forever. Through acts as simple and common as the birth of a baby, God transforms the world, and God's promises are kept. It is that expression of faithful love we anticipate and celebrate this day. It is that promise that brings light to our deepest night.**

### ADVENT PRAYER

**"Lord of Advent, we await your coming and even as you approach us, we find ourselves yearning for you. You give us great Hope in your Word, offer us Peace by your promised presence, you complete our Joy, O God, and come to us once again reconciling all the world to you in your great Love for us. Amen."**

**\*HYMN OF ADVENT "There's Not a Thing That God Can't Do!"**  
(Tune: "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks" Handel)

**"There's not a thing that God can't do!" The angel said. "Not one! For Mary, God has favored you And you will bear God's Son, And you will bear God's Son."**

**So Mary answered, "Here am I, The servant of the Lord." She knew that she could well rely Upon the angel's word, Upon the angel's word.**

**There's not a blessing we won't know If God is pleased to share;  
As Mary found out long ago, We're ever in God's care,  
We're ever in God's care.**

**O God, what awesome things you do; You call, surprise and bless!  
As Mary answered, may we, too, Respond by saying,  
"Yes!" Respond by saying, "Yes!"**

**\*PASSING THE PEACE**

May the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.  
**And Also With You.**

(At this time you are invited to share a sign of peace: a hug, a handshake, a kiss...)

**\*Choral Response:**

**"Good Christian friends, rejoice, With heart, and soul, and voice;  
Come ye one and come ye all, embrace the faith that does enthrall;  
Jesus Christ will come to save!**

**Calls you one and calls you all, to gain the everlasting hall.  
Christ will come to save! Christ will come to save!"**

**\*PRAYERS OF THE DAY AND CONFESSION (responsive)**

Holy God, scattering the proud,  
you look with favor on those the world ignores. **For you:**  
we wait for the One who will feed us; **for you,**  
we wait for the One who stands with us in our loneliness and pain.  
**For you, we wait.**

Jesus Christ, born in a backwater town: **in you,**  
God fills the hunger of our hearts; **in you,**  
God lifts us from our hopelessness; **in you,**  
all the promises come true. **For you, we wait.**

Holy Spirit, Hallower of God's people: **from you comes faith,**  
so we might believe; **from you comes belief,**  
so we might be blessed; **from you come all blessings,**  
so we might give them away. **For you, we wait.**

Forgive us, Mighty God who comes in the weakness of a baby.  
**Look with grace upon us, so we might see your love shining  
down. We could live secure in your hope, we could be the ones  
of peace for our world, we could learn to do your will, if we but  
welcome Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior,  
into our hearts and into our lives. Amen.**

**\*ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

God passes the heirloom of mercy down from generation to generation,  
always loving, always forgiving, always calling us to new life.

**As we open our hearts to God, we are filled with the joy that was  
sung at the Birth, with the Hope that walked among us,  
with the Grace which is always with us.  
Thanks be to God, we are forgiven!**

*In our final  
'gathering act' we  
"Pass the  
Peace" as an act  
of caring,  
welcome, and  
mutual love.  
Please remain  
standing as we  
sing a verse of  
"Good Christian  
Friends Rejoice."*

Because of God's love proven to us in the sending of Jesus we are bold to approach God and to confess our sins. In the Presbyterian Church our confession is in the form of a corporate prayer that in the speaking become our own. The Assurance of Pardon enables us to prepare our hearts and minds for the "Proclamation of the Word:" unencumbered by the burden of our sin.

The "Proclamation of the Word" is central to our life in the faith. We come to hear God's word read, preached and reflected upon in music.

(We use the 'common lectionary' which is a guide the assigns readings over a three-year cycle. God's people are given the opportunity to hear and read along in God's Word from the Bible).

We stand for the reading of the gospel in a very old tradition of the church. In response to the Word read there is the 'preaching of the word for our living today.' This includes words for 'the young church' and all who gather. Our Choirs offer musical 'proclamations' in song.

Our Anthem for the Day is "The Seven Joys of Mary" which is reflective of the 'ponderings' of Mary beginning with Jesus' birth and continuing through his life on earth and his coming again in glory.

