

**Sunday December 12, 2021
Look Forward**

Prelude

Words of Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

Leader: Gathering one! Embracing one!

People: **Gentle one! Emblazoned one!**

Leader: Winnowing one! Restorative one!

People: **The one who has come! The one who will come!**

Leader: The one who bears the image of those who bear God's.

People: **Worthy are you, mysterious one!**

Opening Prayer Unison

**God of joy and exultation,
you strengthen what is weak;
you enrich the poor
and give hope to those who live in fear.
Look upon our needs this day.
Make us grateful for the good news of salvation
and keep us faithful in your service
until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives for ever and ever. Amen.**

Advent Three Candle Lighting (Peace)

Jim & Suze Marley

Advent Candle Readers: We now light our first two Advent candles representing
Hope, Faith, and Peace.

Pastor: Arise and celebrate, good news of deep joy is here!

People: **The warm glow of Divine love lightens our hearts.**

Pastor: Here we are together. We are not alone. We gather on this third Sunday in
Advent with gratitude and overflowing generosity, blessed multiple times

by our give-away God. We are witnesses to the flowing of this transforming love.

People: The joy of Christ is good news, unexpected and surprising in its overflowing abundance.

Advent Reflection on Joy (Advent Candle Readers)

Just as God's all-inclusive joy is given to all persons, so too can we be moved, touched, transformed, and re-born as carriers of this divine-rooted joy. We uphold this light for all God's creatures in all stations, seasons, situations, turmoils, and challenges any of us may be experiencing. We proceed into this third Sunday of Advent preparing for the birth of our Savior. As we open our hearts we know you will enlarge and bless all life through us. Empower us to share the joy of sharing life as children of your light.

Lighting of the third Advent Candle

Let Us Pray (Advent Calendar Readers):

God-who-lights-up-life, give us joyful, generous, and courageous hearts. As we lean on your ways of joy what swells up in us overflows and blesses life as we witness to a life of deep gratitude, full of grace, cathartic appreciation for all the diverse expressions of human goodness. Amen.

Hymn #55: Rejoice, You Pure of Heart
(Please see separate attachment for the score)

Hymn Leader: Ken Littlefield

- 1) Rejoice, you pure in heart; lift praises to the sky;
Your festal banner wave with joy, the cross of Christ raise high!

[refrain] Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice, give thanks and sing.

- 2) Bright youth and seasoned age, strong souls and spirits meek,
Raise high your free, exulting song, God's wondrous praises speak. [refrain]
- 3) With voice as full and strong as ocean's surging praise,
Send forth the hymns the saints have loved, the psalms of ancient days. [refrain]
- 4) Yes, on through life's long path, still chanting as you go,
From you to age, by night and day, in gladness and in woe. [refrain]
- 5) Praise God who rules all worlds, the risen Christ adore,
Praise God the Spirit, Holy fire, one God forever more! [refrain]

Prayer of Confession **Unison**

**God, we come before you humbled and distraught.
John, your prophet, said it clearly and plainly:
“Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none;
and whoever has food must do likewise.”
We are awash in excessive belongings–
And we only part with that which no longer suits us.
Help us, compassionate one.**

Moments for Reflection and Silence

Assurance of Pardon

Know this clearly, “With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.”
God will save one and all from their oppressors,
even from the oppressive greed and anxiety that lives inside of us
and separates us from the community’s need.
Sing praises! God has done gloriously!

Passing of the Peace

Pastor: The Peace of Christ be with you
People: **And also with you!**

Reading

Karen Yoho

Isaiah 12:2-6 (NIV)

12:2 Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid, for the LORD GOD is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation.

12:3 With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

12:4 And you will say in that day: Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known his deeds among the nations; proclaim that his name is exalted.

12:5 Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be known in all the earth.

12:6 Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

Gospel Reading

Luke 3:7-18 (NIV)

3:7 John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

3:8 Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.

3:9 Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

3:10 And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?"

3:11 In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise."

3:12 Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?"

3:13 He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you."

3:14 Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

3:15 As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah,

3:16 John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

3:17 His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

3:18 So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

Musical Interlude

Sermon: Look Forward

Music for Meditation

Prayers of the People

Hymn #119 My Soul Gives Glory to My God (verses 1, 3 and 5)

**1) My soul gives glory to my God. My heart pours out its praise.
God lifted up my lowliness in many marvelous ways.**

**3) From age to age, to all who fear, such mercy love imparts,
dispensing justice far and near, dismissing selfish hearts.**

**5) Praise God, whose loving covenant supports those in distress,
remembering past promises with present faithfulness.**

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer **Unison**

Offering Invitation

God calls us to create a community which welcomes all:
To care for the infirm, to heal the shame of the outcast,
To create a welcome for all.
Let these gifts we offer begin this process of reconciliation!

Offering and Dedication **Unison**

**Take these gifts, and gather us back together, O God.
We who have separated ourselves
from our neighbors
from our higher selves
and from your expansive Love.
Reunite us with our calling. Amen.**

Benediction **Unison**

**Gathering one! Embracing one!
The one-who-bears-the-image-of-those-who-bear-God's.
Open our hearts to find you in community,
In the hopeful, peaceful, joyful work of your people.**