

4 FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

LIGHTING OF THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE

The first three candles are lit before the service begins.

One: Into our tumultuous times, the Love of God breaks in.

Many: Into our fearful times, the glory of God is revealed.

One: Sometimes it announces itself.

Many: Other times we must look high and low.

One: Sometimes we recognize it.

Many: Other times we walk right past it, lost in ourselves.

One: Love's in need of willing hearts.

Many: Love's in need of the smallest opening.

One: Greetings, favored ones! God's Love is with you.

Many: Here? Now? How can that be?

One: Be not afraid. With God, nothing is impossible.

Many: Love is knocking at the door.

One: Be not afraid. The Mighty One will do great things.

Many: Who can say what awesome thing God is up to now?

One: Arise and shine, beloveds. God's Love wants to be born in you.

Many: Here we are, servants of the Lord. Let it be so.

The fourth candle is lit. Silence is kept.

ALL: FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS, MAY YOUR LOVE BE BORN IN US.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

From the fear that keeps us from answering your call, liberate us. From our attachment to the way things have always been, deliver us.

From the despair that is unable to see a new thing breaking forth, save us.

For every time we've said "no" to Love, forgive us, and open our hearts wide to receive you anew. Amen.

CALL TO THE OFFERING

On this day when we magnify the Lord for the great things God has done through unlikely people and in unexpected ways, we give thanks that we, too, by God's Spirit, can do great things. We, too, can lift up those who are laid low. We, too, can fill the hungry with good things. We, too, through our open-hearted generosity, can proclaim that nothing will be impossible with God. We can do all of that and more by contributing to the Christmas Fund of the UCC Pension Boards. Our contributions will help retired clergy, church staff, and their survivors pay bills, maintain health insurance, and meet emergency needs. Our contributions tell our former pastors and church staff members that they are not forgotten, that they are loved, that they and their ministries are appreciated and remembered. For Love's sake, let's give generously.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Holy One who scatters the proud and lifts up the lowly, Mighty One who fills the hungry and sends the rich away empty: Receive these, our humble gifts. Bless them, that by your Spirit they might bring hope and healing, encouragement and joy, sustenance and love. Amen.