Our Hymn of Response is "Born in the Night Mary's Child," which was written by Geoffrey Ainger wrote "Born in the night, Mary's Child" in 1959, while minister at Loughton Methodist Church in Essex, England. It was written to be used in a youth Christmas play and has become a beloved song of Christmas

**\*NEW TESTAMENT LESSON**      **Luke 1:39-56**      (NT: p. )

**ANTHEM**

**"The Seven Joys of Mary"**

*"The first good joy that Mary had, It was the joy of one:  
To see her blessed Jesus Christ, When He was first her Son.  
When He was first her Son, good man; And blessed may he be,  
Both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to all eternity.*

*The next good joy that Mary had, It was the joy of two:  
To see her own son Jesus Christ, To make the lame to go.  
To make the lame to go, good man; And blessed may he be,  
Both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to all eternity.*

*The next good joy that Mary had, It was the joy of three:  
To see her own son Jesus Christ, To make the blind to see.  
To make the blind to see, good man; And blessed may he be,  
Both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to all eternity.*

*The next good joy that Mary had, It was the joy of four:  
To see her own son Jesus Christ, To read the Bible o'er.  
To read the Bible o'er, good man; And blessed may he be,  
Both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to all eternity.*

*The next good joy that Mary had, It was the joy of five:  
To see her own son Jesus Christ, To bring the dead alive.  
To bring the dead alive, good man; And blessed may he be,  
Both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to all eternity.*

*The next good joy that Mary had, It was the joy of six:  
To see her own son Jesus Christ, Upon the crucifix.  
Upon the crucifix, good man; And blessed may he be,  
Both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to all eternity.*

*The next good joy that Mary had, It was the joy of seven:  
To see her own son Jesus Christ, To wear the crown of Heaven.  
To wear the crown of Heaven, good man; And blessed may he be,  
Both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to all eternity."*

**A TIME WITH THE YOUNG CHURCH**

**MEDITATION**

**"LOVE IS COMING..."**

**\*HYMN OF RESPONSE NO. 30 "Born In The Night Mary's Child"**

**\*AN ADVENT AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (Unison)**

We believe in God, creator and lover of the earth, origin and destiny of us all.

We believe in Jesus the Christ—

**God coming to us in the fragile promise of a baby yet unborn — who emerges as the herald of hope, God's laughter in the face of despair. Plunged into death and hell, he broke free the captives, and is leading the way to the land of promise where justice and peace will flourish.**

We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
**who implants the seed of truth, brings us to birth as the  
body of Christ, and empowers us to confront and  
transform all that is corrupt, degrading and deceitful.  
We believe in the coming reign of God.**

Announced by the Baptist,  
**it has drawn near to us in Jesus, and will be consummated  
in the glorious marriage of earth and heaven, when all who  
have passed through the world's deep sorrow will be raised  
from the waters, robed in righteousness, and gathered into  
the joyous fulfillment of God's desire.**

For the coming of that day on this day, we work and pray:  
**Come, Lord Jesus, Come!**

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

God of Advent,

**We are so close to Christmas Day, that we can see your light  
shining in the dark as we come closer and closer. And as we  
draw nearer we find ourselves tempted by all the excitement of  
the holidays to lose our focus on you. Help us o Lord to keep our  
eyes on you.**

God of Advent,

**We have been waiting for what seems like a long time for that  
special day to celebrate the birth of your son. We have waited  
with hopeful hearts.  
We have waited with longing for your peace.  
We have waited with a desire for your joy.  
And now we wait with a yearning for your love to be born  
in us again.**

God of Advent, When your steadfast love is birthed in us,

**We will sing of you and your love forever and ever.**

When we are anointed by your love,

**we will open our hearts and hands to the lonely, the needy,  
the sorrowful, the sick, saddened and those who are hurting.  
We pray that we are able to share your love with all we meet.**

God of Advent,

**We pray that we are able to say yes to you when you call.  
We pray that we are able to say "Here I am to you Lord."  
We pray that we can be your servants.  
We pray that we can say as Mary said so long ago,  
"Let it be with me according to your word."**

May all that we are glorify you,

**and may we rejoice in you for you are our God,  
You are the rock of our salvation.**

Yes, all our praise and love is focused through Jesus

**On you, O God. Amen**

We 'say what we believe' as another corporate act in the Presbyterian Church. Today we share a 'responsive' declaration of faith as part of our response to the Word as it is preached and heard that is especially mindful of this Advent season. It was written by Nathan Nettleton, and posted on his [Laughingbird](#) website.

The "Prayers of the People" are intended to draw us closer to God, to one another, and to all of God's children in the world. We offer God praise, we give God thanks, we lift up our brothers and sisters and finally we pray for ourselves.



