

Rev. Janet Doyle
Elmer Presbyterian Church
Fourth Sunday in Advent
Sunday, December 19, 2021
Scripture: 1 John 4: 7-21

Sermon: It's The Most Wonderful Time of the Year- Gift of Love

Last Sunday we lit the candle of joy. We light it and the Candles of Hope and Peace again as we remember that Christ, who was born in Bethlehem, will come again to fulfill all of God's promises and bring us everlasting peace and joy.

The fourth candle of Advent is the Candle of Love. God's love is a perfect love. It holds nothing back. God, in love, gives us everything we need to live a life of hope and peace.

The Bible says in John 3:16, that "God so loved the world that God gave His only Son, so that whoever believes in him, should not perish, but have eternal life." Jesus shows us God's perfect love.

This is what love is like as we find it in I Corinthians 13: "Love is patient, love is kind and envies no one. Love is never boastful or conceited, rude or selfish. Love is not quick to take offense, it keeps no records of wrongs, it does not gloat over other people's troubles, but rejoices in the right, the good, and the true. There is nothing that love cannot face, there is no limit to its faith, to its hope, to its endurance. Love never ends."

We light the Candle of Love to remind us that Jesus brings us God's love and shows us how to love others.

Love is like a light shining in a dark place. As we look at this Candle of Love today we celebrate the love we find in Jesus Christ.

We cannot have the Christmas Story without love. As Linus states in *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, "That's what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown."

As followers of Jesus we put on the Love of Jesus when we love others around us in His name.

John 13: 5 says, “By this all people know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

When Jesus came as a baby to this earth, he brought a special kind of love. This love is unselfish, compassionate, and unconditional. He loves us just as we are.

He loves us so that we can love one another with that same love. Our actions reflect Jesus to the world around us.

As you move into Christmas this week, be reminded that your actions and words can show others God’s love.

The Christmas Story that has changed lives around the world begins with Joseph’s love for Mary, he chose the way of love. Then we see Mary’s love for Jesus, the center of the Christmas Story, the actual birth of Jesus, as Mary tenderly wraps Jesus in swaddling cloths and lays him in the manger. The love between mother and child is so natural. The third aspect of love at Christmas is God’s love for sinners because Jesus “will save his people from their sins.” (*Matthew 1:21*) The name Jesus means “Savior” and Jesus was born to save. The greatest gift ever given was the gift of God’s own Son and nothing will separate us from the love of God. The Fourth aspect of love is our love for one another. 1 John 4 says, “since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”

The Christmas Story is not only a reminder of how much God loves us, but also how much we should love other people.

Is there someone you need to help this Christmas?

Is there someone you need to reach out to this Christmas? Is there someone you need to forgive this Christmas?

God showed his love for us at Christmas by sending his Son Jesus into the world as a sacrifice for our sins. How will you show your love to others this Christmas?

Remember, The Christmas Story is all about LOVE.