

Trinity United Church of Christ Worship Bulletin

Letting God's light shine since 1901

We worship God and seek to share His Word with everyone through faith in Jesus Christ

December 15, 2024

Third Sunday of Advent

www.trinityuccwestville.org

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here at Trinity!

Gathering and Preparing to Worship

Sounding of the Bells

Throughout the centuries, bells have rung to call people to worship or bring them news. We use the chiming of the bell to joyously call us to worship, and prepare ourselves.

Welcoming

One: Welcome to worship today at Trinity United Church of Christ in Westville Illinois. If you are worshipping with us on line, you can download a bulletin from our church's website www.trinityuccwestville.org.

They are located in the events section under today's date,

Let us now pause for prayer to calm ourselves down and prepare our hearts to worship our living and loving God.

Opening with Prayer

By Nancy Townley

One: Let us pray...

Many: **O Lord, you know the deserts and the parched places in our lives. We seek your healing power. Lead us on this Advent journey to the place of new birth and to the place of our redemption; for we ask this in Jesus' Name. Amen.**

Lighting the third Advent Candle

One: The prophet Isaiah writes in Chapter 31 verses 1 & 2; 8 & 10: "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."

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.

We light these candles, the candle of optimistic 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.

Three candles (2 purple and one pink) are lit on the Advent wreath.

One: Let us Pray...

Many: **Come, O Holy One, breaker of chains and renewer of life!**

Open our eyes to your presence in all the earth. Stir us to proclaim gladly the signs of your love: the liberation of those oppressed, the healing of those frail and broken, the springs of water in all the parched places, and Jesus Christ active and alive, through whom we pray. Amen.

Announcements

Call to Worship

By Nancy Townley

One: Be patient! Wait and Watch for the Lord is drawing near to us.

Many: **We have gathered here this day to hear the good news and to gather strength for the times to come.**

One: Be at peace with one another.

Many: **Let love and wisdom prevail.**

One: Open your hearts and souls to God's healing word.

Many: **Lord, touch our hearts. Teach us to patiently listen for your words of love.**

Hymn of Gathering

Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart

1 Re-joyce ye pure in heart; lift praises to the sky

Your fes-tal ban-ner wave with joy, the cross of Christ raise high!

Refrain

Re-joyce (*Re-joyce*) Re-joyce (*Re-joyce*) Re-joyce give thanks and sing

2 Bright youth and seasoned age, strong souls and spir-its meek

Raise high your free ex-ult-ing song; God's wonderous prais-es speak

Refrain

3 With Voices full and strong as o-ceans surg-ing praise

Send forth the hymns the saints have loved, the psalms of an-cient days

Refrain

4 Yes, on through life's long path, still chanting as you go

From youth to age, by night and day, in glad-ness and in woe

Refrain

5 Praise God who rules all worlds, the ris-en Christ a-dore

Praise God the Spir-it, Ho-ly fire, one God for ev-er more!

Refrain

Call to Confession

By Rev. Thom Shuman

One: There is no need to wait in long lines. God is always willing to listen – to our hearts as well as our voices, as we admit how we have not cared as we could, have not shared as we should. Let us join our voices together, as we pray our prayer of confession

Prayer of Confession and Letting Go

By Rev. Thom Shuman

One: Let us pray...

All: God of Advent, it seems we find it easier to trust a politician's fear mongering words than Yours which were truthfully spoken so long ago. Because of what we do today and ignore the joy You brought about so long ago, we are afraid of what tomorrow may bring. We have been given so much from Your heart, yet in this season of giving, we find it hard to share from our own abundance.

Please take a few moments of silence for personal reflection,
and release back to God, those things you need to be forgiven for in your life

One: Let us continue...

All: Forgive us, and have mercy on us God. When we stumble, lift us to our feet and draw us close into Your loving embrace. Forgive us and grant us the courage to declare You as our God, as we follow Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Words of Forgiveness and Assurance

By Rev. Thom Shuman

One: Do not be afraid, but believe. Our God is here, opening our eyes to see that salvation which is ours approaching us in this season of Advent.

Many: We join our voices in joyfully rejoicing in God who is our Savior.
The One who calls us blessed, is the God who forgives us. Amen.

*Gloria Patri

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
World without end, Amen, Amen.*

Sharing of Christ's Peace

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

One: The coming of Christ turns the world upside down. For folks who are quite content with things as they are, this may not feel like good news! But a greater vision lies before us—God's vision of real life for all. So let all of us now pass the peace of Christ.

Please type in, post and share the peace of Christ with those gathered.
Please make sure your comments are appropriate. You can use words such as
"The peace of Christ be with you,"

Listening for God's Still Speaking Voice

Prayer for Illumination

One: Let us pray...

Many: We have prepared our homes, and our gifts, Lord, but we need help in preparing our spirits to receive your message of Joy. Free us from the stresses and strains of this time, and place your peace which passes all our understanding in our hearts. For we ask this in Jesus' Name. Amen.

