**St. Andrews**

 **United Church**



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**December 15, 2024 Advent 3 – Joy**

**Prelude**

**Welcome**

**Announcements**

**Acknowledgement of Kinship**

As we gather in this time of expectant waiting, we begin by acknowledging the gifts we have already received and thanking Creator God, from whom all blessings flow, for this land on which we live and worship.  We acknowledge and give thanks to those who were stewards of the land before our ancestors came and we give thanks to them for the blessing of the sharing of this land. With open hearts we commit ourselves to living into Advent with peace and respect with all our relations.

**Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy**

A: As we light the candle of joy today

B: We make space for the grace of joy.

A: Resisting shame and stigma,

B: We rejoice in *all* God’s Creation.

**All: Let us share the good news with everyone.**

**Candle lighting Hymn - Prepare the Way of the Lord - 10 VU**

**Call to Worship**

Sing praises to God on high, for glorious are God’s works.

**Sing praises to the ends of the earth.**

Shout and sing for joy, O people of God,

**for great is the Holy One in our midst,**

**blessed is the One who comes to dwell among us.**

**Hymn - A Candle is Burning - 6VU**

**Prayer of Confession**

1 & 2:   **Let us confess the excuses we have made**

**for not living in the reality of the kingdom of God:**

1: For our blindness to the needs of others

**2: and our preoccupation with our own agenda,**

1: for our failure to pay attention to the still, small voice in our lives,

**2: for our surrender to fear and self-protection,**

1: for harsh words spoken to our friends,

**2: and love withheld from our enemies,**

1: for seeking success rather than faithfulness,

**2: for praying without acting,**

1: For our life choices this week

**2: that have not contributed to greater love and justice in the**

 **world.**

1: O Lord, you are our strength and our might; you have become our

 salvation.

**2: Listen to what God says: “I have taken away the judgments**

 **against you; I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not**

 **bear reproach for it.”**

1: With joy we will draw water from the wells of salvation.

**Reflection - Great Joy**

**Hymn - Joy to the World - 59 VU**

**We Listen for God’s Word**

**Scripture Reading - Philippians 4: 4-7, Luke 3: 7-19**

**Ministry of Music**

**Meditation - *Surprised by Radical Joy***

**Hymn - On Jordan’s Bank - 20 VU**

**Invitation to Offering**

Sometimes we wonder how generous we should be. John the Baptizer was very clear: Share what you have so that everyone has enough, and do not give in to greed. I wonder what that could look like here? What joy would that kind of generosity bring us? Friends, let us trust God to be sufficient in all things as we share our gifts for our community of faith and for God’s work in the world through Mission and Service.

**Offering Hymn - In the Bleak Midwinter - 55VU - Verse 4**

What can I give him, poor as I am

If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb

If I were a Wise man, I would do my part

Yet, What I can I give him - give my heart.

**Offering Prayer**

God of joy, may giving these gifts be our deepest joy. You are the God of abundance, and on this day, we give thanks knowing that you are our salvation; we will trust, and will not be afraid, for you are our hope and our strength. Amen.

**Prayers of the People**

God of our Highest Joy, we come to you this day as your servants,

gathered to worship you and you alone.

As we continue this Advent journey, help us to focus on you and the coming of your son, Jesus.

Amidst the commercials, the cooking, and the company,

help us to remember the true meaning of this season:

that you would come to us in the flesh and forever live among us.

Even as we share the joy we find in you with one another,

we are mindful of those for whom joy is hard to find,

     for those who don't have enough clothes,

     for those who don't have enough food,

     for those who don't have enough (or any) shelter,

     for those who don't have enough protection and justice.

We confess that there really is "enough" for everyone,

but it is our fault that the "enough" is hoarded by few at the expense of many. Help us to bear the good fruit that the Baptist called us to bear,

being mindful of those around us without during this season of giving.

We pray this day for those longing for spiritual renewal.

We would ask that your Holy Spirit invigorate us

that we may provide for others first before expecting them to provide for us. Come to this place and encourage us to do the work to which we were baptized. Help us to proclaim the Good News in word and in deed.

We pray this day for the hope we have found, the peace we seek,

and the joy we will receive in your Holy name.

May we bring hope to the hopeless, peace to the restless,

and joy to those who crave it.

We pray this day, either out loud or in our hearts, for those dear to us...

Gracious God, may the joy we find not be a commodity to be hoarded

but a gift to be shared with one another.

We thank you for your presence among us,

your creation around us, and your providence within us,

as we continue this blessed journey.  Amen.

**The Lord’s Prayer**

**Closing Hymn - Go, Tell it on the Mountain - 43 VU**

**Commissioning and Benediction**

May we go forth into the world to share Radical joy with all God’s beloved creation. And may the laughter of the saving Christ,

the cheerfulness of the lively Spirit,

and the joy of the everlasting God, be with you now and always.

**Amen !**

**Choral Amen**

**Announcements**

**Coming Events**

* **December 18, Prayer Shawl 10:30am**

 **Come and join Advent Study at New Vision Community church on Wednesdays at 12:30pm. Bring a lunch, come, enjoy some discussion and fellowship.**

December 29th will be a combined service with New Vision. It will be a carol/hymn sing service and a potluck to follow.

December 24th Christmas Eve Service at St. Andrews at 5pm. Don’t miss this wonderful service with lots of musical offerings.

**Railway Museum Christmas Trees**

**Dec.13,14,15, Dec. 20, 21, 22 ~ Decorated trees, Lego village, Miniature railway display. Times: Friday 5pm-9pm, Saturday 2pm-10pm, Sunday 12-5pm. Free Admission and donations accepted. Dress warmly!**

**Please Save your clementine boxes for summer camp. You can drop them off any time during office hours or any Sunday and we can store them here. Thank You.**

