

Myerstown United Church of Christ

The Second Sunday in Advent

December 8, 2019

Worship Time 10:00 am

“Repeat the Sounding Joy:” Loving Joy

EXPANSION OF OUR HEARTS

A Time of Reflection to Prepare for Worship

We gather together to worship the One Who Is Joy and as we come together, our hearts are expanded. We remember that the heavens declare God's praise as the sun rises and light multiplies. And we witness that all of nature (including us) yearns to reach and expand toward the Light so that all might know joy.

Prelude

Veni Emmanuel

Heathcote Statham

Welcome

Second Sunday Sharing

Community Meal

Mark Herr

Announcements

[will all who are able please stand]

***Advent Hymn**

#154 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

VENI EMMANUEL

Loving Joy

Advent Prayer [Leader/All]

Let us pray together.

We make a joyful noise to the Beloved. All the earth breaks forth into grateful song and sings praises! Yes, Beloved, we sing songs of praise extolling Love's way, lifting our hearts with gratitude and joy! Come, Christ Child of Bethlehem! Come! Amen.

The Wreath

Candle Lighting Prayer

Worship Leader: [after lighting the candle] Let us pray:

Holy God, you are the source of love. You are the joy that runs deep and wide underneath all of life. You are the one that helps us reach out in love, especially to those whose fear makes it hard for them to love. Help us when our fear gets in the way of joining the chorus of joy.

Let us repeat the sounding joy in our hearts this day.

Let us repeat the sounding joy in our church this day.

Let us repeat the sounding joy in the world this day in the name of Love.

Amen.

***Song of Joy**

[will those who are able please stand]

#179 *Joy to the World* [verse 2 only]

ANTIOCH

RECEPTION OF GOD'S WORD

As we open to receive the Word and interpret its meaning for our lives, we connect to the depths of our being where the River of Joy is always flowing. We have only to dip into it for, we have the "joy, joy, joy, joy, down in our hearts."

***Scripture**

Matthew 3:1-11

Hear the good news of Jesus Christ as it is found in the 3rd chapter of Matthew beginning with the 1st verse and following.

Praise be to the Christ Child for whom we wait.

While Jesus was living in the Galilean hills, John, called “the Baptizer,” was preaching in the desert country of Judea. His message was simple and austere, like his desert surroundings: “Change your life. God's kingdom is here.”

John and his message were authorized by Isaiah's prophecy: Thunder in the desert! Prepare for God's arrival! Make the road smooth and straight!

John dressed in a camel-hair habit tied at the waist by a leather strap. He lived on a diet of locusts and wild field honey. People poured out of Jerusalem, Judea, and the Jordanian countryside to hear and see him in action. There at

the Jordan River those who came to confess their sins were baptized into a changed life.

When John realized that a lot of Pharisees and Sadducees were showing up for a baptismal experience because it was becoming the popular thing to do, he exploded: “Brood of snakes! What do you think you’re doing slithering down here to the river? Do you think a little water on your snakeskins is going to make any difference? It’s your life that must change, not your skin! And don’t think you can pull rank by claiming Abraham as father. Being a descendant of Abraham is neither here nor there. Descendants of Abraham are a dime a dozen. What counts is your life. Is it green and blossoming? Because if it’s deadwood, it goes on the fire.

“I’m baptizing you here in the river, turning your old life in for a kingdom life. The real action comes next: The main character in this drama—compared to him I’m a mere stagehand—will ignite the kingdom life within you, a fire within you, the Holy Spirit within you, changing you from the inside out. He’s going to clean house—make a clean sweep of your lives. He’ll place everything true in its proper place before God; everything false he’ll put out with the trash to be burned.”

This is where the reading ends. It is the gospel of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Message

TRANSFORMATION OF OUR LIVES

A Time of Reflection to Prepare for Prayer

Connecting with our deepest selves, we are able to accept that all of life resides within joy’s possibilities—not only the happy moments, but also the sorrows and difficulties of life. Like the work of our hearts, all that flows in can be given new life and pumped back out with renewed oxygen, giving us strength and courage for all circumstances.

