

As we unite in worship today, we extend a warm welcome to each one present. May we together experience the presence of God

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We Gather to Prepare Our Hearts to Meet Our Lord



Prelude

Welcome

Announcements

Today we gather in our 3rd Sunday of Advent which is also sometimes called Rose Sunday. This is the day we focus on Joy! Joy of the Good News. Joy of His promise to come again. To honor this special Sunday it is our tradition to light pink candle on the Advent wreath. Come, Let us praise our loving and living God!

Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy

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 (Isaiah 64:1-3a).

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. 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.

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 kin-dom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

***Light three candles of the Advent wreath.** (2 purple - 1pink)*

LET US PRAY - 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.

***Advent Call to Worship**

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

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

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

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

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.

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

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.

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

***HYMN OF PRAISE UMH#240 "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"**

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**1. Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King;
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with th'angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new born King!"**

**2. Christ, by highest heaven adored;
Christ, the everlasting Lord;
late in time behold him come,
offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;**

**hail th' incarnate Deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King!"**

**3. Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new born King!"**

We Hear God's Word

***Gospel Reading..... John 1:6-8, 19-28 (NRSV)**

6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

The Testimony of John the Baptist

19 This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" 20 He confessed and did not deny it, but he confessed, "I am not the Messiah." [a] 21 And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?"

He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." 22 Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" 23 He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,

'Make straight the way of the Lord,' "

as the prophet Isaiah said.

24 Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. 25 They asked him, "Why, then, are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah,[b] nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" 26 John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, 27 the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandal." 28 This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

The Word of God for the People of God, **Thanks be to God!**

CHILDREN'S SERMON

FAITH HYMN UMH #206. "I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light"

Author: Kathleen Thomerson

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**1 I want to walk as a child of the light.
I want to follow Jesus.
God set the stars to give light to the world.
The star of my life is Jesus.**

**Refrain:
In him there is no darkness at all.
The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God.
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.**

**2 I want to see the brightness of God.
I want to look at Jesus.
Clear sun of righteousness, shine on my path,
and show me the way to the Father. [Refrain]**

**3 I'm looking for the coming of Christ.
I want to be with Jesus.
When we have run with patience the race,
we shall know the joy of Jesus. [Refrain]**

"Message"

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer/Lord's Prayer for the Season of Advent

Lord of time and hope, we are rushing headlong into the holidays to come. We look at our calendars and our day planners and wonder how we will get everything done in the time allotted to us before the "big Day" arrives. We begin to panic at the thought of projects still to be finished, contacts that need to be made, preparations for festivities that have only just begun. And the darkness of obsessive holiday planning overtakes us and clouds our minds and spirits.

But you are a God of time and Light. You bring hope to us, as you always have through the voices of the great prophets, and now through the One who is to come, Jesus Christ. Remind us again what this season is truly about.....love, hope, peace and joy. Calm us down. Slow us down. Help us remember that it is in loving relationship that you gave your Son to us and it is in loving relationship that your Word is carried into the hearts of the people. No tinsel, ribbons, tape, cards and convey the eternal message adequately. You have given us the Light, to shine in our path and cut through our darkness.

Shine in the hearts of your people today. Bless those dear ones whom we have named before you today (*share any names given*) with your healing, reconciling, comforting presence and love. Give strength to all who face difficult situations and let your compassionate light shine on them guiding their decisions and their steps. Bring us at last to your presence, where the light of hope and love continually pour out on us.

These prayers and hopes we offer in confidence and gratitude for your love and presence. As we pray using the words Jesus taught us. Our Father...

***Offertory & Doxology (UM Hymnal 95)**

Offertory Prayer

God of hope and compassion: Just as John the Baptist came long ago in Judea to witness to your light, we remember that light he heralds is the savior of hope. Sometimes it seems our world is determined to extinguish hope and light. We admit that there are times when we feel the darkness is just too prevalent, too strong, and hope is just wishful thinking. May we witness through our giving not scarcity and despair but fierce joy, hope, and compassion. May we also witness through what we say and what we do. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen. (John 1:6-8, 19-28)

Departing Hymn UMH #670

"Go Forth for God"

Author: J. R. Peacey (1968, 1970)

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**1 Go forth for God, go to the world in peace;
be of good courage, armed with heavenly grace,
in God's good Spirit daily to increase,
till in the kingdom we see face to face.
Go forth for God, go to the world in peace.**

**2 Go forth for God, go to the world in love;
strengthen the faint, give courage to the weak;
help the afflicted; richly from above**

**God's love supplies the grace and power we seek.
Go forth for God, go to the world in love.**

**3 Go forth for God, go to the world in strength;
hold fast the good, be urgent for the right;
render to no one evil; Christ at length
shall overcome all darkness with his light.
Go forth for God, go to the world in strength.**

**4 Go forth for God, go to the world in joy,
to serve God's people every day and hour,
and serving Christ, our every gift employ,
rejoicing in the Holy Spirit's power.
Go forth for God, go to the world in joy.**

***Benediction**

Beloved, may you be blessed with fierce, tenacious joy that in all things—the highs, the lows, the rejoicing, and the sorrow—you may hold fast to and be held fast by the good news of Jesus Christ, the coming Messiah. Amen.

***POSTLUDE**