



Third Sunday of Advent

December 11, 2022
Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ

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Advent Thought

Joy, above all else, is a selfless quality which is magnified when it is shared and minimized when it is selfishly grasped.

- Tim Hansel

Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ

December 11, 2022

Mt Hope 8:30am

Greenfield 9:50am

Grace 11:00am

3rd Sunday of Advent / Strengthen Your Resolve

Community News

Prayer List and Prayers of the People

Prelude/Lighting of the Candles

* *Call to Worship*

Our souls magnify the Lord.

Our spirits rejoice in God our Savior!

We come today with eager hope, awaiting God's new revelation.

The mighty One has done great things!

God's mercy covers generations.

We come today with ready peace, trusting with anticipation.

The One who lifted up the lowly

And filled the hungry, dwells with us.

We come today with fervent joy, we worship with great expectation.

* *Invocation*

God of Mary, Ruth, Bathsheba, and Rahab - God of us all, your children here and your children afar - We enter this moment of worship with eager anticipation. We know that even before a child would come to lead the way, you were leading our way. From the valleys of the shadows of death to the tables in the presence of enemies, you have never left us nor forsaken us. **Your** rod and your staff have guided us. Guide us now, O God. Make your presence known as we worship you in spirit and in truth. Amen.

* *Opening Hymn "Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation"*

Mt Hope PH #263

Greenfield CH #403

Grace TH #324

Advent Candle Lighting Litany

Soon we shall celebrate the birth of Jesus. We worship God with joy in our hearts as we are reminded of the words the angel said on that first Christmas Day: “Behold I bring you good news of a great joy **which** will come to all the people.”

Advent Scripture

John 15:9-11 NIV

9 “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. **10** If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. **11** I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

Lighting the Third Candle of JOY

We light this candle to proclaim the coming of the light of God into the world. With the coming of this light there is *joy*, joy that is ours not only at Christmas but always.

<lighting of the candle>

Advent Prayer

O Holy One, as Christmas draws near, there is a sense of excitement in the air. We can feel a joy in our lives and see it in those around us. Still, for some of us this is a sad time because of unhappy things that have happened in our lives. Help us to have the joy that does not depend on earthly happiness but on you. Help us to be filled with your joy so that we may share it with a joyless world.

**Candle Lighting Hymn* “Joy to the World!” vs 2,4
Mt Hope VH #88 Greenfield CH #270 Grace VH #88

Prayer for Transformation and New Life

We gather together in this season of Advent anticipating hope, praying for peace, attempting to cultivate joy and share love amidst commotion, grief, despair, and uncertainty.

<Moment of silence>

God, we confess that we have often placed our hope in people and things that can't fulfill our every need. We have searched for peace in shallow places. We have mistaken joy for temporal pleasure and artificial exhilaration. We have put limits on the ways we love, excluding those who need our loving kindness the most. God, when we have lost our way, show us yours. Guide us to the hope in you that will renew our strength. Lead us to your peace that transcends all understanding. Fill us with a joy we can only experience in your presence. Remind us that you have always loved us with an everlasting love, so that we may share that love with others. Amen.

Words of Grace

In this season of desolation and uncertainty, it good to know that God's love for us is sure—that God's commitment to us is definite—that God is walking with us, guiding us, as the compassionate companion that we are called to be for each other. Let us live **in** this gift. Amen.

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 35:1-10 NIV

Joy of the Redeemed

¹ The desert and the parched land will be glad;
the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.

Like the crocus,² it will burst into bloom;
it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.

The glory of Lebanon will be given to it,
the splendor of Carmel and Sharon;
they will see the glory of the LORD,
the splendor of our God.

³ Strengthen the feeble hands,
steady the knees that give way;

⁴ say to those with fearful hearts,
“Be strong, do not fear;
your God will come,
he will come with vengeance;
with divine retribution
he will come to save you.”

⁵ Then will the eyes of the blind be opened
and the ears of the deaf unstopped.
⁶ Then will the lame leap like a deer,
and the mute tongue shout for joy.
Water will gush forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert.
⁷ The burning sand will become a pool,
the thirsty ground bubbling springs.
In the haunts where jackals once lay,
grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.
⁸ And a highway will be there;
it will be called the Way of Holiness;
it will be for those who walk on that Way.
The unclean will not journey on it;
wicked fools will not go about on it.
⁹ No lion will be there,
nor any ravenous beast;
they will not be found there.
But only the redeemed will walk there,
¹⁰ and those the LORD has rescued will return.
They will enter Zion with singing;
everlasting joy will crown their heads.
Gladness and joy will overtake them,
and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

* *The Reading of the Holy Gospel*

Matthew 11:2-11 NIV

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

TH #497

² When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples ³ to ask him, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?”

⁴ Jesus replied, “Go back and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵ The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. ⁶ Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.”

⁷ As John’s disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to

see? A reed swayed by the wind?⁸ If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces.⁹ Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written:

“I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.”

11 Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

* *Gloria Patri*

Children's Message / Congregation Conversation

* *Meditation Hymn* “*Ye Servants of God*”

Mt Hope PH #206

Greenfield CH #38

Grace TH #11

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

The Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory Statement

Offertory (MH)

* Doxology TH # 551

* Offertory Prayer

For the wondrous ways this offering will bless this community, we dedicate these gifts. For the ways it'll help us live out God's mission, we dedicate these gifts. Let these gifts strengthen our call to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly. Amen.

* *Closing Hymn* “O Come, All Ye Faithful”

Mt Hope PH #132 Greenfield CH #249 Grace VH #94

Benediction

Go forth with great expectation
Waiting for God's mercy to fill us
Wait for the God's grace to surround us
Wait for God's child to lead us
And in that waiting,
May God bless and keep you
May God's face shine upon you
May God be gracious to you
And give you peace.
Amen

* *Three-Fold Amen* TH # 558

* *Postlude/Extinguishing of the Candle*

Strengthen Your Resolve: Rev. Mia M. McClain is the Senior Pastor of Riverside Baptist Church in Washington D.C. She is an ordained UCC minister.