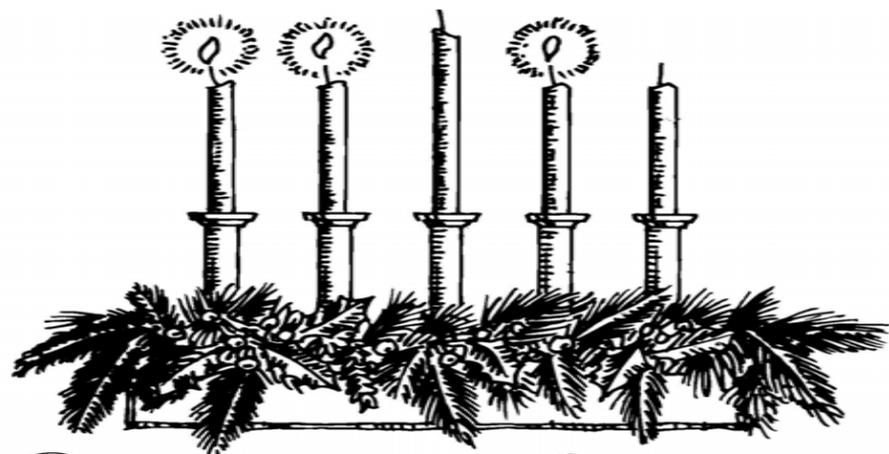


Highland Park United Methodist Church



Third Sunday
OF ADVENT

THE COMMUNITY IN WORSHIP

December 15, 2013

PRESERVICE MUSIC Piano Duets
Medley of Christmas Carols

A TIME FOR GATHERING AND FELLOWSHIP

GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE
(Please register your attendance on the pad located at the end of the pew.)

ANNOUNCEMENTS OF THE DAY

JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRELUDE Organist
Masters In This Hall (traditional French carol)

LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES

A TIME FOR ADORATION

CHORAL INTROIT Chancel Choir
Jesus, Jesus, Oh What A Wonderful Child (African American Spiritual)

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Into our world, as into Mary's womb;
Come, Lord Jesus.
Into the forgotten places, as into the stable;
Come, Lord Jesus.
Into the homes of the poor, bringing hope;
into the workplaces of the powerful, bringing compassion;
into the communities of the weary, bringing rest;
into the hearts of the wise, bringing restlessness;
into our lives and longings, whoever we are...
Come, Lord Jesus.

Into our community and into our worship,
Come, Lord Jesus.
Into every sacred place, Christ is coming,
bringing forth love that can transform the world.

*HYMN OF ADVENT UMH 218
It Came Upon A Midnight Clear

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH UMH 881
The Apostles' Creed

A TIME TO LIGHT THE ADVENT CANDLE

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE Austin & Melissa Moore, Tucker & Ella

UNISON PRAYER

Lord of Joy we await your coming with great expectation. Our lives are marked by joy even when our circumstance might prove to the contrary. May we bring joy to every heart this Advent season. Amen.

SUNG RESPONSE TFWS 2090
Light the Advent Candle (verse 3)

CHILDREN'S MOMENT
(Congregation sings *This Little Light of Mine* as children return to their seats)

A TIME FOR CONFESSION

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Lord, we confess that we are anxious. As we prepare to celebrate the Messiah's birth, we also wait for Jesus to come again. Sometimes we are hopeless when we think of peace. Sometimes we are doubtful when we think of healing. Sometimes we cannot imagine what it will be like to see your full glory. Yes, we wait; but we confess that we are sometimes impatient, Lord. Amen!

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

A TIME FOR PRAYER

HYMN UMH 217
Away In A Manger (v 1 & 2)

SPECIAL MUSIC Chancel Choir
Away In A Manger arranged by Howard Helvey
Karley Estus, cello

A PERIOD OF SILENT PRAYER

PASTORAL PRAYER

THE 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 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. Amen.

A TIME FOR PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

SPECIAL MUSIC Chancel Choir
Bethlehem by Marilyn E. Thornton

SCRIPTURE READING Luke 1:39-56
This is the Word of God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God.

SERMON *Sacred Spaces!*

A TIME FOR GIVING OF OURSELVES

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY Organist/Pianist
It Came Upon A Midnight Clear

*DOXOLOGY UMH 94
Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

O how we have been blessed by the presence of God in our lives. Even in our darkest hours we have a sacred space into which we can turn. Lord, accept our gifts and help us to continue to provide a space in which others may discover you. Amen.

A TIME FOR GOD'S PEOPLE IN COMMUNITY

*HYMN OF DEDICATION UMH 249
There's A Song In The Air

*GREET ONE ANOTHER IN CHRISTIAN PEACE

SPECIAL MUSIC Chancel Choir
Joy To The World arranged by Gordon Young

A TIME FOR BEING SENT FORTH

*SENDING FORTH

Lord prepare us to be sanctuaries
pure and holy, tried and true;
with thanksgiving, we'll be living
sanctuaries for you.
Lord empower us to be a witness for you
acting boldly in your name;
seeking justice, where there is hurting
offering hope where there is pain. Amen.

*CHORAL BENEDICTION UMH 376
Dona Nobis Pacem

We invite you to be seated for the postlude.

