

Message for Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent

Scripture: Isaiah 7: 10-16

Title: Apathy

## **Welcome**

### **Announcements:**

Giving Options-Scholarship Program. Christmas Eve Offering will be Meals on Wheels; Giving Tree-Food Bank; No Men's coffee on Tuesday, December 23; Carols and Cocoa Sunday, December 28<sup>th</sup>, pick your top three carols in the foyer. Toys for Tots image if it shows up; This is the last Advent Study today at 2PM. Gifts for Staff; Christmas Eve Worship, Wednesday December 24 at 5:30PM.

## **Fellowship of Love**

### **Advent Candle Reading**

#### **Reader 2:**

Today we will light the fourth candle in our Advent wreath.

#### **Reader 1:**

Before we do that, we remember God's blessings, symbolized by the candles of hope, peace and joy.

*(Light the first three candles again.)*

--

**Reader 2:** The fourth candle helps us to remember that God is love.

*(Light the fourth candle.)*

--

#### **Reader 1:**

The Bible tells us that the greatest blessing is love. It is because God loved the world so much that Jesus came to share God's love. Mary sings her song in praise of God's love and goodness. Because God loves us, we must love and care for others.

--

#### **Reader 2:**

This candle reminds us to share our love with others through words and actions.

--

### **All in Unison:**

**Loving God, thank you for expressing your love through the life of**

Message for Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent

Scripture: Isaiah 7: 10-16

Title: Apathy

**Jesus, through our lives, and the lives of those around us. Help us to remember that your love will never end. Amen.**

O Come O Come Emmanuel

## **Song**

### **Call to Worship**

L: The signs are there:

God's love comes again, showering us with the light of Christ!

**P: O Lord God of hosts, let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

--

L: With anticipation of the divine, we remain expectant and marvel at the steadfast faith of Mary and Joseph.

**P: O Lord God of hosts, let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

--

L: The time is nearly upon us. Preparations are almost complete. Are we ready for change?

**P: O Lord God of hosts, let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

--

L: Worship and praise God for these signs of hope and love!

**P: O Lord God of hosts, let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

### **Unison Prayer (Please say in Unison)**

**In this season of love, hope and family, grant us joy and peace this day.**

--

**You offered signs to Joseph and Mary long ago-signs that their son would be the Messiah, Emmanuel.**

--

**May your light shine on us here, that we might understand the signs in our lives.**

Message for Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent

Scripture: Isaiah 7: 10-16

Title: Apathy

**We come with open hearts and minds to hear of your love coming into the world.**

--

**We come to hear of a young woman with child, a foster father with trust in God, a match you made in heaven to shepherd a tiny boy to his destiny.**

--

**Holy God, show us your peace as we make ready for your light in the world!**

### **Offering Lead In**

L: As we come to this time of offering, let us remember that giving is an opportunity to respond to God's generosity with our own.

### **Offering – Special Music**

### **Scripture: Isaiah 7:10-16 NRSVue**

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying,

--

“Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.”

--

But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.”

--

Then Isaiah said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also?

--

Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel.

--

He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good.

--

For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

Message for Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent

Scripture: Isaiah 7: 10-16

Title: Apathy

## **Message: Apathy**

I still remember this lesson that was given to me by my high school English teacher. Now mind you that this man was not popular with my family for a number of reasons. I grew up in a smaller community than Cottonwood, so history and reputation has a way of sticking around a lot longer than it has a right to. I don't remember the context of this lesson, but I remember that somehow we were talking about opposite emotions. The emotion we were talking about specifically was love. Obviously, most people said the opposite of love was hate however this teacher had a different opinion. His opinion was that the opposite of love is apathy.

My teacher's argument for apathy is that if you hate someone you still have some form of emotion for them. However, if you don't care what happens to them, in other words are apathetic to them, than you are freed from the emotions of caring. At the time I remember agreeing that this concept makes sense, as I've gotten older I have found it to be more and more true.

Our emotions tell us a lot about ourselves, what we care about, who we care about, and what we are going to do. Our theme today for Advent is love and our scripture doesn't seem to have much to do with love. To be honest it doesn't. You see there are two ways I can take this passage. I can talk about it in relation to the virgin birth and the expectations of the birth of Christ. Or I can take it from the historical perspective and dive into what the passage is speaking about in the time it was written. However, I'm going to take a third option and reflect as I started on our emotions.

If we talk about this in the New Testament context then we are left with a discussion about whether or not prophetic work is future telling. Which it's not. Or what the meaning of virgin is, which I think it's difficult to find a more non-Christmas topic than virginity. If we talk about it from the Old Testament perspective then we are talking about how this passage is really about the lack of trust that King Ahaz has for God, such distrust that Isaiah's prophecies are proved with a very ordinary event, the birth of a child.

Message for Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent

Scripture: Isaiah 7: 10-16

Title: Apathy

Instead, a thread that combines both of these is our reaction to emotions. Ahaz was reacting about trusting God, so God responded with a common example to show how trustworthy God is. The New Testament writers were concerned about seeing God at work, and they pointed to a common banal thing, the birth of a child to prove that. You see how we choose to respond tells us a lot about ourselves.

When I brought up love and apathy I started to try and think about when I have shown apathy and to be honest I don't have many examples. One big example from my life is I don't really care what people think about how I dress. I try and share this with the kids at the school, be less concerned with how your looks are perceived but more concerned with being who you are. Even this example however doesn't really make the point. Personally, I would rather respond with love rather than apathy. I would rather be known for loving too hard, than for not caring for those around me.

Perhaps that is what we need to capture or recapture about the Advent and Christmas season. Maybe we shouldn't be afraid to show others who we love or how we love. Maybe we shouldn't be afraid to say I love you to others, or hug one another, or care for one another. Ultimately when we talk about the incarnation, "God with us," "Emmanuel" we are talking about just that. That God loves you so much that God couldn't be separated from you. God loves you so much that God is willing to look foolish just for you, and correct me if I'm wrong but I thought we were to imitate God. Maybe it's time to love and to love hard. Amen.

**Pastor Prayer/The Lord's Prayer**

**Song**

**Benediction**

**Song**

**Goodbye**