

Eastminster Presbyterian Church

SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

Third Sunday of Advent

December 13, 2020-11:00 a.m.

OPENING PRAYER

Lord God, no one has ever seen you, but you have shown yourself to us in your beloved Son Jesus Christ. Help us to recognize his face in the poor and the humble. Let the Holy Spirit give us the courage to bring his good news of hope and joy to all who wait for him and need him, whether they know it or not. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

VOLUNTARY

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

German Folk Melody

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light,

those who lived in a land of deep darkness on them light has shined.

Week by week, the light grows stronger and brighter, as we anticipate the coming Christ.

The candles of Hope and Peace are already ablaze. Today, we light the candle of Joy.

We excitedly anticipate the coming of the Mighty One. The promise of healing, comfort, liberty, and freedom is good news that is meant to be shared!

Rejoicing in the mercy and justice of our Lord, we kindle this flame.

Together, we lift our hearts and voices in songs of joy.

OPENING CAROL 123 *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*

CALL TO CONFESSION

By confessing our sin before God and living in promised forgiveness, may we experience and share the healing, compassion, justice and love of Jesus Christ.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND GOD'S ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Almighty and loving God, when we have failed to love you with all our heart and to acknowledge you as our Creator, Lord have mercy. When we have failed to be disciples of Christ in the new creation he has brought, Christ have mercy. When we have failed to open our lives to the renewing power of the Holy Spirit, Lord, have mercy. Through the power of your mercy, the good news through Christ: we are forgiven. Thanks be to God!

RESPONSE 137 *He Came Down* (Joy)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

As we prepare our hearts to hear the Word of the Lord, let's pray:

Through your Holy Scriptures, open our eyes to see our Creator's glory. Open our ears to hear our Teacher's wisdom. Open our hands to offer our Comforter's gifts. Open our mouths to sing our Triune God's praise. And, open our hearts to offer our Redeemer our love. Amen

OLD TESTAMENT READING (*Pew Bible*, page 691)

Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11

The Old Testament Reading is from the 61 chapter of Isaiah. Hear now the Word of the Lord: 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; ²to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³to 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. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory. ⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. ⁸For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed. ¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

ANTHEM

*A Voice Cries Out
Sanctuary Choir*

Lloyd Larsen

NEW TESTAMENT READING (*Pew Bible*, page 57)

Luke 1: 46-55

⁴⁶And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; ⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. ⁵⁰His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. ⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. ⁵²He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly; ⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. ⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

CAROL 96 *On Jordan's Bank, the Baptist's Cry*

SERMON

Singing from the Heart

Sherry Holloman

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We affirm with our mouth what we believe to be the truth in our hearts, saying:

We believe in God, who is love, whose love is manifest in all creation, in our lives, and in all people. We follow Christ, who embodied God's love. In his life and ministry, his death and resurrection, and his granting to us of his Spirit, he filled us with that love as well. We live by the Spirit, the presence of God's love in us. In that love we participate in the Church, Body of Christ, in loving God by loving our neighbors through our prayers, our presence, our gifts and our service. Love is our faith, and it is a gift from God. We thank God, and ask God's blessings, that we may love in the name of Christ and the power of the Spirit, to God's glory. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Scripture says: See here, at that time I will deal with all your oppressors; and I will save the lame and gather the outcaste; and I will change their misery into praise, and their honour shall be worldwide. Let us pray.

God our holy and unshakeable Friend, we seek your abundant and overflowing joy for the people of planet earth. Where there is conflict, terrorism and war, bless all those who work for peace and reconciliation. Bring your peace and joy, we pray. Where there is exploitation of the weak and the poor, bless those who work for emancipation. Bring your mercy and joy, we pray. Where there are refugee camps, prison compounds, and ethnic discrimination, bless those who work for justice and liberty. Bring your rescue and joy, we pray. Where there are addictions affecting mind, body, spirit, relationships, bless those who provide programs for rehabilitation. Bring your healing and joy, we pray. Where there is hunger, malnutrition, disease, and despair, bless the agencies that bring compassion and practical help. Bring your hope and joy, we pray. Where there are the lonely, the suffering and the sorrowing, bless the merciful who are lovingly there for them. Bring your comfort and joy, we pray. Where the church is weak and struggling against big odds, bless all those sturdy souls who keep the faith and practice the love. Bring your abundant grace and joy, we pray.

For all within and beyond these walls whose names, circumstance, joys and concerns we have lifted... (silent prayers): **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 and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.**

OFFERTORY SENTENCE

In compassion, God calls us into this family of faith. May we bring our gifts as expressions of our thanksgiving, with the prayer that, through them, others will be touched by the reconciling love of God in Jesus Christ.

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY ANTHEM *E'en So, Lord Jesus Quickly Come* Paul Manz

RESPONSE 150 *As With Gladness, Men of Old* (verse 3)

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

With grateful hearts, we pray. We give these gifts in recognition of Jesus, a tiny babe who from humble birth was created great in your light. Thank you, God, for your pure, unbounded love wrapped in clothes lying in a manger—a gift so great to share that it could not be contained. Let the joy we feel in our hearts overflow in unending praise. Amen.

DISMISSAL AND BENEDICTION

May we be people of joy.

Let joy live in our hearts and share the joy of Christ with all you meet.

Share joy by seeing the good in each other.

Share joy by remembering good times and hoping for good times to come.

Share joy by praying for our world.

In this Advent season, we need to see, feel, and share joy.

As you go out into the wonder of God's creations,
share joy, peace, and hope with those you meet.

May the love of God enfold us,
the peace of Christ surround us,
and the joy of the Spirit be in and among us. Amen.

CLOSING CAROL 93 *Lift Up Your Heads Ye Mighty Gates*