



WELCOME TO FIRST MENNONITE CHURCH
of Champaign-Urbana

Following Christ. Nurturing Community. Seeking Peace with Justice.



In the Beginning was the Word

Artist: Gwen M. Stamm

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Celebration *of* Worship

December 21, 2025



Advent 4: Love Comes Down

Centering chimes

Prelude

***Call to worship**

Leader: In the beginning was love, and love was with God, and love was God.

**Congregation: We gather in awe and amazement , watching and waiting
for Love to come down.**

Leader: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Congregation: We wait with hope, longing for the gentle light of love to fill the world.

Leader: The Word became flesh and lived among us, full of grace and truth.

Congregation: We have seen his glory, Love embodied among us.

Leader: Come, let us worship the God who moves among us, the Christ who draws near,
the Spirit who shines in our hearts.

**ALL: The Light is coming! We tremble in excitement and uncertainty. Watching, waiting,
for Love to be born.**

***Gathering Hymn #215** "Oh, How Shall I Receive Thee"

Welcome & prayer

Praising Hymn #270 "In the Beginning"

Lighting Advent candles

Leader: We have been wondering in the night, looking into the vastness, looking for even
a glimmer of starlight, to usher in your love.

Congregation: Come, Love of the world. Come amaze us.

**ALL: May your love dispel the darkness and reveal your path of grace and mercy,
inviting us to journey with you.**

Candle lighting hymn (insert) "Come Hope of the World" (verses 1-4)

Children's story and offering for the Mennonite Central Committee's crisis response in Gaza

Congregation sings as children come forward (Voices Together #512)

Embodied Scripture Psalm 130:5-8

Scripture John 1:1-18

Women's Ensemble *Sing to Him a Song of Love* by Linda Spevacek

Sermon

***Response Hymn #638** "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"

Congregational sharing and prayer (use a mic or *text/email prayers to Pastor Michael*)

Prayer & Offertory

Ushers will pass offering plates down the rows.

Introduction of visitors

Work of the church

***Sending Hymn #255** "Love Came Down at Christmas"

***Benediction**

**Stand in body or in spirit. Children are invited to wave the worship ribbons during the hymns.*

Note: Because worship is participatory and not a performance, instead of applauding please show appreciation for preludes, offertories and special music in other ways, such as ASL, silent applause, saying "Amen" or thanking musicians later.

We welcome, without exclusion, all who seek God's love and grace . . .

You are welcome here, inclusive of gender, race, country of origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, sexual identity, socioeconomic status, family status, past imprisonment, education, citizenship status and physical or mental abilities. We encourage you to share in the rituals, fellowship and ministry of this congregation.

Hearing devices (T-coil and over-ear) and large print hymnals are available from the greeters.

Childcare (birth – preschool) is provided in the nursery downstairs.