

St. Mark's Presbyterian Church
Third Sunday in Advent – December 14, 2025

Land Acknowledgement

I want to acknowledge I am leading worship from Treaty 4 Territory the traditional homeland of the Cree, Ojibwe, Saulteaux (SOTO), Dakota, Nakota, Lakota, and the Métis Nations

Responsive Call to Worship – Advent Liturgy

Mary praised God who entrusted her with a sacred role. Great things God has done!

With Jesus' birth, the world will never be the same again.

The powerful will be toppled from their thrones. The hungry will be lifted up and joy will break through in unexpected places.

Every time a child is born, the world changes for someone.

Our lives changed when a humble young woman gave birth to the One who would save us. On this third Sunday of Advent, we light the candle of joy.

The candle of joy is lit.

Let us pray together:

Living God, gift us with Mary's trust and readiness to accept your purpose. May we celebrate your coming, as we say with joy: Come, Lord Jesus.

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*)

Merciful God, we look around us and we are not proud of what we see. People criticize each other and listen only to those who agree with them. We grumble and think the past holds the solutions, forgetting its inequities and iniquities. We are impatient for things to improve but we do not want to change our ways. Forgive us for sharing in the ungrateful mood of our times and renew in us the joy and gratitude we once knew for your gifts to us in Christ 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 Psalm 146:5-10 p. 589 NT & Psalms

⁵But joyful are those who have the God of Israel as their helper,
whose hope is in the Lord their God.

**⁶He made heaven and earth,
the sea, and everything in them.
He keeps every promise forever.**

⁷He gives justice to the oppressed
and food to the hungry.

The Lord frees the prisoners.

**⁸ The Lord opens the eyes of the blind.
The Lord lifts up those who are weighed down.
The Lord loves the godly.**

⁹The Lord protects the foreigners among us.
He cares for the orphans and widows,
but he frustrates the plans of the wicked.

**¹⁰The Lord will reign forever.
He will be your God, O Jerusalem, throughout the
generations.
Praise the Lord!**

New Living Translation (NLT)

Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation

Scripture Lessons

Isaiah 35:1-10 p. 582 pew Bible

James 5:7-10 p. 401 New Testament with Psalms

Matthew 11:2-11 p. 20 NT & Psalms

Reader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

Sermon Is joy simple?

Prayers of the People (*minister*)

Prayer of Dedication (*congregation*)

God, our Judge and our Joy, receive our gifts as seeds of gratitude for your gift to us in Christ Jesus. Bless these seeds with growth so that joy will blossom for people depleted by challenges, and places overwhelmed by scarce resources. Be their justice and their joy and ours, through Christ our Lord. 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.**

Choral Blessing

Go now in peace. Never be afraid.

God will be with you each hour of every day.

God will be there, watching from above.

Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.

Benediction

Three-fold Amen

Piano Postlude