

Sunday Order of worship

(Welcoming Elder: Edwin Webster)

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
 - Rev Soong Huh is home sick today and the Elders will be leading the service.
- Call to worship (Advent hand-out) – lighting the JOY candle
- Hope of a star (vs. 3) BOP 119
- Opening Hymn “Oh for a thousand tongues to sing” BOP 374
- Prayer for Adoration and Confession and Prayer for Understanding
- Words of Assurance
- Time for our children and youth

We Listen

- Hymn – “All earth is waiting” BOP109
- Prayer for Illumination
- Scripture: Matthew 11: 2-11
- Message: The Gifts That Jesus Brings
- Hymn – “Come, thou long expected Jesus” BOP110
- The Prayers for the people (Thanksgiving and Intercession)

We Respond

- Invitation to the Offering
- Doxology
- Prayer of Dedication
- Song for the Journey – Hymn – “Joyful, Joyful we adore you” BOP410

We Serve

- Benediction

As we come into the presence of our Lord, let us open our eyes that we may see, open our ears that we may hear, open our hearts and minds that we may focus on our Lord and King.

Responsive Call to Worship

Reader 1: We are people of joy.

Reader 2: God causes flowers to bloom in the desert; the wilderness is glad and breaks into song.

People: We open our eyes and we are surprised by joy in our lives!

Reader 1: The third candle of Advent reminds us that we are called to live as people of joy.

Reader 2: We light this candle, recalling moments of laughter, great beauty and deep faith. (light the candle of joy)

Reader 1: Let us pray:

People: Holy One, regardless of what happens in our lives or in our world, may we reflect the warmth and wonder of this flame. Make your church a place of joy and life in our community. Amen.

Reader 1: Let us sing:

"Hope is a star" V3 on the theme Joy

(BOP 119)

Joy is a song that welcomes the dawn, telling the world that the Saviour is born.

When God is a child there's joy in our song. The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong, and none shall be afraid.

Opening Hymn

"Oh for a thousand tongues to sing"

(BOP 374)

Oh for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise, the glories of my God and King, the triumphs of God's grace	Jesus, the name that charms our fears, and bids our sorrows cease – 'tis music in the sinner's ears; its life and health and peace	My gracious Master and my God, assist me to proclaim, and spread through all the earth abroad the honours of thy name.
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Prayer For Adoration

Creator God, Maker of heaven and earth,
 with the sea and the stars, and everything in between,
 we praise you for the wonders of this world and beyond it.
 You set all creation in relationships both fruitful and fragile.
 You make deserts bloom and refresh the earth with seasonal rain.
 With your care for the vulnerable in our hearts,
 we praise you with joy song this day,
 Our God, who is the Source, Saviour and Spirit of life,
 perfect in unity, splendor and truth.

Prayer of Confession (in unison)

Gracious Judge,
we look around us and we are not proud of what we see.
People criticize each other and listen only to those who agree with them.
We grumble and think the past holds the solutions,
forgetting its inequities and iniquities.
We are impatient for things to improve
but we do not want to change our ways.
Forgive us for sharing in the unhappy mood of our times,
and renew in us the joy and gratitude we once knew
for your gifts to us in Christ Jesus.

Prayer for Understanding

God of justice and joy, we turn to your Word to hear your will and your wisdom for our times. Open our hearts and minds by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit so that we might hear what you are saying to the church through Christ, our Friend and Saviour. Amen

Renew in us all the joy that comes from the assurance of your love for us in Christ Jesus
for we gather our prayers together in the words he taught us:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Receive the Good News in joy. With great mercy, God forgives what we have confessed and offers us new life in Christ. Rejoice that you can make a new beginning and share the joy in mercy and forgiveness with others.

May the peace of the Lord be with you.

And also with you. (Let us take few moments to greet each other and share our peace.)

Prayer for children and youth

Dear God;

Let our faith be handed down to the next generation. May our youth know of your love for them. Help them to know of your presence in their lives. We ask that you watch over them as they go about their daily tasks in this world. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

"All earth is waiting"**(BOP 109)**

All earth is waiting to see the Promised One, and open furrows await the seed of God. All the world, bound and struggling, seeks the true liberty; it cries out for justice and searches for the truth.	Thus says the prophet to those of Israel: "a virgin mother will bear Emmanuel," one whose name is "god with us" our Saviour shall be; with him hope will blossom once more within our hearts.
Mountains and valleys will have to be made plain; open new highways, new highways for the Lord. He is now coming closer, so come all and see, and open the doorways as wide as wide can be;	In lowly stable the Promised One appeared; yet feel his presence throughout the earth today, for he lives in all Christians and is with us now; again with his coming he brings us liberty.

Prayer for Illumination:

God of justice and joy, we turn to your Word to hear your will and your wisdom for our times. Open our hearts and minds by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit so that we might hear what you are saying to the church through Christ, our Friend and Saviour. Amen

Scripture: Matthew 11:2-11

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?'

Jesus answered them, 'Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them.

And blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me.'

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind?

What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces.

What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.

This is the one about whom it is written, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you."

Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

"This is the word of the Lord / **Thanks be to God.**"

SERMON:**The Gifts That Jesus Brings (Matthew 11:2-11)**

The sermon today is adapted from today's Children's sermon.

Look at this calendar! Can you believe it? We are only a few days from Christmas! (Count the days remaining until Christmas.) Have you finished all of your Christmas shopping? I haven't!

I'm hoping that you can help me figure out what some of the most popular gifts are this year. Will you help me?

Raise your hand if you're hoping to get a doll or stuffed animal for a Christmas gift. Well, you may be hoping to see or hear from your love ones and friends not a doll or stuffed animal.

