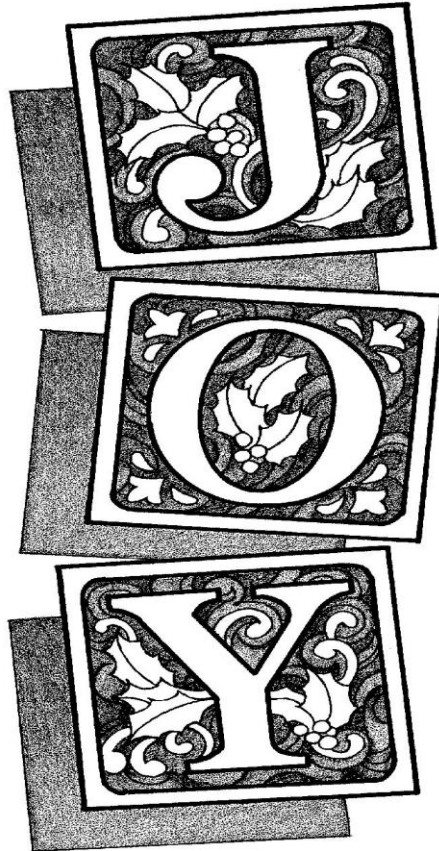


Bethel Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

~ a community of faith coming together,
for fellowship, study and service . . .
seeking God's peace, justice and love ~



A SPECIAL WELCOME TO OUR GUESTS:

We extend a warm welcome from Bethel Presbyterian Church!
We invite you to participate in signing the Friendship Folders adding your name
and address and if you desire a church newsletter or a pastoral call.

When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we say "sins...sin against us"
rather than "debts..." or "trespasses..."

Prayer requests can be noted on the cards provided in the pew racks
and placed in the offering plate.

**The Service for the Lord's Day
Bethel Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Third Sunday of Advent
December 12, 2021 - 11:00 AM**

** Indicates congregation standing if able.
Congregational responses indicated in bold.*

GATHERING AND GREETING OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements

Please sign the Friendship Pad found in your pew, passing it down the pew then back.

Prelude

Call to Worship (*L = Leader, P = People*)

L: Let us worship God.

Mary the virgin declared,
"My soul magnifies the Lord;

P: My spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

L: for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

P: Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed.

L: God has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty."

P: Rejoice in the Lord; again I will say, rejoice!

All: The Lord is near.

Lighting of the Advent Candles

We light this candle in hope. (*Light candle #1*) *1st candle*)

We light this candle for peace. (*Light candle #2*)

We light this candle in joy! (*Light candle #3*)

* Wreath Lighting Song (*Sung to tune Hymn No. 146 "Gentle Mary Laid Her Child"*)
*Shine, three can-dles, and with glee see our Lord come nigh us!
Wel-come Christ, hu-man-i-ty, Sav-ior who stands by us!
Turn from sin, and hail our Chief, Prince of Peace, De-fen-der,
Bring-er to the poor re-lief with a heart so ten-der.*

* Prayer

Almighty God, you have made us and all things to serve you.
Now prepare the world for your rule.
Come quickly to save us, so that wars and violence shall end,
and your children may live in peace,
honoring one another with justice and love;
through Jesus Christ, who lives in power with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

* Hymn No. 86 **"THE PEOPLE WHO WALKED IN DARKNESS"** ISAIAH 9

*The peo-ple who walked in dark-ness a-wak-en to see a great light.
The peo-ple who dwelt in the land of the shad-ow
rise to the star shin-ing bright.*

*His name is Won-der-ful, Coun-sel-or, Al-might-y God,
Fa-ther for-ev-er, Prince of Peace.*

*For God has en-larged the na-tion, and pros-pered the fruit of its land.
God's peo-ple are blest with the har-vest of vic-tory,
gift from a boun-ti-ful hand.*

*His name is Won-der-ful, Coun-sel-or, Al-might-y God,
Fa-ther for-ev-er, Prince of Peace.*

*The yoke of des-pair and bond-age, the chains of the slave mas-ter's rod
are shat-tered and scat-tered like dust in a wind-storm,
loosed by the jus-tice of God.*

*His name is Won-der-ful, Coun-sel-or, Al-might-y God,
Fa-ther for-ev-er, Prince of Peace.*

*For us now a child is giv-en, for all the de-spised and for-lorn.
The rule of com-pas-sion shall rest on his shoulder.
God's own Mes-si-ah is born!*

*His name is Won-der-ful, Coun-sel-or, Al-might-y God,
Fa-ther for-ev-er, Prince of Peace.*

*How vast is our God's do-min-ion! How far truth and mer-cy ex-tend.
The zeal of the Lord will ac-com-plish its pur-pose:
jus-tice schall reign with-out end.*

*His name is Won-der-ful, Coun-sel-or, Al-might-y God,
Fa-ther for-ev-er, Prince of Peace.*

* Call to Confession

God calls us to joy and peace, but far too often we stumble
and miss the hope and joy Christ has for us.
Trusting in God's steadfast, immovable love, let us confess our sins.

