



*December 13, 2020*  
*Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ*

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### *Advent Thought*

“Joy is a state of mind and an orientation of the heart. It is a settled state of contentment, confidence and hope.”

*Theopedia*

Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ  
Mt Hope 8:30am                      Greenfield 9:50am

December 13, 2020  
Grace 11:00am

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent

*Community News*

*Prayer List and Prayers of the People*

*Prelude/Lighting of the Candles*

\* *Call to Worship*

Rejoice!

The spirit of God is sending us:

**to bring good news to the oppressed,  
to comfort the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
to proclaim the year of favor among God's people.**

Rejoice!

The work of the Spirit is calling us:

**To rebuild ancient relationships ruined by injustice,  
To repair the cities as places of hope,  
To restore land devastated across generations.  
to proclaim the year of favor among God's people.**

Rejoice!

The Glory of the Spirit is leading us:

**To cast off any faint spirit  
and put on the mantle of praise,  
To take root as the plantings of the HOLY ONE,  
to display God's glory.**

Come, let us worship in Joy!

\* *Opening Hymn*

*Mt Hope VH #97*

*"What Child Is This?"*

*Greenfield CH #281*

*Grace VH #97*

## *Lighting the Third Advent Candle – The Candle of Joy*

O Holy One, we light this third candle, and delight in the sparkle of its outrageous reminder to “rejoice”! Let its flame cast light into shadowy places and show where work is to be done. Let a community of builders be formed in The Light of Joy. Let Joy find home in our hearts, and make space for your presence there, as we work for justice and peace in the service of Love.

**God be with us in this Light of Joy.**

### *Lighting of the Candle*

#### *Gathering Prayer*

Holy One,  
Builder who delights  
in making spaces of safety and beauty,  
Matchmaker who rejoices  
in presenting new spouses with a future of hope,  
fill us today with the gifts we need  
to join you in your life-sustaining, hope-giving work in the world;  
let us share your joyful vision  
of beauty and justice  
in this world you have created and loved.  
In the name of the One who is coming,

**Amen**

#### *Witness to Joy*

Instead of a typical Confession of Sin,  
today let us try something that may be equally challenging  
in light of the difficult year we have spent:  
Let’s give witness instead to signs of Joy in our midst,  
Signs that our God is doing something new,  
and calling us to faithfulness in our contexts.

What are signs of hope, of encouragement, of change, of comfort,  
that point to the Holy One at work?

Are there signs which call us to join in, or amplify these signs in  
our community?

#### *Silent Reflection*

## *Words of Assurance*

Holy one, we give you thanks that you meet us in our struggles, and call us into a future of hope and joy. You have promised to be faithful, and we open our hearts to you in trust, in the name of the one you send, Jesus.

## *The Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings*

Offertory Statement

\* Doxology

\* Offertory Prayer

TH # 551

**O Faithful One, accept these gifts of our hearts and hands.**

**May they be multiplied and magnified as the living presence of Christ in the world. Amen.**

## *Epistle Lesson*

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 NIV**

**Mt. Hope pg. 1876**

<sup>16</sup> Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup> pray continually, <sup>18</sup> give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

<sup>19</sup> Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup> Do not treat prophecies with contempt <sup>21</sup> but test them all; hold on to what is good, <sup>22</sup> reject every kind of evil.

<sup>23</sup> May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

## \* *The Reading of the Holy Gospel*

**John 1:6-8, 19-28 NIV**

**Mt. Hope pg. 1683**

## *Gloria Tibi (Glory be to Thee, O Lord.)*

**TH #497**

<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. <sup>8</sup> He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

### *John the Baptist Denies Being the Messiah*

<sup>19</sup> Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. <sup>20</sup> He

did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, “I am not the Messiah.”

<sup>21</sup> They asked him, “Then who are you? Are you Elijah?”

He said, “I am not.”

“Are you the Prophet?”

He answered, “No.”

<sup>22</sup> Finally they said, “Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?”

<sup>23</sup> John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, “I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way for the Lord.’”

<sup>24</sup> Now the Pharisees who had been sent <sup>25</sup> questioned him, “Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?”

<sup>26</sup> “I baptize with water,” John replied, “but among you stands one you do not know. <sup>27</sup> He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.”

<sup>28</sup> This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

\* *Gloria Patri*

*Children's Message*

\* *Meditation Hymn*      “*O Little Town of Bethlehem*”

*Mt Hope* VH #89

*Greenfield* CH #250

*Grace* VH #89

*Today's Message*

\* *The Apostle's Creed*

**I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ his only begotten 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 hades; 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/Christian church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.**

### *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 debts as we forgive our debtors. And  
lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,  
forever. Amen.**

\* *Sung Response*                    *"Hear Our Prayer, O Lord"*                    TH # 501

\* *Closing Hymn*            *"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"*                    vs. 1,2,4  
*Mt Hope VH #25*                    *Greenfield CH #648*                    *Grace VH #25*

### \* *Benediction*

Go forth confident that God is faithful:  
Those who have sowed in sorrow will return with shouts of joy  
Bearing the harvest of God's work.  
Rejoice always—the Lord is near.

In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forevermore. **Hallelujah! Amen!**

### \* *Three-Fold Amen*

\* *Postlude/Extinguishing of the Candle*                    TH # 558

\* *Postlude 2/Exiting the Church*