

Worship Service
Sunday December 11, 2016
3rd Sunday of Advent
Theme: "Joyous anticipation of our redeemer and King"

WE GATHER IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Gathering Song: **"Prepare the Way of the Lord"** BoP#112

Welcome and Sharing of the peace
(We greet each other saying, **"The Peace of Christ be with you"**)

Call to Worship (based on Luke 1:46-50):

One: Our souls magnify the Lord.
Many: Our spirits rejoice in God our Saviour!
One: The mighty One has done great things for us!
Many: Holy is God's name!
One: Let us worship God.
Many: For God is our Maker and our Redeemer;
from generation to generation God gives mercy.

Hymn: **"O Come, Let Us Adore Him"**

1,5 O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

2 We'll praise His name forever,
We'll praise His name forever,
We'll praise His name forever,
Christ the Lord.

3 We'll give Him all the glory,
We'll give Him all the glory,
We'll give Him all the glory,
Christ the Lord.

4 For He alone is worthy,
For He alone is worthy,
For He alone is worthy,
Christ the Lord.

Text and Music: traditional
Prayer of Adoration:

P: Almighty God
you have arranged and ordered all things in creation;
1: you make the deserts bloom,
2: the dry land generative,
3: and the waters refreshing.

P: You transform all things so that
1: the darkness is pierced by light,
2: the speechless sing,
3: the immobilized are set free.

**All: Let us receive the good news joyfully.
Let us accept the great gifts that Christ brings with gratitude.
Let us worship God in the beauty of all holiness.**

P: We pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Sung Prayer: **“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”** BoP#110

WE LIGHT THE CANDLE OF JOY

Lighting of the Advent Candles

Song: **“Dawning Light of Our Salvation”**

1. Long in darkness Israel wandered;
Long in mortal shadows, we
Walked in bondage and self-pity,
Trod in paths of sin and grief.
In the prophets' words He told us,
Long the God of Israel spoke;
He alone in strength would save us
From the hands of all our foes.

Refrain:
Every valley be exalted!
Every mountain be made plane!

Crooked ways repent and straighten;
All creation bend in praise!

2. He shall raise a mighty Savior;
Born of David's lineage, He
Comes in cov'nant love to claim us
From our sins to set us free.
Light to those who dwell in darkness
Life to those from death who flee
Joy unto the earth, and gladness,
To your pathways dawning peace!

Refrain

3. Jesus, Lord, and mighty Savior,
David's Son and yet his King,
Dawning light of our salvation,
Of your saving pow'r we sing!
Stand, Oh lame, and dance ye broken,
Know the Savior's healing grace;
Come, Oh deaf and hear him singing;
Turn, Oh blind, behold his face!

Refrain

Words: Wendell Kimbrough (c) 2012 Wendell Kimbrough
Music: Bruce Benedict, (c) 2012 Cardiphonia

Solo (Debbie Lamb): "**See Him Lying**"

Youth message: "**A Christmas Star**"

Youth Hymn: "**Hope is a Star**" Bop # 119

GOD SPEAKS TO US FROM HIS WORD

Prayer for Understanding:

Eternal God, who caused all scriptures to be written for our learning: help us to hear your words; to read, learn, and inwardly digest them so that,

through patience and your guiding Spirit, we may embrace truth and the hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Reading of Scripture:

Psalm 146: 4-9
Philippians 4: 4-9

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God!

Sermon: **“Joy in the Lord”**

Text: Philippians 4: 4-9

4 Rejoice[c] in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.[d] 5 Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. 6 Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, beloved, [e] whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about[f] these things. 9 Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

Today on the third Sunday of Advent we focus on joy. The focus on joy at advent was heralded by the angels' announcement in **Luke 2:10 “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.”** Too often we lose our joy during the most joyful of all seasons for one reason or another. Jesus came to bring joy to the individual heart regardless of all the joy robbers that come our way. As Christians at this time of the year, we too are focussed on all the commercialism that surrounds us in this age. It is true also that many times we lose the real meaning of Christmas, focus on all the materialism and as such, we lose our joy.