Scripture Reading for Today John 1:6-8; 19 - 28

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

John the Baptist Denies Being the Messiah

¹⁹Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. ²⁰He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Messiah."

²¹They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?"

He said, "I am not."

"Are you the Prophet?"

He answered, "No."

²² Finally they said, “Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?”

²³ John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, “I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way for the Lord.’”

²⁴ Now the Pharisees who had been sent ²⁵ questioned him, “Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?”

²⁶ “I baptize with water,” John replied, “but among you stands one you do not know. ²⁷ He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.”

²⁸ This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

A Refection on the Word

*** Hymn of Response**

Good Christian Friends Rejoice!

**1 Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
give ye heed to what we say:
Jesus Christ was born today.
Ox and mule before him bow,
and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today!
Christ is born today!**

**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!**

**3 Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now ye need not fear the grave:
Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all
to gain his everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save!
Christ was born to save!**

Offering of Our Gifts and Our Lives

One: As God has so richly blessed us, in our gratitude let us return a portion of these blessings back to God, If you are able, please consider giving to the work and ministry of Trinity United Church of Christ You may drop your offering for today in the offering plates as they are brought forward. Your gifts are used in service to others through the ministries and mission of Trinity United Church of Christ. We graciously thank all who are able to support Trinity UCC during this time. To mail your offering or pledge, please send it to

Trinity UCC 311 E. Moses Ave., Westville, IL. 61883

Our morning offering will now be received

***Doxology**

“Emmanuel”
Em-man-u-el, Em-man-u-el,
His name is called Em-man-u-el;
God with us, re-vealed in us;
His name is called Em-man-u-el;

*** Blessing What We Can Give Back to God**

By Rev. Heritetta Stith

One: Let us pray...

Many: **We present to you, O God, our gifts. May they be used to make a difference in the lives of people where hope is scarce. May our gifts be a reminder, to those who receive them, of your love. Bless them to help build a better tomorrow, starting today. Amen.**

Prayers of the People

Please drop off any prayer requests in the basket located in the narthex, or in the offering plate.

Please only first names, and keep your prayers appropriate to our worship.

If you are worshipping via Facebook Livestream

Please type in and post in the comments section and share any prayer requests.

We will try and get to every prayer posted during worship.

If we don't get to your request, we will lift up your requests after worship.

After Pastor David reads the petition, he will say “Lord in Your mercy,”

and the congregation will respond with **“Hear our prayer...”**

The Lord's Prayer (debts/debtors)

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

*** Our Hymn of Departure page 6**

Sing with Joy You Advent People by David Wood
Sung to the tune “Angels We Have Heard on High”

1 Sing with joy you Advent people
Hopeful hearts inspire your song
Fill the earth with alleluias
For the wiat will not be long
Joy-----ful hearts, sing with exultation!
Joy-----ful hearts, sing with exultation!

2 Draw with joy the springing waters
Bursting from the well of God
See the wonderous gift of heaven
Key of David, Jesse's rod
Joy-----ful hearts, sing with exultation!
Joy-----ful hearts, sing with exultation!

3 Shout with joy O daughter Zion!
Sing a-loud Jerusalem
Now your God is coming nearer
Sorrows time is at an end.
Joy-----ful hearts, sing with exultation!
Joy-----ful hearts, sing with exultation!

*** Charge and Benediction**

By Rev. Heritetta Stith

One: Prepare yourselves to leave this place
Return to your waiting with patient hope for the events of God's promise of salvation to unfold.
Strengthen your hearts for the coming of the Lord is near.
And joyfully go out into the world in peace. Love the Lord your God
with all your heart, with all your mind, and all your strength;
and love your neighbor as yourself.

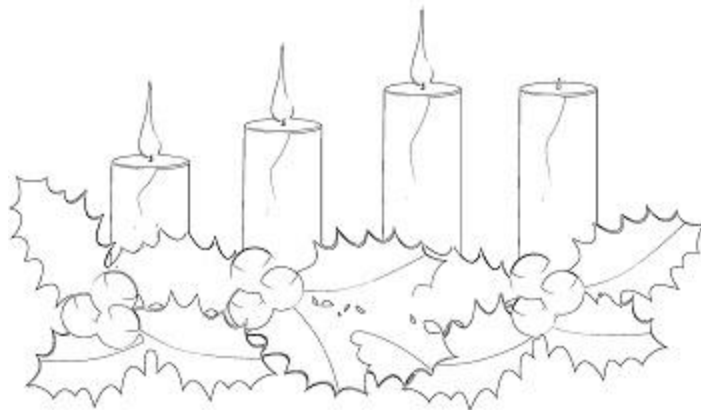
Many: We go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

One: Go forth, knowing that the God who created you, the Christ who redeems you and the Spirit who empowers you is with you today and for ever more. Knowing this, may laughter and joy go with you every step of your journey.

Many: Amen.

Sing "A-Men"

*Thank you for worshipping with us today! Remember, no matter who you are,
or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here at Trinity UCC*



Celebrate Joy Today!