



ORDER OF WORSHIP

3rd Sunday in Advent

“JOY”

December 12, 2021

Due to COVID precautions, we are asking everyone in the congregation to remain masked, and to enjoy singing the hymns and responses.

MEDITATION

Whatever desire possesses us will make us small . . . unless a larger aspiration takes over. Aspiration can make us as large as desire can make us small. You who messed up the scales: lead us! Cradle by cradle, star by star, step by step – let’s go. Amen.

Donna Schaper, *On Tiptoes In Expectation*

PRELUDE: Preludio & Corrente (from *Sonata No. 7 in F major*) *Archangelo Corelli*
Guiomar Turgeon, violinist; John Finney, organist

WELCOME

Liturgist: Rev. Anne Marie Holloway

* CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Rejoice in the Lord always;

All: again I will say, rejoice.

One: Let us pray.

All: Stir up your power, O God, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

* HYMN: Return, My People

Repton

New Century Hymnal (black hymnal) #114

“Return, My People” Words Copyright © 1993 James F. D. Martin

* PRAYER OF CONFESSION and ASSURANCE OF PARDON

One: Participating in repentance is to name the contradictions in which we find ourselves: misplaced love, deceitful innocence or unworthy allegiances. Let us offer God our willingness to turn in a new direction.

All: **Merciful God, we await your light. The darkness in us deepens as we have not lived as heirs of your mercy. We have excused ourselves from sorrow's lamentations and love's commitments. May the advent of your grace humble us and open us to the peace that is beyond understanding. Amen.**

—silent confession—

One: *The Lord is at hand. Have no anxiety about anything.* God restores us and strengthens us for each day's challenge. Praise God, give thanks, and rejoice!

* SUMMARY OF THE LAW

* GLORIA *Gloria*
Angels We Have Heard on High
**Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply, echo back their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

* PASSING OF THE PEACE

Please be seated.

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING: Presentation of the gift of joy.

Rev. Ruth Edens, David Zimmer

Scripture: John 8:12; John 8:54-59

Reflection

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Hymn: Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

Es ist ein' Ros'

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung!

Of Jesse's lineage coming, by faithful prophets sung.

It came, a floweret bright,

Amid the cold of winter, when half spent was the night.

Prayer

SOLO: Rejoice Greatly, O Daughter of Zion (from *Messiah*)

G. F. Handel

Laurie Stewart Otten, soprano; Guiomar Turgeon, violinist

LESSON Philippians 4:4-7, NRSV

Reader: Rev. Kit Novotny

Paul, like Isaiah centuries before, is confident of the nearness of God and thus can offer – while imprisoned – the exhortation to rejoice.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

LESSON: Luke 3:7-18, NRSV

The life of faith is a life lived in right relationship with God and one another. John the Baptist preaches that our lives should “bear fruit worthy of repentance.”

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” Even tax-collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.” So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

Reader: For the Word of God in scripture, among us, and within us.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON: *“The Fellowship of the Gentle”*

Rev. Dr. Jill Edens

INVITATION

Nate Klug, Katherine "Kit" Novotny, Garrett Murphy

QUESTIONS

READING & OWNING THE COVENANT

Now let us unite our hearts and voices as we affirm our covenant. (read by all)

We do unite in striving to know the will of God and to walk in the ways of God, as made known in Holy Scripture and in the continuing revelation through men and women. We hold it to be the mission of the Church of Christ to proclaim the gospel, to exalt the worship of God, and to labor for the progress of knowledge, the promotion of justice, the reign of peace, and the realization of harmony among the children of God. We agree to maintain the Church of Christ by our presence and support, and to live with each other in love and uprightness. This we do, not in our own might, but depending on God and the Holy Spirit. In the name of Christ, we thus covenant and agree.

WORDS OF WELCOME *(read by minister and current members)*

We, the members of this Church, do welcome you with joy. We pledge you our sympathy, our help, and our prayers, that together we may present each other perfect before God. God grant that loving and being loved, serving and being served, blessing and being blessed, we may be prepared while we dwell together on earth for the perfect fellowship which is to come.

PRAYER OF BLESSING

PRAYER CONCERNS & CELEBRATIONS

SILENT PRAYER

PASTORAL PRAYER & OUR LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OFFERING OF OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS TO GOD

Invitation

As the offering plates are passed, please pass and sign the Friendship Register.

Offertory: O Thou, That Tellest Good Tidings to Zion (from *Messiah*) *G. F. Handel*
Chancel Choir; Shannon Lebrón, mezzo-soprano; Guiomar Turgeon, violinist

* Doxology:

Dix

As they offered gifts most rare, at the manger rude and bare,
So may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin's alloy,
All our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to you from whom they spring.

* Dedication of the Offering

Through our offerings, we express our gratitude. As we give of ourselves, we respond to your call to bear fruit and to make your name known among the nations. Thank you for accepting all we offer. Amen.

* HYMN: Good Christians All, Rejoice

In dulci jubilo

Hymns of Truth & Light (blue hymnal) #158

* COMMISSION & BENEDICTION

Please be seated during the Postlude.

POSTLUDE: In dulci jubilo

J. S. Bach

John Finney, organist

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Joel 2:12-23; Isa. 11:1-12

James F. D. Martin, 1981; alt.

1 Re - turn, my peo - ple, Is - ra - el, with pen - i - ten - tial tear;
 2 Fear not, be - lov - ed, hear - ken now: our God has done great things!
 3 Then to the faith - ful of the earth the call of God rings clear:

just as the proph-et did fore - tell the ad - vent of Em-man-u - el,
 Your vin - di - ca - tion shall pour down like rain up-on the bar - ren ground,
 "Re - turn, my peo - ple, claim your worth, pre - par - ing for your Sav - ior's birth;

God's reign on earth is near! God's reign on earth is near!
 glad tid - ings to you bring, glad tid - ings to you bring.
 my reign on earth is near. My reign on earth is near."

This new Advent text by United Church of Christ minister James Martin is set to a tune by British composer Charles Hubert Hastings Parry, who is also known for his symphonies, organ works, and cantatas.

Tune: REPTON 8.6.8.8.6.6.
 C. Hubert H. Parry, 1888
 Alternate tune: REST

1. Good Chris-tians all, re-joice, with heart and soul and voice;
 2. Good Chris-tians all, re-joice, with heart and soul and voice;
 3. Good Chris-tians all, re-joice, with heart and soul and voice;

give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;
 now ye hear of end - less bliss; Je - sus Christ was born for this!
 now ye need not fear the grave; Je - sus Christ was born to save!

ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man-ger now.
 He has o - pened heav-en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.
 Calls you one and calls you all, to gain his ev - er - last - ing hall.

Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!
 Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!
 Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

WORDS: German-Latin carol, 14th century; tr. John M. Neale, 1853, alt.
 MUSIC: German melody, 14th century

IN DULCI JUBILO
 66.77.78.55

The earliest version of this dance-like, macaronic carol (one combining two languages - in this case, Latin and German) dates back to c. 1400. The first English translation was published in 1708.

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GOD
IS STILL
SPEAKING

WE ARE AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION.
NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE,
NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE
ON LIFE'S JOURNEY,
YOU ARE WELCOME HERE.