

Third Sunday of Advent

10:30 a.m.

December 17, 2023

GATHERING

The people of God come together in the Lord's name

Prelude - *Noel Etranger* - Louis-Claude Daquin

Introit - *An Advent Processional* – Pearson
(Congregation sings refrain on insert)

Call to Worship

Happy are those whose hope is in the Lord our God,
who executes justice for the oppressed and gives food to the hungry,
who watches over the strangers and upholds the orphan and the widow.
The Lord will reign forever. Praise the Lord!

Opening Hymn 220** - *Angels from the Realms of Glory*

*Angels from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
ye who sang creation's story
now proclaim Messiah's birth:*

Refrain:

*Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.*

*Shepherds, in the field abiding,
watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing;
yonder shines the infant light:
(Refrain)*

*Sages, leave your contemplations,
brighter visions beam afar;
seek the great Desire of nations;
ye have seen his natal star:
(Refrain)*

*Saints, before the altar bending,
watching long in hope and fear;
suddenly the Lord, descending,
in his temple shall appear:
(Refrain)*

Invocation

In the Advent seasons, when the past has fled, unasked, away and there is nothing left to do but wait, God, shelter us. Be our surrounding darkness; be the fertile soil out of which hope springs in due time. In uncertain times, help us to greet the dawn and labor on, love on, in faith awaiting your purpose hid in you and waiting to be born in due time. Amen.

PROCLAMATION

The Word of God is read and proclaimed for all ages.

Advent Candle Lighting

Lift Up Your Eyes - Joel Raney (sing on director's cue)

Anthem - *Christ is Born* - Mark Miller

Scripture Reading - Luke 1:46-55

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gloria Patri (sung)

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Children's Anthem - *Long ago in Bethlehem*

God's Word for Young Disciples

Scripture Reading - Isaiah 35:1-10

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon - *The Promise of Joy*

Pastor Jon Priebe

RESPONSE

The people of God respond to the Word

Hymn of Response 224** - *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice*

*Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
give ye heed to what we say:
News, news!
Jesus Christ is born today!
Ox and ass before him bow,
and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today,
Christ is born today!*

*Good Christian friends, rejoice,
with heart and soul and voice;
now ye hear of endless bliss:
News, news!
Jesus Christ was born for this!
He hath opened heaven's door,
and ye are blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this,
Christ was born for this!*

*Good Christian friends, rejoice,
with heart and soul and voice;
now ye need not fear the grave:
News, news!*

*Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all
to gain his everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save,
Christ was born to save!*

Offertory - *Angels' Carol* – John Rutter
(Please fill out the attendance sheet found in the pew.)

Doxology**

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. Amen.

Prayers of the People/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.

SENDING FORTH

The people of God are sent forth to serve others and witness to their faith

Closing Hymn 250** - *Once in Royal David's City*

*Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for his bed;
Mary, loving mother mild,
Jesus Christ, her little child.*

*He came down to earth from heaven
who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable,
and his cradle was a stall.
With the poor, the scorned, the lowly
lived on earth our Savior holy.*

*Jesus is our childhood's pattern;
day by day, like us he grew;
he was little, weak, and helpless,
tears and smiles like us he knew;
and he feeleth for our sadness,
and he shareth in our gladness.*

*And our eyes at last shall see him,
through his own redeeming love;
for that child so dear and gentle
is our Lord in heaven above;
and he leads his children on
to the place where he is gone.*

Benediction and Congregational Response (Hymn 211)
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Postlude - Echo Noel - Louis-Claude Daquin



The flowers on the altar are dedicated to the glory of God.

Service Music: Chancel Choir; Epworth Choir; Bethlehem Choir
Music: One License A-731491

NEXT STEPS

Are You Sure?

we try to feel safe by making things certain that are best left uncertain

Matthew 11:2 – Why did John the Baptist second guess himself?

Like the Crocus

Isaiah 35:1-2 – a crocus can bloom in the most adverse of circumstances

God's promise of joy isn't dependent on our circumstances

Questions for Reflection: One of the qualities of the crocus is its hardiness; it can bloom in almost any conditions. One day there's a snow covering and the next the crocuses have peppered blossoms out from the cold ground. The desert crocus breaks forth in earth that looks entirely desolate.

How is your faith like a crocus? What could you do to strengthen your resiliency?

Question for Discussion: When have you experienced a surprising joy in the midst of uncertainty?

Memory Verse: *Isaiah 35:10b* – “they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

Readings for this Week: Isaiah 7:10-17, Luke 2

CHURCH NOTES

Holiday Nuts: The nut sale is back! You may purchase them between and after services on Sundays, in the office during the week, or you may pre-order and pick them up on the Sunday of your choice. We have Deluxe Mixed, whole cashews (both at \$10/lb.) and raw pecans (\$12/lb.) You may drop your order form off at the Welcome Center. Proceeds will benefit Work Camp.

Did You Know? Your pledges aren't automatically renewed from year to year. That's one reason it's important to return your pledge card. We appreciate everyone's giving throughout the year, but it helps us to have the pledge cards when it comes time to do the yearly budget and to make plans for programs, worship, and other opportunities for the coming year.

Epworth Alumni: You are invited to come sing at the 8pm service on Christmas Eve with the Epworth Choir. We will sing All is Well and Were You There on that Christmas Night. If you were part of the Epworth choir in 2019 sang O Little Town of Bethlehem with Dan Forrest you are invited to join the Chancel Choir for that anthem as well.

ZOE Empowers: Our Christmas offering has gone to a different mission each year. This year it will go to ZOE Empowers, where it will be used to support a group of vulnerable orphans in Zimbabwe. ZOE uses an empowerment model rather than a traditional charity model. For more information, visit their website at www.zoempowers.org.

**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH –
PRAYER BULLETIN
DECEMBER 17, 2023**



MINISTERS & STAFF:

Forrest Waller

HOSPITALIZED:

MEMBERS TO BE REMEMBERED IN PRAYER:

Scott Adie	Scott Hipkins
Bob Ahonen	Lee Minier
Debbie Amundsen	Jack Nitzsche
Glenn Atwood	Pat Park
Behrman family	Kathi Sawyer
Jim Bailey	Christina Shaw
Bill & Janet Blank	Martha Shoults
Mark & Cindy Blaser	Ken Tunstall

DEEPEST SYMPATHY & PRAYERS:

Ann (Terry) Lewis and family on the death of her father, Thomas Misiak on 12/2.

Kathie (Jack) Davis & family on the death of her father, Robert Zimmerman on 11/25.

Family of member Bob Boyd on his death on 11/25.

Vic & Evelyn Ing on the death of their son, Michael Ing on 11/24.