Raise your hand if you're hoping to get a super-hero toy for a Christmas gift. Jesus is my super-hero, and he is in my heart guiding me.

Raise your hand if you're hoping to get an electronics or techy toy for a Christmas gift. If I get one of these, I'll need to go to a 101 course to learn how to turn it on and off.

Raise your hand if you're hoping to get socks for a Christmas gift. My Grandma is gone, so these will be a no go.

Those are a lot of gifts that we're all hoping for--except for the socks, however, there are many people here in our community and in the world who need socks and other warm clothes for this Christmas. We have the tree of life here in the sanctuary that you can donate a tin or box of food to give to the Aurora Pantry. If you have warm clothes or socks, you can donate to the Close Closet who will then dress their clients.

Thanks for helping me.

Those may be some of the most popular gifts that children will find under their Christmas tree this year, but they don't compare with the gifts we receive from the Christ of Christmas.

In our Bible lesson today we learn that John, even though he was in prison, was hearing about all the wonderful things Jesus was doing. He sent a message to Jesus by some of his friends. "Ask Jesus if he is the Messiah we have been expecting, or should we continue to watch for someone else?"

When they asked Jesus that question, he answered, "Go back to John and tell him about the things you hear and see: The blind can see. The crippled can walk. People with harmful skin diseases are healed. The deaf can hear. The dead are raised to life. And the Good News is told to the poor."

If you were blind, what better gift could you receive than to be able to see? If you were crippled, what better gift could you receive than to be able to walk? If you were dead, what better gift could you receive than the gift of life? Jesus is God's gift to us. Jesus came to earth to give us life -- eternal life! What a gift!

Dear God, thank You for Jesus! We know that every good gift we receive comes from you and the greatest gift is eternal life brought down to us through your Son. Father, we thank you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

"Come, thou long expected Jesus"**(BOP 110)**

Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free; from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee. Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art, dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.	Born thy people to delivery; born a child and yet a king; born to reign in us forever; now thy gracious kingdom bring. By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone; by thine all sufficient merit raise us to they glorious throne.
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Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession (Prayers for the People)

God of all creation,
Every creature finds its way to rejoice in your presence.
The desert blooms, a mountain top glistens,
a stream makes music flowing over rocks.
We give you thanks for the joy in nature which can lift our hearts.
Thank you for the joy we can share with each other,
for familiar songs on our lips,
for greetings from old friends,
for the excitement of children in this season,
and for the promise born again in us as we anticipate Jesus' birth.

God who makes all things new,
All: Renew our life together.

God of the world, its wonders and its woes,
we know there are many people and places who cannot rejoice this year,
so we open our concerns for the world before you this day.

We remember those who have been silenced
by oppressive regimes
by shocking tragedy
by bullying and threats
or by illness that takes away speech.

Keep silence for 10-15 seconds.

Help us listen with care when words are not easy to find,
and show us when and how to speak when others cannot.

God who makes all things new,
All: Renew our life together.

We remember those who have grown weaker
Through months of isolation

Through changing economic circumstances
Through aging or illness
Through hunger and homelessness.

Keep silence for 10-15 seconds.

Renew their strength and courage to engage life as they are able,
and show us when and how to offer our support and encouragement.

God who makes all things new,

All: Renew our life together.

We remember those whose days are filled with fear
because of war and conflict on their streets,
because of intimidation and discrimination,
because the security they relied on has disappeared.

Keep silence for 10-15 seconds.

Bring them protection and comfort in uncertain situations,
and make us wise and generous neighbours who can offer relief.

God who makes all things new,

All: Renew our life together.

We remember those whose lives seem empty
because their cupboards are bare while others shop for the season
because someone precious is absent
because choices made have not been fulfilling

Keep silence for 10-15 seconds.

Fill empty lives with meaning and purpose.
Show us how to share what we have in ways that are generous and dignified,
and let joy dawn again where it has died.

God who makes all things new,

All: Renew our life together.

Invitation to the Offering

This Sunday we celebrate the Advent of Joy, rising in us through Jesus Christ. Think of your gifts as seeds of that joy, which we can plant in the world God loves; for Christ's sake.

Doxology

(BOP 830)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Prayer of Dedication (in Unison)

God, our Judge and our Joy, receive our gifts as seeds of gratitude for your gift to us in Christ Jesus. Bless these seeds with growth so that joy will blossom for people depleted by challenges, and places overwhelmed by scarce resources. Be their justice and their joy, through Christ our Lord.

“Joyful, joyful we adore you”**(BOP 410)**

Joyful, joyful we adore you, God of glory, Lord of love. Hearts unfold like flowers before you, opening to the sun above. Helt the clouds of sin and sadness; drive the dark of doubt away; giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.	All your works with joy surround you; earth and heaven reflect your rays; stars and angels sing around you, centre of unbroken praise. Field and forest, vale and mountain, flowery meadow, flashing sea, chanting bird and flowing fountain, join to praise you joyfully.
You are giving and forgiving, every blessing, every blessing, well spring of the joy of living ocean depth of happy rest. God Creator, Christ our Saviour, all are yours who live in love. Teach us how to love our neighbour; lift us to your joy above.	Morning stars, awake the chorus; mortals, join with every part, for what joy is set before us as Christ's live joins heart to heart! Ever singing, march we onward, victors in the midst of strife; joyful music leads us sunward in the triumph song of life.

Commission and Benediction

Go with joy renewed this day, energized to share that joy with justice and generosity in the world God loves.

And may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

*** Stay seated and contemplate what you have heard today until after the Postlude is done. Please join us in the Guild Hall for refreshments and fellowship. ***