

(An Offering Collection Box is located on the table in the back of sanctuary, by the exit door)

OFFERING INVITATION

Liturgist: Family of God, we came to worship the One who fills the hungry, who lifts up the lowly, and brings the powerful down from their thrones. One way we follow in the Way of our Lord, is by sharing our gifts and resources so that we may continue the mission of God and become the Good News we wish to see. Let us dedicate all we give with a song of praise and a prayer.

(Please stand in body and/or spirit)

DOXOLOGY *We Give Thee But Thine Own* (Verse 1, only) **Red Hymnal, #258**

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

All people: We dedicate the time, talent, and finances we give for the enrichment of this community and the whole wide world, which you came to save. Let these gifts usher joy into our world and signal to all people that you, O God, are still setting captives free. Amen.

HYMN *Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers* **Red Hymnal, #99**

BENEDICTION

Pastor: 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.

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

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

All people: Amen.

POSTLUDE

December 17, 2023
Third Sunday of Advent - *Gaudete Sunday*

GREETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

Mr. Kevin Crone

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING (Based on Isaiah 61)

Pastor: This morning, we continue lighting candles on the Advent wreath. Two weeks ago, we started by lighting the Hope candle and last week, added the Peace candle.

Pastor: Today, we light the Joy candle in anticipation of the day when our voices can join the angels to forever sing, "Joy to the World, the Lord is come!"

Congregation: In this Advent season, we anticipate the day when everlasting joy will be on each of us.

The HOPE, PEACE and JOY Candles are lit.

Pastor: We light the JOY candle to illuminate those moments where we've already tasted moments of gladness within ourselves, our relationships, and in the world.

Liturgist: Turn to a church neighbor, sitting in front, behind, or beside you and tell them about a moment of JOY you've recently experienced or seen in your daily life or in the news.

Sharing Visions of Joy

Pastor: May your spirits be lifted in the sharing of your stories about joy with one another. Let us now call ourselves into worship, using the words of Isaiah, chapter 64. Please stand, as you are comfortable.

(Please stand in body and/or spirit)

CALL TO WORSHIP (Isaiah 64:1-4, 8-11, Revised Standard Version)

Pastor: God calls the Prophet Isaiah to speak good news to people who are celebrating a return from exile – a homecoming from the wilderness!

Congregation: Isaiah proclaimed: The Spirit of the Sovereign God is upon me. The Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted. God has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound,

Pastor: to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God;

Congregation: to comfort all who mourn,
And grant to those who mourn in Zion –
a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
Pastor: a mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit,
that they might be called oaks of righteousness,
a planting of the Lord, that God may be glorified.

Congregation: They will build up the ancient ruins.
They will raise up the former devastations.
They will repair the ruined cities -
the devastations of many generations.

Pastor: The Lord says: I love justice; I despise robbery and wrong.
I will faithfully give them their restitution,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

Congregation: Their descendants will be known among the nations,
and their offspring among the peoples -
all who see them will know
that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed!

Pastor: I will greatly rejoice in the Lord!
my soul will exult in my God;
for God has clothed me with the garments of salvation.
The Lord 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.

Congregation: As the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes to spring up, what has been sown,
so, the Lord will cause righteousness and praise
to spring forth before all the nations.

All people: The Word of the Lord! Thanks be to God!

HYMN Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee Blue Chalice Hymnal, #2

LITANY OF CONFESSION

Pastor: Beloved of God, we can no longer play dumb. We not only know the lives we are called to lead, but we are also well aware of how we fail - through our words as well as our silence, by our deeds and our unwillingness to act. Let us confess to the God who comes to us,

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

All people: You call us home to live with you, Comforter of the lost, but we are too busy right now to listen. We flock to the stores run by temptation and seduction, seeking the best prices. We rush to judge everyone around us but ask you to be more patient with our repeated errors. We feast at the table piled high with broken promises and drink from the cup of fading dreams. Yet you continue to cry out to us - speaking to us of your love. Forgiveness is the gift for every moment, not just one day; hope is our constant companion as we journey with Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, who is your Messenger of mercy.

SILENCE IS KEPT FOR TIME OF PRIVATE, PERSONAL CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Pastor: At the beginning, at the end, and in every time between, the good news speaks to us of God's tender mercy and love for us. God comes! Not to punish, but to gift us with joy, not to condemn, but to save us.

All people: Thanks be to God for grace and mercy, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRAISE HYMN

Gloria Patri

Red Hymnal, #493

PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

(The congregation may be seated, as the children & youth come forward)

JESUS SAID, "LET THE CHILDREN COME"

HYMN

Joy to the World

Blue Chalice Hymnal, #143

GOSPEL READING – John 1:6-8, 19-28

SERMON

Gaudate

Rev. Laura Baker

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

All people: 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; forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin 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. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Child of Peace (Besig & Price)