



THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
DECEMBER 15, 2024

JOY

This candle is called "Joy" or "Shepherd's Candle", and describes the joy felt at the birth of our Lord, as well as the joy we have in anticipation of His return.

God has given us a joy that no one can take away. No matter what happens in this dark world, we can experience light.

Sunday, December 15, 2024

Sunday
Virtual Worship

SUNDAY VIRTUAL WORSHIP

Sunday, December 15, 2024

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

GREETING and ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

“The Angel Gabriel”

David Cherwien

OPENING PRAYER

Holy One, we thank you for the glimpses we catch of your gift of joy on earth. Even in the midst of fear, of challenge, of struggle— even when we aren’t sure that goodwill among us can be found, ignite the flame of joy within us that we might glow with its brilliance from the inside out. Amen.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Holy One, we thank you for the glimpses we catch of your gift of the depths of joy. Even in the midst of fear, of challenge, of struggle – even when we are not sure of your presence, ignite the flame of joy within us,

Many: People: that we might glow with its brilliance from the inside out.

I believe in God, I believe in God, even when ... even when ... God is silent.

Leader: Help us face the silence of unknowing and embrace it as the pregnant pause before joyful new beginnings.

Many: Amen.

Leader: Today we light the third Advent candle, the candle of Joy.

HYMN 40

“Joy to the World”

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (In unison)

Mighty and powerful God, your word says, “Rejoice always.” But we would rather sulk about the things that don’t go our way. Your word says, “Pray without ceasing.” But we go for days without even thinking about You. Your word says, “Give thanks in all circumstances.” But our thankfulness is fleeting, because we think we deserve blessings. Your word says “Hold fast to what is good,” while we hold fast to sinful ways of thinking and acting. Amen.

(Time for silent confession)

SINGING 572

“Lord, Have Mercy upon Us”

Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us.

ASSURANCE OF GOD’S PARDON (based on Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11)

The prophets of old have declared, “I 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 robes of righteousness.

Friends, believe the good news:

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Thanks be to God. Amen.

SHARING the PEACE of CHRIST

CHORAL ANTHEM

"I Believe"

Mark Miller

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Isaiah 57:14-19 and Luke 1:1-4, 26-56

AFFIRMATION of FAITH (In unison,

SERMON

"I Believe in God, Ode to Joy"

The Rev. Dr. Jim C. Dunkin

AFFIRMATION of FAITH (In unison, *The Apostles' Creed*)

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

*HYMN 8

"Good Christian Friends, Rejoice"

INVITATION to OFFERING

(Those joining us online may use our online giving platform at hocpc.org/give)

MINUTE for MISSION

Christmas Joy Offering

Brian Huffman

OFFERTORY

*DOXOLOGY *"Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow"*

*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.*

*PRAYER of DEDICATION (in unison)

Holy One, this Advent season we wait in joy, And we give with joy. Joy for all you have given us; Joy because of your sacred promises. Receive these generous offerings, and use them to spread your joy in our world. Amen.

PASTORAL PRAYER

*HYMN 464

"Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee"

CHARGE and BENECTION

And so, my friends, like bells ringing out the news that God is ever-present with us, fill the night left by sadness with messages of joy. Go into your lives humming the tunes that keep that joy alive in you. Raise your voices and repeat after me...**"do not be afraid!"**

Many: Do not be afraid! Amen!

POSTLUDE

"Savior of the Nations, Come" Johann Buttstedt

Isaiah 57:14-19

¹⁴ It shall be said, "Build up, build up, prepare the way; remove every obstruction from my people's way." ¹⁵ For thus says the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place and also with those who are contrite and humble in spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite.

¹⁶ For I will not continually accuse, nor will I always be angry, for then the spirits would grow faint before me, even the souls that I have made. ¹⁷ Because of their wicked covetousness I was angry; I struck them; I hid and was angry, but they kept turning back to their own ways. ¹⁸ I have seen their ways, but I will heal them; I will lead them and repay them with comfort, ¹⁹ creating for their mourners the fruit of the lips. Peace, peace, to the far and the near, says the LORD, and I will heal them.

Luke 1:1-4, 26-56

¹ Since many have undertaken to compile a narrative about the events that have been fulfilled among us, ² just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, ³ I, too, decided, as one having a grasp of everything from the start; to write a well-ordered account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ so that you may have a firm grasp of the words in which you have been instructed.

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴ Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born[Ⓜ] will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶ And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸ Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her. ³⁹ In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰ where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴² and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³ And why has this happened to me that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴ For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." "My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant. Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed, ⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name; ⁵⁰ indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. ⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. ⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly; ⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. ⁵⁴ He has come to the aid of his child Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever." ⁵⁶ And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.