

Sermon Title: **Love - God Is With Us**

Bible: Matthew 1:18-25 (Isaiah 7:10-14)

Where & When: Fourth Sunday of Advent at Gilroy UMC on Dec. 22nd, 2019

Audience: about 35 English-speaking Church Members

Opening Prayer

Gracious God, you sent us your son, Jesus Christ. That's because you want to be with us. God became a human to be with us. Please be with my lips in your love and grace. In Jesus' name.

Amen.

1. Lectionary Year A in 2019 Advent

	Meaning	Color	Old Testament	Gospel
12/01	Hope	Purple	Isaiah 2:2-5	Matthew 24:36-44
12/08	Peace	Purple	Isaiah 11:6-9	Matthew 3:1-12
12/15	Joy	Pink	Isaiah 35:3-10	Matthew 11:2-11
12/22	Love	Purple	Isaiah 7:10-14	Matthew 1:18-25
12/24	Christ	White	Isaiah 9:6-7	Luke 2:1-20

In Advent, I am following the Lectionary scriptures and the meaning of the Advent candles.

We have previously lit the candles of Hope, Peace, and Joy. Today, we light the candle of Love.

On Christmas Eve, we will light the last candle, the white candle of Christ! There will be carols, candle lighting, and a nativity photo booth. You can see the nativity photo booth today in the fellowship hall after worship. I hope to see all of you at our lovely Christmas Eve Service.

2. We Are All Here Today!

We are all here today. I regard this as a miracle. I made a video to follow this miracle. I am not sure if I can explain it well, but I will give it a shot. (Google Earth for Gilroy UMC - <https://youtu.be/WGQQy6AnMT0>) We are coming from all different places to this church. I thought that Gilroy was a small town. But now I know that it is a big city. Gilroy and our church are growing every year. Most of us live in Gilroy. Can you see your house? Some are coming from San Martin, Morgan Hill, Hollister, San Juan Bautista, and sometimes from the San Francisco Bay Area. Most of us came here from various parts of California. But some came here from other States, including Hawaii. And our parents and our grandparents came from all over the States and the world. Some of our ancestors were Native Americans. Many of our ancestors came from many countries in Europe. Some came from a small island in the Azores. Some came from Latin America, Peru. Some came from Japan. Some came from South Korea. If I missed anyone, please forgive me. We are all coming from different places on the earth. But we are all here at this small church. We make this small church big and wonderful. I am thankful and joyful to see you here and now. It is a miracle. We are the miracle itself!

3. We Are Nothing? Everything?

I will show you another video: <https://youtu.be/8Are9dDbW24> This video shows how tiny we are. It looks like we are just one very tiny speck of dust or nearly nothing. At the same time, we are made up of many small parts. Are we huge or tiny? Are we nothing? Or everything? I do not know how to explain this, but we are between nothing and everything. We are not everything. In the face of the universe and history, we cannot help but be humble. However, we are not

nothing. We have tons of cells in our body. We have our minds and our souls that not any lens catch. So, I would like to say that we are special.

4. God decided to be with us.

Because we are special, God provides many things to us: air, water, food, this mike, and this building. God sends us family, friends, neighbors, and church members. God gives us passion, forgiveness, healing, hope, peace, and joy. God does not stop there. What God decides is to send Godself to us. God became a human. God decided to be with us. It is Emmanuel, Baby Jesus, that we are waiting for. Last Christmas, my wife, Mihyun, came to Gilroy from South Korea. Because of my complex visa status, she came to me once a year as a Christmas gift for three years. Because we loved each other, we were able to wait for each other, even though I stayed in the States, and my wife stayed in South Korea. It was not easy, but it was not impossible. Now that we still love each other, thankfully, we decided to be together. I believe that I am becoming a better Hwapyoung every day. We are making many good memories in Gilroy. I am still amazed to stand here. How can I be here? How can we be here together? I regard this as a miracle. I am just thankful for this wonderful miracle and accept it.

God decided to be with us as a human, because God loves us so much. But, sometimes, I cannot understand God's love. That's because God's love led Jesus to sacrifice himself for us. With my small head, I cannot understand what made God, in the form of Jesus, to be with us even on the cross. I regard this as God's mysterious love. I decide to say thank you, Jesus, and accept it. Emmanuel. God is with us. This is God's love, and it is the gift of Christmas.

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, you sent us your son Jesus Christ. You became a human and decided to be with us on the earth. For your love, for this holy mystery, we give you thanks. Please pour out more love toward us! In Jesus' name. Amen.

Questions.

1. Can you share a miracle that you have experienced?
2. Can you share a mystery that you experienced?
3. Can you share a memorable gift that you have received at Christmas?