

Sunday December 15, 2024
Third Sunday of Advent

We Gather In God's Presence

Prelude: "Joy to the World" Music: Lowell Mason arr. Kevin Olson

Birthdays, Celebrations, and Life and Work of the Congregation

Lighting the Advent Candle Written by Jean Hamilton. Used with permission.

Today is for joy, because Christmas is near.

Do you know what that means? Do you have it quite clear?

Of course, it just means that we're smiling and happy

And playing

And singing

And dancing

And clappy.

It really is easy, it's really a cinch, and if you don't get it, you're likely a grinch!

So that is the answer, so that's how it's done!

It's really as simple as just having fun?

You sound kind of doubtful! Do you think there's more,

Do you think there's something else Christmas is for?

I think fun is great, but I think joy is deeper.

Like fun comes and goes, but joy is a keeper.

I think joy's a mystery, richer by far,

And it all has to do with a stall and a star.

I think that at Christmas it's there in the air,

And spreads from the manger to shine everywhere.

I don't understand it, I just know it's there.

I know you are right, if I just stop and think,

Joy is the mystery, and love is the link.

So let's light a candle, for love and for joy

So we will remember the birth of a boy. *(light third candle)*

Hymn VU 253 "Sing Your Joy" Words, Music: David Haas, 1987. Words and Music © 1987 G.I.A. Publications Inc.
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Sing your joy, proclaim God's glory!

Rise and sing, the morning has come!

Bless our God and praise all creation;

song of the earth, and light from heaven:

God is alive! Hallelujah!

All the earth is filled with rejoicing,

light and life, the wonder of God!

Christ has triumphed! Risen forever!

Joy of our hearts, and hope of our dreaming:

God is alive! Hallelujah!

May we learn to become your kingdom,
may we be your kindness and truth!
Love is our calling, gift of your presence;
children of God, and spirit of Jesus:
God is alive! Hallelujah!

Light our way, O God of the living,
may we learn to see with new eyes!
Jesus the Lord, our power and promise;
light for the blind, and food for the hungry:
God is alive! Hallelujah!

Opening Prayer (*unison*) Written by **Nora Vedress**, *Calvary U.C., Prince Albert, Sask.* Used with permission.

Advent waiting offers us hope; it places in our hands the gift of peace; it sings a song of joy that rings over our heads for all the world to hear. Today we rejoice for we know that it is you, O God, who moves among us calling us into the sacredness of this time. Fill our hearts with laughter, fill our lives with music, fill this church, this city, this world with life and light. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Ministry of Music: "Ave Maria" Bach/Gounod

Nancy Quinn

A New Creed VU 918

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.

Hymn VU 29 "Hark the Glad Sound" Words: Philip Doddridge, 1738. Music: Thomas Haweis, 1792.
 Music adapted Samuel Webbe, 1808. Words, Music, Adaptation in the Public Domain.
 Descant: John Wilson. © Hope Publishing Co. OneLicense.net A620168

Hark the glad sound! The Saviour comes,
 the Saviour promised long:
 let every heart prepare a throne,
 and every voice a song.

He comes the prisoners to release
 in Satan's bondage held,
 the gates of brass before him burst,
 the iron fetters yield.

He come the broken heart to bind,
 the bleeding soul to cure,
 and with the treasures of his grace
 to bless the humble poor.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
 your welcome shall proclaim;
 and heaven's eternal arches ring
 with your beloved name.

We Open Ourselves to Receive God's Blessings

Responsive Reading: Isaiah 12:2-6 VU 880

Proclaim God's marvelous deeds to all the nations.

I will praise you, O God,
for though you were angry with me,
your anger turned away, and you comforted me.

Surely God is my salvation.

I will trust and not be afraid,

for you, God, are my strength and might;
you show yourself my saviour.

Proclaim God's marvelous deeds to all the nations.

With joy we draw water from the wells of salvation.

Give thanks and call on God's name.

Make known God's deeds among the nations;

proclaim that God's name is exalted.

Sing praises to God, whose work is glorious;

let it be known in all the earth.

Shout for joy, you who dwell in Zion,
for the Holy One of Israel is majestic among you.

Proclaim God's marvelous deeds to all the nations.

Scripture: Zephaniah 3:14-20 A Song of Joy

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;
shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem!

The Lord has taken away the judgments against you;
he has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;
you shall fear disaster no more.

On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:

“Do not fear, O Zion;
do not let your hands grow weak.

The Lord, your God, is in your midst,
a warrior who gives victory;
he will rejoice over you with gladness;
he will renew you in his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing
as on a day of festival.”

I will remove disaster from you,
so that you will not bear reproach for it.

I will deal with all your oppressors
at that time.

And I will save the lame
and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise
and renown in all the earth.

At that time I will bring you home,
at the time when I gather you;
for I will make you renowned and praised
among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes
before your eyes, says the Lord.

*The other readings for this week are: **Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18***

Meditation: “Joy”

Hymn VU 35 “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice” Words: Latin, 14th C. Translated by John Mason Neale.

Music: German melody. Harmony © 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House.

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Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice!

Give ye heed to what we say: News! News!

Jesus Christ is born today.

Ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now.

Christ is born today! Christ is born today!