Invitation to Prayer

Prayer of Confession

Goodness Incarnate, we must confess that we have not lived as your children. We muddy the clear waters of baptism with the detritus of walking over those we claim we love. We sit in our lonely lives feasting on bitterness, when we could be feasting with those we are told not to trust. We wait for all

our desires to be taken care of by you, while you hope we would fill the lives of others with your grace and hope.

Forgive us, God of this holy season, and help us to be as willing to draw near to others, so we might heal their brokenness, touch their loneliness, embrace their grief, and love them as you did when you came to us so long ago, as well as in these moments, in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon

Here is the good news: Speak with the whispers of love until it silences despair; sing the carols of compassion until all join in the chorus; shower others with wonder and delight and join in God’s dance of grace.

Thanks be to God. We are forgiven! So, let us welcome others with open arms, just as we have been embraced in God’s loving joy. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Who needs a message of love in your life? In the world?
Why do we ration love as if it isn’t never-ending, ever-green?
Like the tree adorned with ornaments,
with what outward messages do we adorn our own lives?
What messages of love and joy can we repeat? How?

Prayer of Our Savior

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.

COMPASSION FOR THE WORLD

A Time of Reflection to Go Out into the World

Connecting to Joy can compel us to want this connection for all beings. We leave this place “with passion” (com-passion) for adding our love, peace, hope, and joy to the world.

*Going Forth

***Benediction**

This is the cycle of Joy
It expands us outward,
we receive so much from that experience,
we take it in and are transformed by it
and we want that for the whole world...
which sends us out again...
expansion, reception, transformation, compassion.
I invite you to follow along with me.

***Closing Hymn**

#156 *On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry*

PUER NOBIS

***Personal Reflection on Loving Joy**

***Postlude**

Toccata on 'Savior, of the Nations Come'

Paul Manz

Acknowledgements

The church is adorned with the poinsettias that will heighten our joy through Christmas Eve.

There are four *movements* in each of our Advent and Christmas Eve services. They are transitional moments in what is happening. We come to worship and feel the *expansion of our hearts*. Then we *receive God's word* and are *transformed as we pray*. The service comes to a close expressing *compassion for the world* as we journey back into our daily lives. You are invited to participate in the gestures that accompany them during the Benediction.

Liturgy and music for this service was reprinted with permission from Worship Design Studio [<http://www.worshipdesignstudio.com/landingpage.cfm>]

Announcements

JOY TO THE WORLD ORNAMENTS: are available for purchase. Each congregation members is encouraged to take 2 beveled, 2 disc, and one set to sell to your neighbors and friends. There are 2 lists: I Purchased and I Took On Consignment. Please complete the information requested. This helps the office keep track of the inventory.

CHURCH DIRECTORIES AVAILABLE: Copies of an updated church directory are available on the Information Counter. Please take one home with you. If you have any corrections, please add them to the Communication Book, also on the Information Counter or contact the church office.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES OFFERING: Regardless of which service you attend and where that service is hel, it is important to use an envelope for the offering and ***not place cash in the plate***. We ask that you use a purple Veterans of the Cross envelop or any envelop with the words Veterans of the Cross on it. Since we are partnering with Friedens Lutheran for these services, the envelopes are the only way to make sure that the contributions reach the appropriate congregation.

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED: The Church office will be closed on Tuesday, 24 December 19 with no pastoral office hours. It will be closed Monday, 6 January 20, in order for staff to receive training on the new membership and financial software.

