

Order of Worship Sunday, December 11, 2022
Third Sunday of Advent - The Heart of Christmas Brings Joy in All Circumstances
Hear Pastor's Sermon by Phone 24/7 at 814-422-6238 - Website: PennsValleyParish.info

For the transformation of the world, we make disciples.

We study God's Word and offer praise and worship, strengthening each other for outreach beyond the church walls.

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CENTERING WORDS God wanted to be near to us in order to rescue us. The arrival of Jesus brings us joy because he is the very presence of the divine.

SERVICE OF THE ACOLYTE

† CALL TO WORSHIP

L: We are ready, O Lord, to behold the presence of your spirit among us.

P: Bless our spirits with openness and joy!

L: We have come on this journey seeking hope and peace.

P: You, O Lord, have poured your spirit on us!

L: Justice and peace shall be brought to all God's people.

P: No more shall fear and doubt claim us.

L: God is fulfilling the ancient promise of a Savior.

P: Our hearts rejoice at this good news of God's love. AMEN.

† CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP – Hark! The Herald Angels Sing UMH #240

† LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE – We Light the Candle of Joy

L: "The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus. It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing . . . A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray . . . And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (*Isaiah 35:1-2, 8, 10 NRSV*).

P: The prophet Isaiah tells us about the joy of ascending to God's house. The prophet tells us to imagine being set free, being unburdened, being released to live, to fully live in the grace and wonder of life itself, surrounded by those who love us like no one else. And then he tells us that the journey to get there is just as much a joy.

L: The Psalmist says "Happy are these whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord . . . who made heaven and earth . . . who keeps faith . . . who executes justice . . . gives food . . . sets prisoners free . . . opens eyes . . . lifts up . . . watches over . . . upholds . . . The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord!" (*Psalms 146 NRSV*)

P: We light these candles, the candle of joyous hope, of proclaimed peace, and of deep and everlasting joy, as a sign that we are those who walk with a skip in our step because we can see the destination, and it is pure joy. We are ascending to God's promise.

Light two purple candles and one pink candle on the Advent wreath.

† OPENING PRAYER

Visionary God, in this season of preparation and reflection, let us see, as through your eyes, the way the world can be. Hope, peace, joy, and love are more than just nice things that could be. Help us work to make them really be - as clothing and water, as food and fire. Make us bearers of your promise to the world, that all may know the power of your holy love. AMEN.

† HYMN Angels We Have Heard on High UMH #238

BLESSING OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS – 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.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE Words that Question Matthew 11:2-11

JOYS AND CONCERNS - (The Lord's Prayer "trespass")

SELECTED SCRIPTURE John 1:14 // Romans 5:8 // 1 John 4:9

MESSAGE The Heart of Christmas Brings Joy in All Circumstances

† CLOSING HYMN Joy to the World UMH #246

† COMMISSION & BLESSING

Joy Reflection and Discussion Questions:

1. Why does the joy we experience in life seem to be so circumstantial?
2. How is the incarnation unique to the Christian faith? How does it shape your ideas of sin and forgiveness?
3. When was a time in life that you received grace? How did it make you feel?
4. How can your deep abiding joy impact the world around you?

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PENNS VALLEY CHARGE ANNOUNCEMENTS – Calendar also on PennsValleyParish.info

December 24 – Christmas Eve Services; 3pm at Sprucetown UMC; 6pm at St. James UMC, Coburn

December 25 – 8:30am Worship at Faith Spring Mills, message online and by phone at 814-422-6238.

January 1 – Service to be held at 9:45am at St. James UMC in Coburn, 8:30am Worship at Faith Spring Mills.

CCLI #11541746 Several elements of today's worship are from Ministry Matters, Feasting on the Word, Trevor Miller through Outreach.com, the United Methodist Book of Worship, and The Abingdon Worship Annual 2022.