POSTLUDE Piano Duet
Hark Hear the Bells arranged by Gilbert Martin
Based on Ukrainian Bell Chant

EXTINGUISHING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES

*indicates congregation standing

WELCOME

Thank you for worshipping with us this morning. We extend a special welcome to our guests. We are glad you came. Please sign the register in the pew to let us know you attended. We look forward to having you worship with us again soon.

This Week at Highland Park

TODAY — December 15

- Third Sunday of Advent
 - 10:30 a.m. Worship Service
 - 6:00 p.m. God's Angels: A Christmas Play

MONDAY — December 16

7:00 p.m. Mission and Service Team

TUESDAY — December 17

7:00 p.m. Boy Scouts

WEDNESDAY — December 18

9:30 a.m. Rebekah Circle
 10:00 a.m. Newsletter Articles Due
 1:15 p.m. Circle of Elizabeth

THURSDAY — December 19

7:00 a.m. Grape Jelly Gang
 12:00 p.m. Stillwater Noon Lions Club

FRIDAY — December 20

- Newsletter Folding

NEXT SUNDAY — December 22

- Fourth Sunday of Advent
 - 9:30 a.m. Sunday School (fourth class of "*Finding Bethlehem in the Midst of Bedlam*" for adults in fellowship hall)
 - 10:30 a.m. Worship Service
 - 2:00 p.m. Christmas Caroling
 - 5:00 p.m. Youth Fellowship

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- LARGE PRINT BULLETINS AND HYMNALS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE USHER STAND
- CHILDREN'S BULLETINS (AGES 3-6 AND 7-12) ARE AVAILABLE
- INDIVIDUAL LISTENING DEVICES FOR HEARING ASSISTANCE ARE AVAILABLE

Words on Worship

Today is the **Third Sunday of Advent**. The liturgical color for this season is **purple**. Our theme for this Advent/Christmas season is *Sacred* and today we focus on sacred people. **The pregnancies of Elizabeth and Mary are connected with the promise of justice and joy in the readings this week. They are creating a space for the gestation of hope that can move into, and transform, the world. We will ponder the spaces we inhabit at home, work and community, asking whether they are feeding and nurturing the freedom and grace that is so desperately needed.**

Keeping Christmas

Are you willing to believe that love is the strongest thing in the world — stronger than hate, stronger than evil, stronger than death — and that the blessed life which began in Bethlehem [two thousand] years ago is the image and brightness of the Eternal Love? Then you can keep Christmas. And if you can keep it for a day, why not always? But you can never keep it alone.

—Henry Van Dyke

(www.newsletternewsletter.com)

Live to give

In Acts 20:35, Paul quotes Jesus that "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Interestingly, that's the only recorded statement of Jesus that's not found in one of the four gospels.) At Christmas and throughout the year, the blessings of giving are profound and lasting. Poet Maya Angelou says, "I have found that among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver."

PERSONS LEADING WORSHIP TODAY

PREACHER — Rev. Jim Jones

LITURGIST— Miranda Luster

ORGANIST/PIANIST— Claudia Mornhinweg

CHOIR DIRECTOR/PIANIST — Gayla Foster

CELLIST - Karley Estus

GREETERS — Nancy Myers and Avonelle White

ACOLYTES — Ciara Mitchell and Misty McGuire

LITURGICAL RESOURCES

- Call to Worship from www.worshipdesignworkshop.com
- Lighting of the Advent Candles: by Lisa Kropinak, www.gbod.org
- Prayer of Confession .www.gbod.org

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Office Hours:

Monday through Friday

9:30 - 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 - 3:00 pm

Thoughts for the Day

Prayer from the Iona Community

When the world was dark and the city was quiet, you came. You crept in beside us. And no one knew. Only the few who dared to believe that God might do something different. Will you do the same this Advent, Holy One? Will you come into the darkness of the world; not the friendly darkness as when sleep rescues us from tiredness, but the fearful darkness, in which people have stopped believing that war will end or that food will come or that a government will change or that the church cares? Will you come into that darkness and do something different?

Will you teach us how to save your people from death and despair? Will you make this world a sacred space in which your love is birthed? Will you come into the quietness of this town, not the friendly quietness as when lovers hold hands, but the fearful silence when the phone has not rung the letter has not come, the friendly voice no longer speaks, the doctor's face says it all?

Will you come into that darkness, and do something different? Will you teach us to embrace your people? Will you make this world a sacred space in which your grace is nurtured? And will you come into the dark corners and the quiet places of our lives? We ask this not because we are guilt-ridden or want to be, but because the fullness our lives long for depends upon us being as open and vulnerable to you as you were to us, when you came, wearing no more than diapers, and trusting human hands to hold their maker. Will you come into our lives, if we open them to you? Will you do something different and make our lives sacred places? When the world was dark and the city was quiet you came. You crept in beside us. Do the same this season, Holy One. Amen.

"The Lord's ransomed ones will return and enter Zion with singing, with everlasting joy upon their heads. Happiness and joy will overwhelm them; grief and groaning will flee away."

-- Isaiah 35: 1-10

Your sacred space is where you can find yourself over and over again.

--Joseph Campbell



More people are willing to accept an invitation to church on Christmas Eve than any other time of the year. Make it a point this year to invite someone to church. If you have invited them before, invite them again, and again, and again.