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Prayer List

|                   |                           |                 |
|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Nancy Brown       | Russ Kahl                 | Rosene Duffy    |
| Ellen Goodyear    | Ruthann Snoke             | Joyce Mitstifer |
| Ralph Woynarowski | Jewel Fessler             | Linda Feaser    |
| Bill Gracely      | Rosalla Hollenbach        | Joanne Frantz   |
| David Mock        | Heather & Elvin Perez     | James Haines    |
| Steve Norford     | Family of Arlene Spangler | Suzanne Fritsch |

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Worship Assistants for December 15, 2019

8:00 am Service
Greeters: Lindy Bennetch
Open Church: Marcia Bicher
Worship Leader: Wanda Rabold

10:00 am Service
Greeters: Ed & Candy Hibshman
Worship Leader: Marianne & Steve Fritsch
Ushers: Marie Hibshman, Darryl Brown, Bob Dash, Kenny Patrick
Counting Team: Lois Werner, Sara Zeller, Sally Kulp
Advent Wreath: Dave, Jen, Noah, & Jacob Blystone

Calendar for This Week

Today, Sunday, December 8 **The Second Sunday in Advent**
 8:00 am Brief Worship Service
 8:45 am Small group meetings.
 10:00 am Traditional Worship Service
 11:00 am Church Council [Library]

Monday, December 9
 8:30 am Strong Bones [social hall]
 9:00 am - 2:00 pm Church Office Open
 5:00 pm Lebanon Choral Society Rehearsal

Tuesday, December 10
8:30 am - 12:30 pm Pastor Office Hours [preferably by appointment]

Wednesday, December 11
 9:00 am - 2:00 pm Church Office Open
 Scouts

Thursday, December 12
 8:30 am Strong Bones [social hall]
 9:00 am Community Meal Prep
 4:00 pm Community Meal

Friday, December 13
 9:00 am - 2:00 pm Church Office Open

Saturday, December 14
 9:00 am Lebanon County Choral Society Rehearsal
 6:00 pm Scout Spaghetti Supper

Sunday, December 15 **The Third Sunday in Advent**
 8:00 am Brief Worship Service
 8:45 am Small group meetings
 10:00 am Traditional Worship Service
 11:00 am Church Council Meeting [Library]
 1:00 pm Lebanon County Choral Society Rehearsal
 3:00 pm Lebanon County Choral Society Concert with Reception



Christmas Eve

4:00 Service with Holy Communion at Friedens Lutheran, Myerstown
 6:30 pm Service with Holy Communion at Myerstown UCC
 11:00 pm Service with Holy Communion at Friedens.

Welcome to Myerstown United Church of Christ

Church Office: 304 West Main Avenue, Myerstown , PA 17067-1023
 Phone: 717/866-5252 myerstownucc@comcast.net
 website: myerstownuccchurch.org

Kory Leppo----- 717-269-6033 ----- Council President
 Marie Hibshman 717-343-3247 ----- Elder
 Jim Yoder----- 252-258-4268 ----- Bridge Pastor
 Emily Frantz----- 717-383-1147 ----- Parish Administrator
 Mark Herr----- 717-572-7734 -Family & Community Ministry Coordinator
 Lindy Bennetch----- Financial Administrator
 Jim Yoder----- Church Secretary
 Elicia Frank----- Custodian

Worship Assistants

Appreciation to the following who participated in today's service:

Organist Mark Herr

8:00 am Service

Open Church: Bill & Betty Arnold

Greeter: Bill & Betty Arnold **Worship Leader:** Bill Arnold

10:00 am Service

Greeter: Ted & Carol Batdorff **Sound:** Paulie McQuate

Worship Leader Margo McQuate

Ushers Travis, Angie, Gabby & Hank Bicher, Kenny Patrick

Counting Team Marie Hibshman, Kathy Grose, Charlie & Carolyn Williams

Advent Wreath Lighting: Travis, Angie, Gabby & Hank Bicher

Stewardship Report for Sunday, December 1, 2019

General Fund	\$3,892	OCWM	\$380
Church Improvement Fund			\$900
Attendance 8 am:	14	Attendance 10 am:	42