

St. Mark's Presbyterian Church
Third Sunday of Advent – December 15, 2024

Responsive Call to Worship

As we prepare for Christ's coming, we remember your calling to be filled with joy.

We come knowing that our actions can help alleviate the burdens of others.

We light the third candle of Advent, a symbol of joy that uplifts the spirit.

(Light the candle of joy)

May the warmth and brightness of this candle encourage us to act with compassion and courage.

Holy One, strengthen us by your Spirit to commit ourselves to being people of joy and justice. Fill us with all joy and peace as we trust in you, so that we may overflow with hope. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Hymn 410 Joyful, joyful we adore you

**1. Joyful, joyful, we adore you,
God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flowers before you,
opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;
drive the dark of doubt away;
giver of immortal gladness,
fill us with the light of day!**

**2. All your works with joy surround you;
earth and heaven reflect your rays,
stars and angels sing around you,
center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
flowery meadow, flashing sea,
chanting bird and flowing fountain
join to praise you joyfully.**

**3. You are giving and forgiving,
ever blessing, ever blessed,
well-spring of the joy of living,**

**ocean-depth of happy rest!
God Creator, Christ our Saviour,
all are yours who live in love.
Teach us how to love our neighbour,
Lift us to your joy above.**

**4. Morning stars, awake the chorus,
mortals join in every part,
for what joy is set before us
as Christ's love joins heart to heart!
Ever singing, march we onward,
victors in the midst of strife;
joyful music leads us sunward
in the triumph song of life.**

Prayer of Praise *(minister)*

Hymn 145 In the bleak mid-winter

**1. In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan;
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.**

**2. Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;
heaven and earth shall welcome him when he comes to
reign:
in the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed the
Lord God incarnate, Jesus Christ.**

**3. Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
but his mother only, in her maiden bliss,
worshipped the Beloved with a kiss.**

**4. What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
if I were a Wise Man, I would do my part; yet
what I can I give him: give my heart.**

Prayer of Confession (congregation)

**All knowing God, we know perfect joy only comes through
faith in you, yet we seek it elsewhere. In search of comfort,
we indulge our desires. In search of love, we hide from our**

faults. In search of approval, we spend beyond our means. Forgive us, O God, for seeking satisfaction in the wrong places. Help us turn again to you, our true source of joy, and guide us to discover what is honourable, just, and pleasing in your sight.

Come, Lord Jesus.

- silent confession -

The Lord's Prayer (Debts/Debtors)

**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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

**For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory. For ever
and ever. Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon (minister)

Hymn 151 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 prophets long have sung.
It came, a floweret bright,
amid the cold of winter,
when halfspent 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 to us a Saviour,
when halfspent was the night.**

**3. This flower, whose fragrance tender
with sweetness fills the air,
dispels with glorious splendour
our darkness everywhere.**

**True flesh, yet very God,
from sin and death he saves us
and shares our every load.**

**4. O Saviour, child of Mary,
who felt our human woe,
O Saviour, King of glory,
who dost our weakness know,
bring us at length, we pray,
to the bright courts of heaven
and to the endless day.**

Responsive Reading Isaiah 12:2-6 p. 563 pew Bible

² "Surely God is my salvation;

I will trust and not be afraid.

The Lord, the Lord himself, is my strength and my defense;

he has become my salvation."

**³ With joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation.**

⁴ In that day you will say:

"Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name;

make known among the nations what he has done,

and proclaim that his name is exalted.

**⁵ Sing to the Lord, for he has done glorious things;
let this be known to all the world.**

**⁶ Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion,
for great is the Holy One of Israel among you."**

New International Version (NIV)

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Scripture Lessons

Zephaniah 3:14-20 p. 768 pew Bible

Philippians 4:4-7 p. 344 NT & Psalms

Luke 3:7-18 p. 104 NT & Psalms

Reader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

Sermon Joyful?

Prayers of the People (minister)

Offering & Offertory

Doxology 830 Praise God from whom all blessings flow

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
praise him all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

Prayer of Dedication (congregation)

**Gracious and generous God, we offer you our gifts with
humble thanks for all you have provided. Bless them with
your Spirit and use them to bless those in deepest need with
love they can taste and justice they can celebrate in Jesus'
name. Amen.**

Communion Hymn 507 Break now the bread of life

**1. Break now the bread of life, dear Lord, to me,
as once you broke the loaves beside the sea:
beyond the sacred page I seek you, Lord:
my spirit longs for you, O living Word.**

**2. You are the bread of life, dear Lord, to me;
your holy word is truth redeeming me.
Give me to eat and live with you above;
teach me to love your truth, for you are love.**

**3. Oh send your Spirit now, dear Lord, to me;
touch now my blinded eyes and make me see:
then shall all bondage cease, all fetters fall,
and I shall find my peace, my all in all.**

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Invitation

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you;

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts;

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God;

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

You commanded light to shine out of darkness, divided the sea and dry land, created the vast universe and called it good. You made us in your image to live with one another in love. You gave us the breath of life and freedom to choose your way. Through long generations you have been patient and kind to all your children. Through the words of your prophets, you gave your people hope by promising them the Redeemer. And now we rejoice that in your Son, Jesus Christ, the Saviour has come and will come again in power and glory making all things new.

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Holy is Jesus the Christ, O God. Walking this earth, feeding the hungry, calling the lost and lonely, caring for the outcast and downtrodden, he brought healing and wisdom to those who sought him out, and revealed your kingdom taking shape in this world.

As we break this bread and share this cup in Jesus' name, with your people here and in every place, we recall the mystery of our faith:

Christ has died;

Christ is risen;

Christ will come again.

Pour out your Spirit upon us and these gifts of bread and cup. Gather your church together, scattered to the ends of the earth into your kingdom where peace and justice are realized. Show us the hope that joy will be shared at the banquet you prepare for us when heaven and earth join hands. Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honour and glory are yours, Tender and Mighty God, now and forever.

The Breaking of the Bread

The Pouring of the Cup

The Revelation

Partaking of the Bread

Partaking of the Cup

Prayer after Communion

Lord Jesus Christ, you have nourished us, body, and soul, in this meal. We have heard your love and hope proclaimed, now send us out to speak it to others. We have seen your love and hope poured out, now send us out to show it in everything we do. We have been fed by your love and hope at your table, now send us out to share it so the world may believe. And let all things be done for your glory. Amen.

Hymn 153 Joy to the world

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

**2. Joy to the earth! the Saviour reigns:
let us our 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 world 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.**

***Benediction**

Three-fold Amen

Piano Postlude