



December 12, 2021 – 10:00 AM-Advent Week 3

Covenant is an accepting, welcoming community sharing the glory of God's love with all.

PRELUDE

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" arr. Barbara Kinyon

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND PRAYER REQUESTS

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING †

The Handbell Choir

A: Joy is seeing people you love after months apart.

B: Joy is hearing, "Come on over, it has been too long!"

A: Joy is the stretches and giggles of a newborn child.

B: Joy is making it home when the journey is long.

A: Joy is your dog sliding to meet you at the door.

B: Joy is the energy of a new season.

A: Joy is feeling found when you thought you were lost.

B: So today we light the candle of joy, because the welcome God has for us is nothing short of joyful.

A: Rest in that good news. Let it wash over you.

B: Family of faith, we are close to home. Amen.

INTROIT "Candles Glowing, Promise Showing"

Candles glowing, promise showing joy that fills our very soul.

Grace abounding, hymns resounding, Christ restores and makes us whole.

Mercies gleaming, wonders beaming, justice streaming, Christ redeeming –

Christ restores and makes us whole! Christ restores and makes us whole!

***CALL TO WORSHIP** † Liturgist: Please stand as you are able and join me in the call to worship

Leader: We are seeking—

People: deeper faith, a place to belong, the feeling that God is here in this room.

Leader: We are seeking—

People: joy that overflows, the movement of the Spirit, a hand to hold, when alone in the dark.

Leader: We are seeking—

People: the freedom to be, the courage to love, the conviction to act in the face of injustice.

Leader: We are seeking, but here in this space,

People: We are found.

Leader: Take a deep breath. This is your sanctuary.

People: God is here. We are found. Amen.

***HYMN #104** “O Lord, How Shall I Meet You”

Ribbon

1 O Lord, how shall I meet you,
how welcome you aright?

Your people long to greet you,
my hope, my heart’s delight!

O kindle, Lord most holy,
a lamp within my breast,
to do in spirit lowly
all that may please you best.

2 Love caused your incarnation;
love brought you down to me;
your thirst for my salvation
procured my liberty.

O love beyond all telling,
that led you to embrace
in love, all loves excelling,
our lost and fallen race.

3 You come, O Lord, with gladness,
in mercy and goodwill,
to bring an end to sadness
and bid our fears be still.
In patient expectation
we live for that great day
when your renewed creation
your glory shall display.

CALL TO CONFESSION † Liturgist

Mary’s world turned upside down with the visit of an angel. This is a moment we can relate to, because over the course of the last year and a half, our world has seemed to turn upside down more than once. When those moments come, we hope to respond with grace; but more often than not, fear can get the best of us. So today we turn to God in prayer, asking for God’s guidance and grace in the places and moments we need it most. Let us pray together now. . .

*Please stand as you are able.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION † Liturgist

Cross

God of safe spaces, we wish we were more like Mary, who in the face of great change, went and sought help. She did not wait for help to find her; she walked to the shelter she needed. Too often we wait silently for the world to change around us instead of speaking up for the things we need. Forgive us for failing to care for ourselves the way you would care for us. Give us the courage to seek help.

God of safe places, we wish we were more like Elizabeth, who greeted Mary with laughter and contagious joy. How many people have crossed our doorstep and how many times have we failed to see them? Give us the courage of Mary, and the grace of Elizabeth. Gratefully we pray, amen. (Silence for Personal Confession)

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Family of faith, even if we miss the person standing on our doorstep, even if we fail to care for ourselves the way God would care for us, even if we forget and ignore, turn away and shut down, God still loves us. There is nothing we can do to lose God's love.

Rest in this promise:

If we get lost,

we will be found.

If we mess up,

we are forgiven.

If we withhold love,

God is lavish in loving us.

We are claimed. We are loved. We are forgiven.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN #654 "In the Lord I'll Be Ever Thankful"

Ribbon

In the Lord I'll be ever thankful; in the Lord I will rejoice! Look to God; do not be afraid. Lift up your voices the Lord is near. Lift up your voices; the Lord is near.

PASSING OF THE PEACE The peace of the Lord, be with you all. **And also with you.**

HYMN #188 "Jesus Loves Me"

TALK WITH CHILDREN

Erin Wise

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION † Liturgist

Holy God,

We come to your Scripture today

hoping that it will feel a bit like an open door,

like Elizabeth welcoming Mary,

like coming home.
We want to fall into it.
We want to find sanctuary here.
We want to breathe easier just hearing these words. And we want to find ourselves laughing because this good news is just too good to keep inside. So hover close to us now, we pray.

Open the door to our hearts
so that we might find sanctuary in your words. Gratefully we pray, amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC "On This Day Earth Shall Ring" arr. Cathy Moglebust

GOSPEL READING Luke 1:39-56

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON "Seeking Sanctuary"

Notepad

SPECIAL MUSIC "The Journey is Our Home" by Allen Pote

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven... (Hymnal p. 35. We say "debts & debtors.")

MINUTE FOR MISSION HM3 Christmas Party

PRESENTATION OF OFFERING † Liturgist:

Elizabeth offers her home. She offers her arms. She offers her joy. She offers her affirmation and confidence. Elizabeth offers everything she has when Mary shows up at her door, and it just feels holy, doesn't it? Part of our call as people of faith is to give when and where we can. So today we are invited to be a little more like Elizabeth. Today we are invited to give generously, trusting that God will take these gifts and build a better world here. Let us give with joyful hearts.

OFFERTORY "Finally Home" by David Lantz III

*Doxology #606

Ribbon

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise God, all creatures here below;
praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

*Prayer of Dedication † Liturgist

Cross

Good and gracious God,
We give these gifts for the seekers.
We give these gifts for those who need sanctuary.

We give these gifts for those who build sanctuaries. We give these gifts for those who have lost sanctuary, and for those who find sanctuary all over the place. Use these gifts to bring us closer to home.

With joy and hope in our hearts we pray, amen.

*HYMN #100 “Canticle of the Turning” (v. 1-3)

Ribbon

1 My soul cries out with a joyful shout
that the God of my heart is great,
and my spirit sings of the wondrous things
that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant’s plight,
and my weakness you did not spurn,
so from east to west shall my name be blest.
Could the world be about to turn?

Refrain:

My heart shall sing of the day you bring.
Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,
and the world is about to turn.

2 Though I am small, my God, my all,
you work great things in me,
and your mercy will last from the depths of the past
to the end of the age to be.
Your very name puts the proud to shame,
and to those who would for you yearn,
you will show your might, put the strong to flight,
for the world is about to turn. (Refrain)

3 From the halls of power to the fortress tower,
not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice tears
every tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more,
for the food they can never earn;
there are tables spread; every mouth be fed.
For the world is about to turn. (Refrain)

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Reprise of “Canticle of the Turning” (v. 1-3)

† Prayers by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.

Assisting in Worship Today:

The Handbell Choir- Advent Wreath Lighters

John Harder–Liturgist

Brian Gray–Vocalist

Cherie Brooks – Director of Music

Katie Wynkoop–Organist/Pianist & Assistant Director of Music

Erin Wise – Director of Children’s & Youth Ministries

Brian Biller – Media Production Specialist

Rev. Joel A. Esala – Pastor

Flowers today are in honor of Anna Jo Beeson’s 99th birthday from her loving family.



"Dances for Joy"
by Hannah Garrity

Hannah Garrity