

December 22, 2024

*“Jump for Joy! For Hope in on the Way!”*

**FORT COLLINS MENNONITE FELLOWSHIP**

300 E. Oak Street, Ft. Collins, CO 80524

**Worship: 10:00 AM**

**Pastor: Steve Ramer**

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**SEASON OF ADVENT: Together on the Journey!**

One of our Mennonite songbooks evokes wonderful images of voices blending in praise as we travel together on a path toward a deeper understanding of faith. The road can be smooth for stretches but also includes rough patches that challenge or discourage. But if we pay attention, we may notice God’s guiding hand directing us.

**Fourth Sunday of Advent: “Embodying God’s Spirit: Who Lends a Hand?”**

Since God exemplifies relationship and covenant, we can trust God to provide companions for the journey. The strength found in community is its own mystery; like a rope of cords braided together, the Spirit entwines us with companions to give us energy, steadiness, and joy as we journey together.

**1. GATHERING**

**Prelude**

**Call to Worship: based on Luke 1:26-38 (Steve)**

**Leader:** The Lord is with us, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Can you conceive it? Don’t say, “It’s all relative.”

**People:** It’s real! It’s right now! It’s right here!

**Leader:** Come young, come old. Let us worship in the name of Jesus,

**All:** For nothing will be impossible with God!

**Opening Prayer (Steve)**

**Congregational Singing (Geoff)**

**Welcome and Passing of the Peace**

**Leader:** May the peace of Christ be with you.

**People:** And also, with you.

**All:** Let us offer one another signs of peace, reconciliation, and love.

*“I believe that a trusting attitude and a patient attitude go hand in hand. You see, when you let go and learn to trust God, it releases joy in your life. And when you trust God, you’re able to be more patient. Patience is not just about waiting for something... it’s about how you wait, or your attitude while waiting.” — Joyce Meyer*

## Candle lighting



**Reader 1:** Mary was told that she would be the mother to the promised Messiah.

**Reader 2:** And she responded, "I am the Lord's servant. Let it be with me just as you have said."

**Reader 1:** With the courage of Mary, we can accept the journey ahead of us.

**Reader 2:** But we do not need to walk it alone.

**Reader 1:** We need the support of others.

*Candle lighting (all four Advent candles are lit)*

**All:** With Christ as our center, we join hands with others, walking together on the journey.

## 2. HEARING GOD'S WORD

### Scriptures: Luke 1:26–56 (selected verses)

26 In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy the heavenly messenger Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin... named Mary. 30 Gabriel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 Listen to me: you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus."

34 But Mary replied, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

35 Gabriel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and in the shadow of God's power the child will be born holy and he will be called the Son of God. 36 Even your relative Elizabeth, in her old age, has also conceived a son. She was thought to be infertile but is now sixth months along. 37 Don't you know that with God anything is possible."

38 Then Mary said, "Here I am, the Lord's servant. May everything you have said come true." 39 Mary quickly made her way to... the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. 41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, her baby jumped for joy in her womb. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth 42 exclaimed at the top of her voice, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!"

46 Mary began to sing, "My soul magnifies the Lord, 47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, 48 for the Lord has looked with favor on my lowly status as a servant. 49 ...the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is the Lord's name... 51 With a strong arm God has put the arrogant to rout along with their secret scheming; 52 God has pulled the mighty down from their thrones and exalted the lowest; 53 the Lord has filled the hungry with good things while sending the rich away empty. ...56 And Mary stayed with Elizabeth for three more months.

### Sermon: "Jump for Joy! For Hope in on the Way!" (Steve)



This week, we hear the story of Mary learning that she will have a baby and her subsequent visit to her cousin Elizabeth for support. God is embodied in Jesus (God-with-us) who is formed and held in Mary's body. We must not overlook who exactly Mary was and the fact that God choose someone of such "low status" to bring salvation to the world. Through her, God delivers hope of new life! So of course, we "jump for Joy" when see it!

## 3. RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

### Congregational Singing (Geoff)

#### Response

#### Joys and Concerns

#### Offering & Music

### Sending Blessing (Steve)

May Jesus be nurtured, and born, and grow in our lives  
so that he would find a home with us,  
he would be at home with him,  
and the world would be blessed  
to see and know and love this Jesus—God-with-us. Amen.

*"Jump, and you will find out how to unfold your wings as you fall." — Ray Bradbury*

*"Jump into the middle of things, get your hands dirty, fall flat on your face, and then reach for the stars." — Ben Stein*

*"I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy."*

*— Rabindranath Tagore*