## HIGHLANDS' HIGHLIGHTS

This Week at Highlands  
Week of December 24, – December 30, 2017

### This Week's Calendar of Events:

Today:	9:00 a.m.	Sunday School
	10:00 a.m.	Worship Service
	5:00 p.m.	Candlelight/Communion Service
	8:00 p.m.	Candlelight/Communion Service
	11:00 p.m.	Candlelight/Communion Service
Christmas Day	10:00 a.m.	Cinnamon Buns and Fellowship

### **“WELCOME ONE ANOTHER, AS CHRIST WELCOMES US!”**

**HIGHLANDS UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH WELCOMES YOU!** We are so glad that you are here and worshiping with us this morning. We are privileged to have you with us and would invite you to a time of Fellowship in our Dining Hall after worship. Please do us a favor by signing the Friendship Register and mark appropriate boxes. There are also visitor cards in the pew racks. **FIRST TIME VISITORS – WE HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOU! Thanks!**

**MEMBERSHIP AT HIGHLANDS** is open to all who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord of their lives and who wish to join in the worship and ministry of this church. The pastor or any member of the Session would be more than happy to discuss this with you.

**A NURSERY IS PROVIDED IN THE FAMILY LIFE** building for those who wish to have their children cared for during worship. Parents receive a 'silent pager' for peace of mind and will be paged in case of any need. Highlands takes great care in caring for your children.

**CHILDREN'S CHURCH FOR AGES 3 THROUGH 1<sup>ST</sup>** grade is in the Family Life building after "A Time with the Young Church," except on Communion Sundays. A nursery is provided for infants through two years of age in the Family Life Center. Worship folders for young Highlands' worshipers can be found at the usher's stand. PARENTS please help your children with their worship experience. **WE LOVE OUR CHILDREN AT HIGHLANDS** and want to keep them safe! Please help us with this goal by ensuring that **all children** are supervised by an adult while on the playground at all times.

**DEVICES ARE AVAILABLE FOR THOSE IN NEED OF HEARING ASSISTANCE AT THE USHER'S STAND.**

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**WELCOME ONE ANOTHER AS CHRIST HAS WELCOMED YOU! TODAY IS the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent.** This is the Advent Sunday on which we recognize the promised gift of God's Love in the 'in the flesh' person of Jesus. **This evening we make the transition to our celebration of the Birth of Jesus with our Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Services at 5, 8 and 11 p.m.** The early service is our most 'family friendly' of the services which features participation by our **LOGOS and JOY** choirs. A nursery is provided at the 5 and 8 p.m. services.

**YOU ARE INVITED TO** share fellowship with Dr. Dave and Susan and your Highlands Family on Christmas morning at 10 a.m. We come to embrace the warmth of God's love poured into us and the sweetness of God's presence with cinnamon buns.

**ALTERNATIVE GIFTS are still available for you.** We NEED sponsors for 30 children in Haiti at \$25.00 per month (\$300.00 for the year.) We are only halfway to our goal. Please consider helping these children who are truly in a kind of need even needy children in the U.S. do not experience. We need more sponsorships to assure our ability to meet our commitment to the Grace of Mercy children. Thanks!

**WELLNESS WILL RETURN ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10TH:** Our program begins with seated yoga at 10:00 a.m. and Adult LOGOS follows around 11:00 am. Seated yoga can easily be adapted to anyone's physical interest and we are looking forward to John Smith's usual presentation making Bible study amusing and informative.

**WE'RE CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF LOGOS AT HUPC!!** We're taking a short break, but will be back on January 10<sup>th</sup>. We're having a great time at logos – learning a little and laughing a lot; come and join us on January 10<sup>th</sup>!

**HIGHLANDS STRONG.** I think everyone would agree that Highland's is "Strong" because of our industrious and dedicated staff. Accordingly, your Session has approved a "Love Offering" for the three Christmas Eve Services as token of our appreciation. So, in this season of giving, prayerfully consider this opportunity to say, "Thank You".

**WHAT A BLESSING!!** Our Family Promise guests scheduled for this week was canceled as all three families moved into their new homes!! However, we have been asked to sponsor the family of a single dad with twin 14-year-old boys with necessities for their new home. Their needs include a full/queen bed, food, and Walmart gift cards or cash. Since we want them to have these items before Christmas, we request donations by December 20. Please call Sue Heckler at 891-6034 with any questions. Thank you for your generous and thoughtful consideration and MERRY CHRISTMAS!

**Eat more chicken! FUNDRAISER OPPORTUNITY.** The Preschool is having its annual fundraising opportunity with the Chick-fil-A 2018 Calendar. Each calendar features 12 months of beautiful cow artwork as well as monthly offers for **FREE** Chick-fil-A food. HPGP is now selling the 2018 calendars for \$10, cash only. You can come by the Preschool office any day Monday through Friday from 7:00am to 6:00pm or catch me after worship on Sundays. Thank you for your support to the Church Preschool and the children we serve. Family Promise's "Wheels on the Bus" campaign was a huge success! A new bus will be purchased and there are funds for transportation needs in 2018. Highlands **will** be hosting guests the week of February 4. Thanks so much for your support of this very important mission. We appreciate it – Sue!