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice!
 Now ye hear of endless bliss: Joy! Joy!
 Jesus Christ was born for this!
 He hath opened heaven's door, and we are blest forevermore.
 Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice!
 Now ye need not fear the grave: Peace! Peace!
 Jesus Christ was born to save!
 Calls you one and calls you all to gain his everlasting hall.
 Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

We Respond To God's Grace

Invitation to Invest in God's Mission

Sometimes we wonder how generous we should be. John the Baptizer was very clear: share what you have so everyone has enough. Do not give in to greed. Be content. I wonder what that could look like here? What joy would that kind of generosity bring us? Friends, let us trust God to be sufficient in all things as we share our gifts for our community and for God's work in the world through the Mission & Service fund. Our tithes and offerings will be received.

Offertory Hymn "Bless Our Hands" to tune Good King Wencelas

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Bless our hands to do your work, bless the gifts we're bearing.
 May your love and grace be known in the way we're sharing.
 Peace and hope and joy and love – these are gifts worth giving.
 These be ours to pass along when in Christ we're living.

Prayer of Dedication Written by Gord Dunbar. **Gathering**, Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 2024/2025, page 33. Used with permission

So often, when we present our offerings to you, O God, we do so out of a sense of duty and of responsibility. On this Sunday of joy, however, we want to celebrate how you bless us each day. By sharing our abundance – no matter how insignificant it may seem to us – our spirits dance in celebration of how your purpose, through what we give, changes lives. Bless us by changing our lives too, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession & The Lord's Prayer

God of Love, "A voice cries in the wilderness: prepare the way of the Lord!" Yet we need you, by your Holy Spirit, to prepare a way in our hearts and minds and lives.

Prepare among us the path of joy.

We pray for those whose spirits need to be buoyed up and who have forgotten childhood's gift of taking delight in the simple pleasures of life, which come from you, Extravagant God. We pray for Your church that it may be a joy giving light in the darkness. Especially we pray for Ausable United Church, and their spiritual leader, the Rev. Jim Haupt.

Prepare among us the path of love.

We pray for all who need to be embraced by love:

all who are cramped and narrowed in spirit;

all who have lost the ability to trust;

all who ache for a signal they are cherished, or even noticed by someone;

all who struggle with a lifetime burden of being told they are not good enough.

Prepare among us, O God, the path of hope.

We pray for those in need of hope today:

all who mourn the death of a loved one, especially

the friends and families of Bill Latham, and Shirley Day;

all who grieve the end of a relationship;

all who are worried for a friend;

all who are anxious for a family member's health;

all who live in the midst of social collapse;

all who live in the midst of warfare and terrorism;

all who live in grinding poverty;

all who are overwhelmed by illness or disability, especially we pray for:

Ina, and their loved ones and caregivers,

and those known only in the silence of our own hearts

Prepare among us the path of peace. Grant the peace that comes in following your ways, in practicing justice and righteousness, in sharing our gifts for your sake. We pray for the peoples of this world, that they may be reconciled one to another and learn to live in peace. Especially we pray this week for the people of Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and China.

O God of hope, peace, joy and love, we honour you now and always, through Jesus, your Anointed One, who taught us to pray,

**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 trespasses,

as we forgive those

who trespass against us;

and lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,

and the power, and the glory,

forever and ever. Amen.

Hymn VU 59 “Joy to the World” Words: Isaac Watts, 1719. Music: attributed to G.F. Handel, 1742.

Arranged by Lowell Mason, 1836.

Words and Music in the Public Domain.

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 heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! the Saviour 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.

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.

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.

Commissioning

God who leads by a star, show us the direction to Bethlehem.

Lead us to the place where love and joy are to be born into our lives.

Give us signs along the road as we make our journey,
that we may follow in your way. Amen.

Response: MV 220 “Hope Shines as the Solitary Star” Words: Catherine Faith MacLean.

Music: Janet Bauman Tissandier. Words © Catherine Faith MacLean.

Music

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Joy shines as the solitary star. Faith is the inner light.

You and I together mirror the Light of Lights, and illumine the pathway home.

Postlude: “Oh How Joyfully with Joy to the World” Lowell Mason (based on G.F. Handel) arr. Cindy Berry

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Everything Nativity: *Thanks to all who shared your beautiful nativity scenes, those who set up, packed up and those who welcomed our guests. It was much appreciated. Thirty unique nativity scenes were displayed. Cash donations, as well as food donations will be delivered to our Food Bank. Thank you for your support.*

Looking for the perfect Christmas gift for the person who has everything? Don't forget about **Gifts with Vision!** Order online at giftswithvision.ca

ADVENT STUDY: *What are you longing for? Join us for a three week Advent Small Group Study about how we can use 'longong' as a spiritual gift and activate Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love to the world. Wednesday at 2 p.m., December 18.*

Next Sunday, December 22, we will be celebrating the sacrament of Holy Communion. If you are joining us online, please remember to have some juice (or wine) and bread product at the ready.

Christmas Eve. *We will be celebrating at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 24.*

Worship Around the Breakfast Table: On Sunday, December 29 we will gather in the hall for a potluck breakfast and worship. Let's plan to gather at 9:30 a.m. for breakfast, and then start worship about 10:00 a.m.

LECTIONARY READINGS:

December 22 – Fourth of Advent – Year C – VU 998

Micah 5:2-5a, Luke 1:47-55 or Psalm 80:1-7; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)