

Welcome into the Joy of Advent

Prelude: Lo How a Rose er Blooming Geistliche Kirchengesang arr. Bernadine Johnson

Call to Worship:

My soul magnifies the Lord!
All is ready
Stable prepared
Shepherds working
Magi journeying
Gifts are chosen
My soul magnifies the Lord!
A city awaits
Crowded and bustling
Stars are shining
People expecting
A drama unfolding
My soul magnifies the Lord!
The Lord is coming
To save his people
Mary's obedience
Jesus' willingness
Your gracious gift to us
My soul magnifies the Lord

Advent Candle lighting Liturgies: Who Do You Say Jesus Is?

Readers and Candle Lighters: Sarah & Noah

Jesus, Our Morning Star,

V1: Who do you say Jesus is?

V2: To me, a sunflower, Jesus is like the sun, who I always turn towards for energy and strength.

V1: To me, a team player, Jesus is a great coach who offers leadership, correction, and encouragement.

All: We wait for Jesus, the bright morning star, who brings joy with his rising. V2: (Lights the pink Advent candle)

V1: We wait for Jesus.

Please Join us in Singing: A Candle is Burning

A candle is burning, a candle of JOY,
A candle to welcome brave Mary's new boy
Our hearts fill with wonder and eyes light and glow
As joy brightens winter like sunshine on snow

Children's Time with Ashley: Advent; Hope

Prayer of Approach:

Gracious God, you have done so much for us
 And we so little in return
 You ask for humility
 And we are often a proud people
 You ask for willingness
 And we are often a stubborn people
 You ask for repentance
 And we are often a deaf people
 You ask for service
 And we are often a busy people
 Gracious God, you want the best for us
 Teach us obedience
 Grant us forgiveness
 That we, like Mary
 Might be your willing servants. Amen.

Hymn: VU 8 Lo, How a Rose e'er Blooming

1 Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming
 From tender stem hath sprung!
 Of Jesse's lineage coming
 As seers of old have sung.
 It came, a blossom bright,
 Amid the cold of winter
 When half-spent was the night.

2 Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
 The Rose I have in mind:
 With Mary we behold it,
 The virgin mother kind.
 To show God's love aright
 She bore for us a Savior
 When half-spent was the night.

PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE**One Whom You Do Not Recognize**

It's early evening. You are walking downtown in a large city. It's a few weeks before Christmas, and the streets are filled with people shopping. The sidewalks are so crowded that it's hard to walk without bumping into someone. Your life has been so busy lately that you haven't had time to think about Christmas or shopping or anything related to the season. As you walk, you wonder why you even decided to come downtown tonight. You knew it would be crowded. You knew it would be difficult just crossing the street, but something drew you here, something that you felt deep inside.

You decide to sit in a café for a few minutes to let your mind settle. You take your coffee, but even this place is so full there aren't any seats available. You notice someone sitting at a table alone. "Do you mind if I sit here?" you ask him.

He looks up. You've seen his face before, but you can't remember where. "Not at all," he says with a smile.

You take off your coat and sit down. The man continues to look at you. At first it makes you feel uncomfortable. Then he asks, "What are you looking for tonight?"

The question strikes you as odd, but there is something about his face and voice that make you want to open up and speak freely. "I'm not shopping, that's for sure," you say laughing. "Why do you ask?"

He smiles and says, "I think you know me."

You look at him and again that feeling that you do know him comes over you. "Your face seems familiar. Perhaps we've met before. Are you from around here?"

His eyes seem to look deep inside of you. His smile is warm and inviting. "I am the one you've been searching for. I am he."

His words penetrate deep inside you. You feel a sense of peace and calm, a feeling that he knows all about you and sits there without judgment. "All you need to do is open your eyes. I am here. I am everywhere. Just look." It is then you know. It is then you understand. You look down at your coffee unable to speak but feeling more alive than you have in years. When you look up, he is gone. You look around the café, but you don't see him. You look out the window, and there he is, smiling at you. He points to his eyes and says, "Just look. I am here." And then he disappears into the crowd.

Concluding Prayer

Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end.
Amen.

Hymn: VU 249 Rejoice in the Lord Always

Rejoice in the Lord always;
And again I say, rejoice.
Rejoice in the Lord always;
And again I say, rejoice.

Rejoice, rejoice,
And again I say, rejoice.
Rejoice, rejoice,
And again I say, rejoice.

A New Creed

We are called to be the Church...to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope...

We are not alone,
we live in God's world.
We believe in God:
who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others
by the Spirit.
We trust in God.
We are called to be the Church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.
In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.
We are not alone.
Thanks be to God.

Time of Meditation for Offering: These Gifts We Bring

Scriptures: Grace

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

New Revised Standard Version

61 The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;

² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;

³ to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.

They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

⁴ They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.

⁸ For I the LORD love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;^[a]

I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

⁹ Their descendants shall be known among the nations,
and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.

¹⁰ I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

¹¹ For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

Luke 1:39-55

New Revised Standard Version

³⁹ In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰ where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴² and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³ And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴ For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be^[a] a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

Mary's Song of Praise

⁴⁶ And Mary^[b] said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,

⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me,

and holy is his name.

⁵⁰ His mercy is for those who fear him

from generation to generation.

⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,

and lifted up the lowly;

⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things,

and sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel,

in remembrance of his mercy,

⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors,

to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

Message: "What Are You Waiting For?" – Leonard Van Harten

Hymn: VU 59 Joy to the World

1 Joy to the world! the Lord is come:
let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing.

2 Joy to the world! the Savior reigns:
let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and
plains,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

3 No more let sins and sorrows grow,
nor thorns infest the ground:
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.

4 He rules the earth with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

A Joyful Benediction

Be people of joy.

Let joy live in your heart and share the joy of Christ with all you meet.

Share joy by seeing the good in each other.

Share joy by remembering good times and hoping for good times to come.

Share joy by praying for our world.

In this Advent season, we need to see, feel, and share joy.

As you go out into the wonder of God's creations, share joy, peace, and hope with those you meet. Amen.

Postlude O ! How Joyfully with Joy to the World By Lowell Mason (based on GF Handel) arr. Cindy Berry