* Prayer of Confession

**Lord God, we praise you for sending light into this world.
We confess that we live as though the light had never defeated
darkness. We confess that we ignore the Savior you sent to be
among us and to live in us. We've kept the birth of your Son
confined to the Christmas season and do not yearn for his coming
each moment in our waiting hearts.**

**Forgive us for not opening our eyes to Jesus. Prepare us for His
return. Help us rejoice in the light, so that your grace can
illuminate the darkened places of our hearts. Amen.**

* Sung Response No. 551 **"LORD, HAVE MERCY"** LAND OF REST

*Lord, have mer-cy; Christ, have mer-cy;
Lord, have mer-cy up-on us.
Lord, have mer-cy; Christ, have mer-cy;
Lord, have mer-cy up-on us.*

* Declaration of Forgiveness

This is the good news: there is no ranking in God's kingdom.
God graces everyone with the same gifts: mercy, joy, forgiveness.
God has kept the covenant. God still keeps the promise.
We are forgiven, we have been made new people.
Thanks be to God. Amen.

THE WORD

Prayer for Illumination

Let us pray:

Speak to us, Lord.

Speak to us in the waiting, the watching, the hoping, the longing,
the sorrow, the sighing, the rejoicing.

Speak to us by your Word in these Advent days,
and walk with us until the day of your coming. Amen.

Readings from Scripture

Prophet	Zephaniah 3:14-20	<i>(A Song of Joy)</i>	Pg. 826
Prophet	Isaiah 12:2-5	<i>(Thanksgiving and Praise)</i>	Pg. 603
Epistle	Philippians 4:4-7	<i>(Exhortations)</i>	Pg. 187

Sermon "The Challenge of Joy"

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

* Affirmation of Faith

When nation rises against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, the end is not violence: for there is a God of resilient, redeeming love, and a brighter purpose is at work in the shadows, and the darkness cannot smother it. Lord we believe, strengthen our timid faith.

When there are earthquakes, famines and pestilences and collisions among the stars, the end is not chaos: God the Creator of the heavens and the earth has not forsaken us, and the harmony will again break out and gather to hasten towards consummation. Lord we believe, strengthen our timid faith.

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

The Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer

**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 sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom and the power
and the glory, forever. Amen.**

Invitation to the Offering

In this season as days shorten and night deepens,
give us open hearts that we may give not only to friends and family,
but to those in need as well.

Let us bring our offerings to God.

Offertory

* Hymn No. 606 “**Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow**” OLD 100TH

*Praise God, from whom all bless-ings flow;
praise him, all crea-tures here be-low;
praise him a-bove, ye heaven-ly host;
praise Fa-ther, Son, and Ho-ly Ghost. A-men.*

* Prayer of Dedication

L: God of the wilderness, we give these offerings in gratitude,

P: rejoicing in the abundance of your gifts to us.

L: We give these offerings in faith,

P: trusting that you will provide for our needs.

L: We give these offerings in hope,

P: knowing you can use them to spread your love in this world.

L: And with these offerings, we give ourselves;

P: **May we live with generous hearts, with open hands. Amen**

THE SENDING FORTH

* Hymn No. 94 “NOW THE HEAVENS START TO WHISPER”

JEFFERSON

*Now the heav-ens start to whis-per,
as the veil is grow-ing thin.
Earth from slum-ber wakes to lis-ten
to the stir-ring, faint with-in:
seed of prom-ise, deep-ly plant-ed,
child to spring from Jes-se's stem!
Like the soil be-neath the frost-line,
hearts grow soft to wel-come him.*

*Heav-y clouds that block the moon-light
now be-gin to drift a-way.
Dia-mond bril-liance through the dark-ness
shines the hope of com-ing day.
Christ, the morn-ing star of spleen-dor,
gleams with-in a world grown dim.
Heav-en's em-ber fans to full-ness;
hearts grow warm to wel-come him.*

*Christ, e-ter-nal Sun of jus-tice,
Christ, the rose of wis-dom's seed,
come to bless with fire and fra-grance
hours of yearn-ing, hurt, and need.
In the lone-ly, in the strang-er,
in the out-cast hid from view:
child who comes to grace the man-ger,
Teach our hearts to wel-come you.*

* Benediction

* Sung Response **“COME, THOU LONG-EXPECTED JESUS”** (Verse 1)

*Come, Thou long-ex-pect-ed Je-sus, Born to set Thy peo-ple free;
From our fears and sins re-lease us; Let us find our rest in Thee.
Is-rael's strength and con-so-la-tion, Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear de-sire of ev-ery na-tion, Joy of ev-ery long-ing heart.*

* Postlude

MUSIC ATTRIBUTIONS

“Wreath-Lighting Song”

Text: Dwyn M. Mounger, 2021

Music: Piae Cantiones, 1582; arr. Ernest C. MacMillan, 1930

Text © 2021. All rights reserved.

“The People Who Walked in Darkness”

Text: Mary Louise Bringle, 2008

Music: Sally Ann Morris, 2008

Text and Music © 2009 GIA Publications, Inc.

“Lord, Have Mercy”

Text: Trad. Liturgical text

Music: American folk melody; adapt. Marcia Pruner, 1980; arr. Richard Proulx, 1984

Music Adapt. © 1980 Church Pension Fund

Music Arr. © 1986 GIA Publications, Inc.

“Now the Heavens Start to Whisper”

Text: Mary Louise Bringle, 2005

Music: Alexander Johnson’s Tennessee Harmony, 1818;

Harm. Lutheran Book of Worship, 1978

Text © 2006 GIA Publications, Inc.

Music Harm. © Lutheran Book of Worship (admin. Augsburg Fortress)

Public Domain

“Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow”

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

Reprinted / Podcast / Streamed

with permission under ONE LICENSE #A-718125

All Rights Reserved