

Sunday, December 17, 2023
Third Sunday of Advent: Joy



GATHERING IN GOD'S PRESENCE

PRELUDE Instrumental

WELCOME

*WORDS OF BLESSING

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES The Polar Family

*HYMN #14 "Savior of the Nations, Come"

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy God of Advent, you come near to us, yet we continue to seal our hearts with indifference to a suffering world. You approach us with bundles of mercy to kindle our hope, but we continue to build our lives with the bricks of bitterness. You draw near, longing to embrace us, but we fold our arms, closing ourselves off from those all around us. You call us to you, ready to welcome us, but we hesitate and stand back.
[. . . Silence is kept as we pray our private confessions . . .]
Gracious God, shaper-of-our-lives, have mercy. Jesus, fill us with your gifting love. Spirit, shine in us and through us so all will see you and know you. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

MUSIC "An Advent Yearning" Sanctuary Choir

MINUTE FOR MISSION Karen Fritsch

LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

*PRAYER OF READINESS

Long-awaited Savior, you are the promise of the prophets. We are witnesses to your arrival and your on-going mission in us and through us. As we wait for you again, enlighten and enliven us, send us out to live in your ways and spread your message so that all may see, hear, know and believe that you are the coming of God, the Messiah, now and forever. Amen.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SCRIPTURE Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

SERMON "The World Waits: We Prepare"
Scripture: John 1:6-8, 19-28

RESPONDING AS GOD'S PEOPLE

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

To share a joy or concern: Click [HERE](#) or use the QR code

OFFERING

To give online: Click [HERE](#), or use the QR code

MUSIC "Gesu Bambino"
Laura Smith, Nancy Wright and Cindy Allard

*DOXOLOGY

*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

GOING IN GOD'S NAME

*CHARGE AND BLESSING

POSTLUDE

Some of the worship materials come from:

- Thom Shuman as posted on his Lectionary Liturgies website

Pastor Pat Smith, pat@erpc.org

Don Watson, Music Director, Don@erpc.org

Cathy McGee, Executive Administrator, office@erpc.org
Laura Smith, Director of Spiritual Formation, laura@erpc.org

ADVENT WREATH AND CANDLES

In the ancient world, various peoples lit fires to mark the turning of the light into winter's season and to pray for the return of the light. The church has Christianized that practice in the lighting of the Advent wreath. To us, these candles are signs of the growing light of Christ who is coming again in all fullness into the darkness of our world. Until the dawning of that Great Day, we watch and wait in Holy Spirit for Christ's coming into the darkness of our world, lighting candles of hope, peace, joy, and love; and remembering the promises of God with prayer.

Loaves and Fishes Hosts Needed

Give the Gift of Food this Christmas by signing up to Host a Loaves and Fishes Community Dinner

We still need volunteers to host on Jan 3, Jan 24 and Jan 31. Contact Kent Petrie (petrie@vail.net) to sign up!



Budgeted Giving for 2023 \$503,000

Total received \$381,000 76% as of 12/03/2023.

Thank you for the 26 new pledges received to date for next year.