

Order of Worship for Sunday, December 17, 2023 3rd Sunday of Advent “Our Fierce Joy”
Hear Pastor’s Sermon by Phone 24/7 at 814-422-6238 - Website: PennsValleyParish.info
For the transformation of the world, we study God’s Word in context to be equipped to live Jesus’ Way.

CENTERING WORDS The one who restores Israel is the one who brings release to the captives, help to the oppressed, and joy to the brokenhearted. Now is the time to rejoice, pray without ceasing and prepare for our salvation!

SERVICE OF THE ACOLYTE

† CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Have you noticed? Are you paying attention? God is doing a new thing.

P: We watch and wait in the fierce joy of the coming Messiah.

L: You know the captives? God is bringing freedom. You know the brokenhearted? God is bringing healing.

P: We watch and wait in the fierce joy of the coming Messiah.

L: Beloved, listen. God is calling *you*. To be freed and to free your neighbors. To be healed and to heal your community. To testify to the Light among us.

P: We watch and wait in the fierce joy of the coming Messiah.

L: So, let us join our voices and our hearts as we proclaim the story of the one whose coming we anticipate and yet is already as close as our own breath.

P: We come to watch, to wait, and to worship in the fierce joy of Jesus Christ, the coming Messiah.

† OPENING PRAYER

Holy God of Joy, We rejoice in the reality of who you are. We live within the joy of your love for us. Our contentment comes and goes. Our happiness ebbs and flows. Our feelings depend upon our circumstances, our physical health, our brain chemistry. But our joy is deeply rooted in our identity as your beloved children. And we give you thanks. AMEN

† OPENING HYMN Hark! The Herald Angels Sing UMH #240

† 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.

JOYS AND CONCERNS - PASTORAL PRAYER (The Lord’s Prayer “trespass”)

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE OF JOY

L: When God’s people were surrounded by hardship, suffering, and grief, Isaiah proclaimed, The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God;

to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. We come today as people who are also surrounded by suffering and grief. And yet, the Spirit hovers among us, tending and anointing, inspiring freedom where there is captivity, declaring blessing in places the world has cursed, and igniting fierce joy where mourning and heartache prevail.

P: We wait as people who experience hardship and pain, yet we are called to witness to the persistent joy that sustains our life as God's people.

L: We light these candles as signs of our shocking hope, just peace, and fierce joy. May our lives shine with the fierce, tenacious joy of the Light who lives in our hearts as we wait and work for the coming of God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

P: Amen. [*Light two purple candles and the pink candle of Joy on the Advent wreath.*]

HYMN OF PREPARATION Emmanuel, Emmanuel UMH #204

SELECTED SCRIPTURE Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 // 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 // John 1:6-8, 19-28

MESSAGE Our Fierce Joy

† CLOSING HYMN Joy to the World UMH #246

† COMMISSION & BLESSING

† CHORAL BENEDICTION O Come, O Come, Emmanuel UMH #211 Verse 2 only

O come, O come, great Lord of might, who to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times did give the law; in cloud and majesty and awe.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

PENNS VALLEY CHARGE ANNOUNCEMENTS – Calendar also on PennsValleyParish.info

December 21 – Ladies Coffee & Conversation hosted by St. James UMC, Coburn. Ladies welcome!

December 21 – Our next Advent study. Details on the bulletin board and website.

December 24 – Unified 4th Sunday of Advent worship hosted at Trinity 10am (Sunday School 8:45am)

Candlelight Christmas Eve Services; 3pm at Sprucetown and 6pm at St. James in Coburn

January 3 – 1st Wednesday Bible Study 10-11:30am at Sprucetown UMC. All are welcome!

January 17 – 3rd Wednesday Bible Study 10-11:30am at St. James UMC, Coburn. All are welcome!

ABOUT OUR CHURCH:

Pastor: Theresa M. Heiser; theiser@susumc.org; 814-883-9510; PO Box 211, Centre Hall PA 16828

District Superintendent: Rev. Brenda Leigey District Website: statecollege.susumc.org

Bishops: Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi and Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball Conf. Website: susumc.org

The Penns Valley Charge is part of the Penns Valley Cluster; State College District; Susquehanna Annual Conference; Northeastern Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church

CCLI #1671542 Elements of worship are from Ministry Matters, A Preacher's Guide Lectionary Sermon Series Thematic Plans for Years A B and C, Feasting on the Word, The United Methodist Book of Worship, and The Abingdon Worship Annual 2023.