



Order of Service – 3rd Sunday of Advent

Welcome and Announcements

The Lighting of the Advent Candle “Joy”

Advent Hymn: The Holy Fire of Advent (verse 1,2&3) (lyrics on screen)

Call to Worship:

L: The Lord is getting us ready to receive a gift of great joy.

C: Watch for this gift!

L: Be vigilant and ready. For the gift is about to come.

C: The promise of God is faithful and trustworthy.

L: Watch, wait. The Gift is coming into the world!

C: Praise be to God for such lavish love. AMEN

Opening Hymn: O Come, Divine Messiah! (lyrics on screen)

Confession:

C: God of Amazing Surprises, we are rushing headlong into this season of buying, giving, greed, and struggle. We want to think of the holiday as delightful, but we have a tendency to make it a time of the highest stress. We over-schedule our time, overdraw our resources, ignore those moments in which we could just relax and have quiet time with our families and with you. We blame it on everything else but our own decision making. We speak of obligations, of the need to be constantly busy, of the pressure to purchase things to make people happy. The reality is that your love should be our foundation, the base from which we celebrate. Our watchfulness is not necessarily about what is to happen, but rather should be on the ways in which we order our lives, ways that block out your love and your healing power. Forgive us for our stubborn insistence on maintaining schedule rather than focusing on your love. Heal us. Strengthen us and make us watchful over our faith in you. For we ask this in Jesus’ Name, AMEN. (silence for reflection)

Absolution:

L: Watch! Wait! God is bringing to you new hope and peace. It is a gift, given especially for you--one that you cannot earn--it’s a gift. Praise be to the Giver of All Great Gifts, our Lord. AMEN.

Prayer of the Day

C: Lord of hope, you bless our lives every day. We sometimes forget that all these blessings come from you and we overlook them or decide that we just deserve all the wonderful things that come our way. It seems that every year the push for the commercial holiday expectations comes earlier and earlier. By the time we approach the true Holy Day we are exhausted; we cannot gather the strength to praise you. Make us ready, Lord. Slow us down and help us find release from the demands. Enable us to make decisions that will build hope and community, rather than foster greed and selfishness. Help us reach out to others with gifts of kindness and peace. Enter our hearts, not with demands, but with a gentle reminder of the peace you bring. For we ask this in Jesus’ name, AMEN.

Hebrew Scripture: Isaiah 35:1-10

Special Music *Breath of Heaven*

New Testament: James 5: 7-10

Gospel Acclamation: (lyrics on screen)

The Gospel: Matthew 11: 2-11
Sermon

Hymn of the Day: My Soul Rejoices (lyrics on screen)

Statement of Faith

C: We believe in God, who created all that exists and continues to recreate the lives of those who trust. We believe in Jesus Christ, the only Son of a loving God; whose purpose was to save a lost world and who now works in us and others by the Holy Spirit. We believe that God is calling each of us to be part of the body of Christ, to celebrate God’s presence, to love and serve others, to stand against the powers of injustice and prejudice, and to declare for all the world to hear, “Jesus is risen and we are His people.” Thanks be to God.

The Prayers of the Church

Offering

Offertory Prayer

C: Holy One, whose heart abounds with gifts; receive this offering as a sign of our desire to live our lives inspired by your Spirit. We dedicate our lives, and all that we have, to the work of your kingdom — the work of life, of love, of peace. Use our gifts, and lead us in wisdom and courage. As we seek to serve surround us with your mercy. Amen.

Sharing the Peace

L: The Peace of God be with you always.

C: And also with you.

Prayer for New Ways

L: God of our lives,

C: you are always calling us to follow you into the future, inviting us to new ventures, new challenges, new ways to care, new ways to touch the hearts of all.

L: When we are fearful of the unknown,

C: give us courage.

L: When we worry that we are not up to the task,

C: remind us that you would not call us if you did not believe in us.

L: When we get tired or feel disappointed with the way things are going,

C: remind us that you can bring change and hope out of the most difficult situations. Amen

Benediction

L: As you leave this place, may you go knowing that from generation to generation, we have been claimed and loved. From generation to generation, God has been by our side. From generation to generation, we are part of God's story. The God of yesterday and the God of tomorrow knows you by name, loves you, and calls you forth, saying, "Go be the person you are called to be, love wildly, do justice, and walk humbly with one another and come back soon." May it be so. Amen

Sending Hymn: Days of Elijah (lyrics on screen)

Dismissal



Sunday, December 11, 2022

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