

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2024

Pacific Presbyterian Church and First Presbyterian Church of Union, Missouri

THIRD SUNDAY of ADVENT

GATHERING

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: O come, all you faithful people!
All: **Come to worship Christ the King!**
One: Worship the King, born in a manger.
All: **Worship the Christ-child, Lord of all.**
One: Rejoice in the coming of Emmanuel!
All: **Rejoice, for the Lord is in our midst!**

***OPENING HYMN** “O Come, All Ye Faithful” GtG 133 (*Verses 1, 3, & 4*)

1. **O come, all ye faithful,
joyful and triumphant;
O come ye; O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come, and behold him,
born the King of angels!**

Refrain:

**O come, let us adore him;
O come, let us adore him;
O come, let us adore him,
Christ, the Lord!**

3. **Sing, choirs of angels;
sing in exultation;
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all
glory in the highest!**
(Refrain)

(continued...)

4. **Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing!**
(Refrain)

Words: John Francis Wade, ca. 1743; trans. Frederick Oakeley, 1841, alt.
Music: ADESTE FIDELES, John Francis Wade, ca. 1743; harm. *The English Hymnal*, 1906
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UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Righteous and merciful God: you come to us in the stuff of human experience, yet we too often miss you. We fail to hear your voice when we are overly concerned with our own problems. We fail to perceive your leading when we are overly convinced that we must be right. We fail to sense your presence when we do not stop to look around us. Forgive us for missing you and not paying attention. Help us to recognize you in the face of everyone we meet. Help us to glimpse your guiding hand in our everyday affairs. Help us to listen for your voice in the gentle stillness of silence. Come to us, O Lord, and help us to worship and serve you with everything we have and all that we are. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

One: The angel tells Joseph that the child forming in Mary's womb is to be named Jesus.
All: **"Call him Jesus," the angel says, "For he will save the people from their sins."**
One: From his birth through his resurrection, from age to age, Jesus is about salvation. This is good news!
All: **In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!**

THE PEACE

One: The peace of Christ be with you all.
All: **And also with you.**

(From your seat, a brief sign of peace may be shared: a wave of the hand, a nod of the head, etc.)

THE WORD

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH: The Candle of Joy

One: "Rejoice in the Lord, always; again I will say, Rejoice." (Philippians 4:4)

All: Joy seems synonymous with Christmas. Yet sometimes it eludes us or seems shallow and fleeting.

One: So what is the foundation of our joy?

All: The foundation of our joy is in the sorrow of a cross.

One: Even in the birth of Jesus we can detect the shadow of a cross. Mary was told "a sword will pierce your own soul too" (Luke 2:35), foreshadowing her coming sorrow at his coming death.

Yet even though he was killed, by the power of God he is alive. For

"The stone that the builders rejected
has become the chief cornerstone.

This is the Lord's doing;
it is marvelous in our eyes."

(Psalm 118:22-23)

All: This is "good news of great joy for all the people." (Luke 2:10)

One: So "rejoice in the Lord, always; again I will say, Rejoice."

Sing: "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice" GtG 132 (*Verse 2*)

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

Words: Medieval Latin; trans. and para. John Mason Neale, 1853, alt. Public Domain.

Music: IN DULCI JUBILO, German folk melody, 14th cent.; harm. David Hugh Jones, 1953. Public Domain.

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SCRIPTURE READINGS Zephaniah 3:14-20
Isaiah 12:1-6
Philippians 4:4-9

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SERMON “The Joy of Presence” by Pastor Bill Vincent

***HYMN** “Joy to the World” GtG 134

1. **Joy to the world, the Lord is come!**
Let earth receive her king;
let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

2. **Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!**
Let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

3. **No more let sins and sorrows grow,**
nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.

4. **He rules the world with truth and grace,**
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

Words: Isaac Watts, 1719, alt.
Music: ANTIOCH, attr. George Frederick
Handel, 1742; arr. Lowell Mason, 1836
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***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

**In life and in death we belong to God.
Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit,
we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel,
whom alone we worship and serve.**

(continued...)

**In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit,
we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks
and to live holy and joyful lives,
even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth,
praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"**

**With believers in every time and place,
we rejoice that nothing in life or in death
can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

(from A Brief Statement of Faith, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Book of Confessions)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

One: God in our midst...

All: ...renew us in your presence and life.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (Contemporary)

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.**

OFFERING

Invitation

Reflection

**Unison Prayer of Dedication*

We rejoice, O God, that you come to us daily with blessings too numerous to count. You are the Holy One whose presence relieves our anxieties, feeds our hungers, and stirs our compassion. Through our offerings, we express our gratitude. As we give of ourselves, we respond to your call to bear fruit and to make your name known among the nations. Use our offerings, even as you use us, to accomplish your purposes in Jesus Christ, our coming Lord, in whom we rejoice! Amen.

SENDING

***CLOSING HYMN** “Angels We He Heard on High” GtG 113

1. **Angels we have heard on high,
sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply
echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

2. **Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
which inspire your heavenly song?
Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

3. **Come to Bethlehem and see
him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee
Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

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***CHARGE AND BLESSING**

One: ...And let the gathered people of God say...
All: ...**Amen.**

POSTLUDE

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