In our text today, Paul was aware of the struggles that the Christians in Philippi were going through, and he pointed out some things that Christians in the early church could do to restore joy to their lives. These same things apply to us today

as well. Paul being aware of their feelings of inferiority and the fact that they were not materially rich, pointed them towards some Godly solutions.

He says in verse 4:

1. **Rejoice in the Lord:** First of all, Paul boldly states: “**Rejoice [in the Lord] always!**” The very first thing he says is to rejoice, but not just to Rejoice Always over the good things in their life. Paul knew there were bad things happening around them as well; he knew that not all things were well with them and there were many struggles they had. Regardless of these facts he wanted them to focus on the positive things that were happening in their lives. He wanted them most of all to realise that what they had God in their lives and this was the greatest thing that was going on for them. He therefore didn't just tell them to rejoice but more importantly he said, “Rejoice in the Lord.”
 - Paul's encouragement was for them to develop a consistent attitude and lifestyle of finding joy in the power of the God who loves them. In today's society, it is so easy for us to find and complain about the things that are going wrong; the things that didn't work out; the disappointments and all that we didn't achieve.
 - Rejoicing in the Lord always calls us to focus on the positives; see the disappointments as God's appointments; instead of looking at the glass half empty, see it as half full; see the things that didn't work out as part of God's purpose for us to reach higher.
 - Paul wanted them to get the point and he restated this same thought to them. “I will say it again--rejoice.” He knew that he needed to get their attention off the problems at hand. He says, “I will say it again--rejoice in the Lord always.” The Advent candle reminds us that JOY comes through Jesus.
2. Paul goes in in verse 5 to say, “**Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.**” Many times, we allow others to push us to our limits and cause us to lack gentility. When we lose our gentleness, we become angry, discontented, frustrated, hot tempered and Joyless. This happens partly because we forget who we are in Christ when we are perplexed by a bad neighbour or a troublesome co-worker or a hardnosed family member. We forget that its not every battle we can fight and we also forget that anger and malice are not just ungentle ways but they are opposites of the true Christian character. Lack of gentleness is a joy killer

as when we lose our gentleness we spend time with a feeling of guilt and shame about unkind things we think, do and say.

Paul also says the Lord is near to settle our disputes so we don't have to. It's up to us to show a spirit of gentleness which opens the way for joy to come into negative situations. If we maintain our gentleness we will maintain our joy in Christ and remain relatively happy even when life throws us difficult situations.

3. The third point Paul makes is very central to our happiness as Christians today. ***Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.***

Life these days is filled with worry and anxiety for many individuals. People are worried about their jobs, their future, changes in the world and their economic viability. Many are worried about their family members, the loss of values and attitudes that guide our lives and instilled pride and joy in our growing up. The rate of suicide is on the rise as there are many who lose their hope and can't be helped by the man made and societal structures that are set up to help us cope. According to statistics, hundreds of thousands of people have become dependent on anti depressants in order to turn up for work or just to function on a daily basis. Worry and anxiety are causing so many to go into depression and in fact these are two huge joy killers for us as God's people.

- Paul also gives us some very practical, realistic, tried, tested and proven ways to keep our joy. In everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let our request be made know to God and God's peace will be with us.
- I Thess. 5:16-18 says, ***"Be joyful always. Give thanks in all circumstances for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."***
- Paul instructs us to redirect our thoughts, attitudes, and actions and put the things you have learned into practice. And if you do, this is a conditional promise; The God of peace will be with you. Romans 12:12 says to be ***"joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer."*** Christ is our joy so as he comes, our moment of rejoicing is rekindled. Amen.

Hymn of Response: **“Joy to the World”** Bop # 153

Prayers of God's People, concluding with the Lord's Prayer

WE BRING OUR GIFTS

Work and Witness of our Church

A Time of Giving

Sung Response: **“Praise God, from Whom all Blessings Flow”** BoP#79

WE LEAVE WITH CHRIST'S PEACE

The Benediction

Recessional Hymn: **“Hark! a Thrilling Voice is Sounding”** BoP#116