



Pilgrim Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
December 12, 2021
The Third Sunday of Advent

Image: Nativity scene at Parliament House, from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=57856> [retrieved December 7, 2021]. Original source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nativity_scene_at_Parliament_House,_Brisbane_in_2019,_details.jpg.

Music streamed in today's service

Prelude In the Bleak Midwinter - arr. Pam Turner
O Come, O Come Emmanuel
You are a Light on My Path - Richard Bruxvoort Colligan
With Joy Draw Water - NCH#109*
Wachet Auf, ruft uns die Stimme ("Wake, awake, a voice is calling") - JS Bach

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Today's service will be recorded.

Pilgrim Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
December 12, 2021
Gaudete Sunday (Joy) and Mitten Tree Sunday

Prelude Prelude In the Bleak Midwinter - arr. Pam Turner Dot Bowe

Greeting and Announcements Rev. Reebee Girash and Sarah Jane Fuller

Passing of the Peace

One: Peace be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Let us share the peace of Christ with one another.

Call to Worship Dave McClave

Leader: God did not wait till the world was ready, till the nations were at peace.

People: God came when the heavens were unsteady, and prisoners cried out for release.

Leader: God did not wait for the perfect time. God came when the need was deep and great.

People: God dined with sinners in all their grime, turned water into wine. God did not wait till hearts were pure.

Leader: In joy God came to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.

People: To a world like ours of anguished shame God came, and God's light would not go out.

Leader: God came to a world which did not mesh, to heal its tangles, shield its scorn.

People: In the mystery of Word made Flesh the Maker of the stars was born.

Leader: We cannot wait til the world is sane to raise our songs with joyful voice, for to share our grief, to touch our pain,

People: God came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!

Lighting the Advent Candles

Sadhna Vora and Family

Reader 1: When Jesus was in the upper room with the disciples, he taught them the importance of abiding in him – the vine – in order to bear fruit. The day would soon come when he would not be in their physical presence, and Jesus wanted to impress on them the importance of remaining connected to him. Jesus explained the reason for his teaching this way: “I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete” (John 15:11).

Reader 2: When hope seems far away, Jesus reminds us to lean towards him. Jesus invites us to receive the grace that brings lasting joy.

Reader 1: In Romans 12, the apostle Paul shared these thoughts with the church in Rome: “Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer” (Romans 12:12). Somehow, he believed it was possible to experience joy, hope, and suffering all at the same time.

Reader 2: Soothe our conflicted hearts, O God.

Reader 1: Today, we are lighting the candle of joy in our Advent wreath. We do this not because we have joy figured out or because we have mastered leaning toward the grace of God. We light the candle of joy in this wreath to remind us God’s grace is always extended to us, even when we aren’t sure we have the strength to reach out and receive it. When we are leaning away from joy, God continues to incline toward us.

Reader 2: We long for the joy of hope fulfilled.

All: This season of Advent, Lord, we offer our uncertain hearts to you. Mend our broken places, and soothe our reluctant hearts. Even when joy seems beyond our reach, we lean toward you. Offer your grace to us again and again. Oh, how we need it. Amen.

Solo O Come, O Come Emmanuel Lesley Morrison

Mitten Tree Ingathering

Dedicating Our Gifts Rev. Reebee Girash

Children's Message Sarah Jane Fuller

Children depart for Sunday School at this time.

Scripture Readings **Philippians 4:4-7** Dave McClave

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. 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.

Matthew 1:18-25

18 Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. 19 Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. 20 But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” 22 All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

23 “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,”

which means, “God is with us.” 24 When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, 25 but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

One: Here end the readings. Hear what the Spirit of God is saying to the church.

All: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Rev. Reebee Girash

Prayers of the People

Rev. Reebee Girash

Pastoral Prayer

Rev. Reebee Girash

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father (Creator), 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.

Invitation to the Offering

Rev. Reebee Girash

Offertory

You are a Light on My Path - Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

Doxology

Prayer of Dedication

Rev. Reebee Girash

Thanks be to you, O God, maker of heaven and earth - giver of justice, lover of righteousness, hope of the afflicted, and friend of the poor. Your faithfulness never fails. Take and use these gifts we offer to further your purpose in the world. Amen.

*Hymn With Joy Draw Water - NCH#109

- 1 With joy draw water from the spring; salvation's living well.
The Holy One is in your midst; glad praises sing and tell!
- 2 A shoot has sprung from Jesse's tree; of God the Chosen One.
A branch of knowledge and of truth; a gift of love has come!
- 3 With love the poor will be received; the proud will turn a side;
And faithfulness will be a path, and righteousness the guide!
- 4 The wolf shall lie down with the lamb; the calf and lion play.
God's peace shall dwell within the land; a child shall show the way!
- 5 With joy draw water from the spring; salvation's living well.
The Holy One is in your midst; glad praises sing and tell!

With Joy Draw Water

109

Anne McKinstry, 1986, 1993

Isa. 11:1-10; 12:2-6



1 With joy draw wa - ter from the spring; sal - va - tion's liv - ing well.
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God's peace shall dwell with - in the land; a child shall show the way!
The Ho - ly One is in your midst; glad prais - es sing and tell!

Postlude Wachet Auf, ruft uns die Stimme - JS Bach (“Wake, awake, a voice is calling”)

Dot Bowe

A special thank you to **Dave McClave** for being our liturgist today, **Sadhna Vora and her family** for lighting our Advent Candles, **Lesley Morrison** for her musical gifts, and to **Mike Stevens** for hosting our Zoom service.

Source Notes: Today’s Call to Worship adapts a poem by Madeleine L’Engle. The Prayer of Dedication is from *Feasting on the Word*. The Advent Candle Lighting is by April Fiet,

<https://aprilfiet.com/my-thoughts/advent-for-uncertain-hearts-week-3-joy-at-arms-length>.

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Sunday Worship 10:30 am