

Worship Service ~ *Longing for Love*

Fourth Sunday of Advent, Year A,

21st December, 2025

Luke 1:57-80 / Luke 15:11-32

Prelude

played by church musician Annie Center,

Gathering Together

Welcome

Good morning, it's my pleasure to welcome you to worship with Olympic View Community Church. Please stand with me, if you're able, and hear the Lord call us into worship.

Call to Worship

One: We gather in preparation

All: for good news is about to be proclaimed.

One: We gather in expectation

All: for joy is about to explode in our midst.

One: We gather in celebration

All: for we are those people who have said yes to the manger, yes to love enfleshed, yes to the one incarnate for others, yes to the wholeness of God. With preparation and in expectation, let us celebrate!

Invocation

God of timeless grace, you fill us with joyful expectation. Make us ready for the message that prepares the way, that with uprightness of heart and holy joy we may eagerly await the kingdom of your Son, Jesus Christ, who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

Opening Hymn

Joy to the World ~ 318

Lighting the Advent Candle

The Advent reading for this Sunday comes from John 3:16-17.

Advent Reading ~ John 3:16-17

16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. **17** For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Advent Candle (Love)

Reader,: [*Light Candle*] Even before we loved God, he loved us. His love came to us, in a gift of unimaginable worth, wrapped in swaddling cloths in a manger.

All: His love is still our light, so we light this candle as a reminder to love him who loved us and to love others in his name.

Engaging with God Together

Scripture Reading ~ Luke 1:57-80

57 Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. **58** And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. **59** And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child. And they would have called him Zechariah after his father, **60** but his mother answered, “No; he shall be called John.” **61** And they said to her, “None of your relatives is called by this name.” **62** And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he wanted him to be called. **63** And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, “His name is John.” And they all wondered. **64** And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. **65** And fear came on all their neighbors. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea, **66** and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, “What then will this child be?” For the hand of the Lord was with him.

67 And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying,
68 “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people
69 and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David,
70 as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,
71 that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us;
72 to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant,
73 the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us
74 that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear,
75 in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.
76 And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
77 to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins,
78 because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high
79 to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”
80 And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

Let's greet one another with the peace of Christ as we pass the peace.

Pass the Peace

Sharing Announcements and Prayer Requests

In a moment we are going to pray together, but before we do, does anyone have any announcements to share about anything in the life of the church coming up?

Does anyone have any joys or concerns to share?

Hymn

Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus ~ 178

Hearing the Word Together

Sermon Passage ~ Luke 15:11-32

11 And he said, "There was a man who had two sons. **12** And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. **13** Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. **14** And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. **15** So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. **16** And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

17 "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! **18** I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. **19** I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.'" **20** And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. **21** And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' **22** But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. **23** And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. **24** For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate.

25 "Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. **26** And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. **27** And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' **28** But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, **29** but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. **30** But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' **31** And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. **32** It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"

Sermon ~ *Longing for Love*

Rev. Jonny Finlayson

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Responding to the Word Together

Welcome to the Table of the Lord (*Responsive Reading*)

One: God shows his love for us

All: in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

One: Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life;

All: whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

Prayer

Lord's Supper

Pastor: The Apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 11: 23-26: "For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

All: *The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ.*

All: *The cup which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ.*

Reflection ~ Played during distribution of elements by church musician Annie Center,

Prayer

Hymn

Come Thou Fount ~ 521

Benediction

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Short prayer by pastor

Postlude

played by church musician Annie Center,

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