### **OTHER ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE**

**THE THOUGHTFUL CHRISTIAN CLASS** will study "What the Bible Says About Ecology" next Sunday, Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>. Please join us!

**HIGHLAND'S BABY SHOWER:** Matthew 25:40 – just as you did it to one of the least of these.... you did it to me. Thanks to all of you who answered your call to discipleship with your generous contributions to the Highlands Baby Shower. This ministry shows care and support to many new mothers and babies of our community via your contributions of new baby clothes, blankets and more. You are a blessing. Highlands Mission Committee – for more information contact Susan Lee at 887-4661.

**ARLINGTON COMMUNITY SERVICES: ACS needs the following items:** toothpaste, powdered milk, canned milk, canned pasta, pasta sauce, canned meat, canned tomatoes, canned potatoes, peanut butter, jelly- HUPC's specialty, and toilet tissue. Fourteen jars of jelly were collected this week. Every grocery order going out of ACS has a jar of HUPC jelly. **Don't forget your jelly next Sunday!**

**UPDATE FROM YOUR MISSION COMMITTEE.** We need 15 more 16 X 26-inch hand towels, individual toothbrushes and fingernail clippers in order to have another "batch" of kits ready to go. Thanks for your help!

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED LOVE AND SUPPORT FOR THE CHILDREN OF HAITI.** Please make sure your payments are marked "HAITI CHILDREN" to ensure the money goes into the right account.

**YOU MAY TAKE YOUR POINSETTIAS** home tonight after the 11:00 service and/or on Christmas morning. Thank you for making the sanctuary look special and festive during Advent. This Spring, you can plant your poinsettia in the yard and have beautiful blooms next year.

### **PRAYER CONCERNS AND TODAY'S SERVICE –**

**SPECIAL AND ONGOING PRAYERS: PLEASE INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING IN YOUR PRAYERS THIS WEEK:**

**IN THE HOSPITAL THIS WEEK:**

**OUR FRIENDS IN CARE FACILITIES:** *At Brookdale Southside: (9601 Southbrook Dr., Jax, FL 32256); Hank Green(N-122); At Clare Bridge Louise Keen; At the Atrium (9960 Atrium Way, 32225): Boyd and Doreen Harris (#528) , Doris Ruby (#219) and Kit Fink who is in Rehab. Others: Fay Sweeney (# E10 A) at Cypress Village, 4600 Middleton Park Circle East , Jacksonville, FL 32224).*

**AT HOME:** Richard Marsh, Don Hall, Jo and Hoagy Carmichael, Nancy Hoot, Kinzey Reeves, Patty Strader, Marilyn Reed, JoAn Ewing, Bruce and Annette Marley, Gwen Brown, Barbara Ash and Carolyn Starkweather.

**FAMILY AND FRIENDS:** Debbie Douget's dad, Don Seay, Justin Marley (Bruce and Annette's grandson), Kenneth Moon (Barbara's son), Lenwood Lee (Dr. Dave's father), Ashley Parsons (DCE at Orange Park PC), Ed Mallard.

**IN THE MILITARY:** Jacob Loerop ( [Jacob.Loerop@CVN68.navy.mil](mailto:Jacob.Loerop@CVN68.navy.mil), IT3 Jacob Loerop CVN 68 USS Nimitz Unit 100103 Box 1771 FPO AP 96620. Amelia Powell ([amelia.powell@cvw7.navy.mil](mailto:amelia.powell@cvw7.navy.mil)) AT2 Powell, Amelia N., VAQ-140, Unit 200107 Box 142, FPO AP 96601.

**PRAYER BEARS:** Prayer Bears and Caring Critters are available in the Fellowship Hall after each service.

**MEMBER CARE:** Bev Connell is our **Prayer Ministry Coordinator**. Bev's number is **(904) 868-9659**. Her email address is [bevconn2016@gmail.com](mailto:bevconn2016@gmail.com). Please contact Bev with your prayer request. As always, prayer requests can be made as well by calling the church office, completing the gray slips in the church pews, using the church website ([hupcjax.org](http://hupcjax.org) under "Contact Us") or by notifying your Shepherd.

**FAMILIES WE ARE PRAYING FOR THIS WEEK:** Megan and Patrick Lunsford, Ed Mallard and Jim Marks

**OUR VOLUNTEERS THIS MORNING ARE:** Greeters: Cat and Rebecca Briones. Children's Church Leader: Jessica Sorrells.