

Myerstown United Church of Christ

The Third Sunday in Advent

December 15, 2019

Worship Time 8:00 am

“Make the Blessings Known:” Unabashed 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

Welcome & Announcements

[will all who are able please stand]

***Advent Hymn**

#163 All Earth Is Hopeful [verses 1, 2, 3]

TAULE

[the congregation may be seated]

Unabashed Joy

Advent Prayer [Leader/All]

Let us pray together.

Let the voices of all people blend in harmony, in unison. Let the people magnify the Beloved. Amen.

The Wreath

Meaning of Unabashed Joy

Candle Lighting Prayer

Holy God, you provide the source of our joy. It runs deep and wide underneath all of life. When we are tempted to depend on others for happiness, draw us back to you, for you are the Light that shines for us always. Help us to shine that light from within us through our own Unabashed Joy.

Let us make your blessings known in our hearts this day.

Let us make your blessings known in our church this day.

Let us make your blessings known in the world this day in the name of Joy.

Amen.

Song of Joy

#179 *Joy to the World* [verse 3 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

Isaiah 35:1-10

“The desert and the dry land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom like the crocus. They will burst into bloom, and rejoice with joy and singing. They will receive the glory of Lebanon, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon. They will see the Lord's glory, the splendor of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and support the unsteady knees. Say to those who are panicking: “Be strong! Don't fear! Here's your God, coming with vengeance; with divine retribution God will come to save you.”

Then the eyes of [those who cannot see] will be opened, and the ears of [those who cannot hear] will be cleared. Then [those who cannot move] will leap like the deer, and the tongue of [those who cannot make a sound] will sing. Waters will spring up in the desert, and streams in the wilderness. The burning sand will become a pool, and the thirsty ground, fountains of water. The jackals' habitat, a pasture; grass will become reeds and rushes.

A highway will be there. It will be called The Holy Way. The unclean won't travel on it, but it will be for those walking on that way. Even fools won't get lost on it; no lion will be there, and no predator will go up on it. None of these will be there; only the redeemed will walk on it. The Lord's ransomed ones will return and enter Zion with singing, with everlasting joy upon their heads. Happiness and joy will overwhelm them; grief and groaning will flee away.”

[will those who are able please stand for the reading of the gospel.]

**Luke 1:46-55*

Hear the good news of Jesus Christ as it is found in the first chapter of Luke verses 46 through verse 55.

Praise be to the Christ Child for whom we wait.

Mary said, “With all my heart I glorify the Lord! In the depths of who I am, I rejoice in God my savior. He has looked with favor on the low status of his

servant. Look! From now on, everyone will consider me highly favored because the mighty one has done great things for me. Holy is his name. He shows mercy to everyone, from one generation to the next, who honors him as God. He has shown strength with his arm. He has scattered those with arrogant thoughts and proud inclinations. He has pulled the powerful down from their thrones and lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty-handed. He has come to the aid of his servant Israel, remembering his mercy, just as he promised to our ancestors, to Abraham and to Abraham's descendants forever.

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

Rosemary

Prayers of the People

Most of all today, God of all time, we remember those who are in need of prayer for your support. We life up these people to you.

How can we personally tap into the strength of ever-present, God-given joy especially in the midst of difficulty?

How are we contributing to the oppression of others?

What are we doing to bring healing in our community—
to be an “antioxidant-rich” church?

What is our “magnificat”—our song of prophetic joy?

Prayer of Confession

Let us join together in prayer.

This season is supposed to be so holy, God of Christmas, yet the din of sales pitches turns us into cynical grumps. As we drive down the streets, the decorations on all the houses keep us from seeing the loneliness of the

widower, the strained faces of those who fear the future. We are so determined to find just the right gift or card which speaks of joy, we forget that you came so long ago to offer justice to those who have none.

Be patient with us, God of our hearts, as we struggle to speak for the voiceless, to walk with those who have lost their way, to let go of our certainty of what really happened to long ago, and listen to the songs of children which speak of that peace which really can bring reconciliation, of that grace which really can offer hope, of that love which really can to us that night in Bethlehem, in the birth of Jesus, our Brother, our Savior. And fill us with total Unabashed Joy every day of our lives. Amen.

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.

[will all who are able please stand]

***Going Forth**

***Benediction**

***Closing Carol**

#188 *Angels We Have Heard on High* [verses 1 & 2] GLORIA

***Personal Reflection on Unabashed Joy**

***Postlude**

Acknowledgements

It is always a delight to welcome back Sarah Wagner as our guest organist.

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

Liturgy and music for this service was reprinted with permission from Worship Design Studio [<http://www.worshipdesignstudio.com/landingpage.cfm>] and also with permission from Lectionary Liturgies Blogspot. Thom Shuman. <https://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com/2019/12/liturgy-with-communion-for-december-15.html>

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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 Doreen Muthengi | Suzanne Fritsch |

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Worship Assistants for December 22, 2019

8:00 am Service	Open Church: Fritz Firestine
Greeters: Nancy Weaber	Worship Leader: Sally Kulp
10:00 am Service	Sound: Bob Dash
Greeters: Terry & Suzie Schott	Worship Leader: Kristi Fields, Darryl Brown
Ushers: Kory & Ryan Leppo, Bob Dash, Kenny Patrick	
Counting Team: E & Candy Hibshman, Terry & Suzie Schott	
Advent Wreath: Jeremy, Gia, Camilla, Beckett, & Eva Zimmerman	

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### **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.

### **Worship Assistants for Christmas Eve**

|                                                                                                              |                                                  |                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 6:30 pm Service                                                                                              | <b>Open Church:</b> Jim Yoder                    | <b>Sound:</b> Bob Dash |
| <b>Greeters:</b> Jim & Beth Diehm                                                                            | <b>Worship Leaders:</b> Marianne & Steve Fritsch |                        |
| <b>Ushers:</b> Suzie Wartluft, Marianne Fritsch, Jim & Beth Diehm, Kenny Patrick                             |                                                  |                        |
| <b>Communion Servers:</b> Marianne Fritsch, Suzie Wartluft, Ed & Candy Hibshman, Charlies & Carolyn Williams |                                                  |                        |
| <b>Advent Wreath:</b> Emily, Kara, & Abby Frantz                                                             |                                                  |                        |

### 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 held, 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.

**GIFT CARD FUNDRAISER:** Thank you to all who placed gift cards orders during 2019. I am pleased to report that we raised over \$700 through this simple fundraiser. A special thank you to the Patrick, Fritsch, and Yoder families who participate just about every month! If you have any questions or are interested in participating, there is information on the Counter in the Gathering Area or contact Emily Frantz.

**COMMUNITY MEAL COORDINATOR VOLUNTEER:** We are seeking an individual or individuals to volunteer to coordinate the community meals held at Myerstown UCC in the Spring and Fall. Duties include planning the menu, shopping for food, and directing the preparation of the food. There is a large group of volunteers for this ministry who are already in place and ready to help. Please contact the church office or any member of Church Council if you are interested by January 15, 2020.

**DECEMBER 29, 2019:** There will be only **one service at 10:00 am**. Rev. Dr. Rodney Shearer will be here to sing us through a Festival of Lessons & Carols. The "kitchen committee" has agreed to provide a breakfast that morning which will begin at 9:00. Serving will end at 9:30 am in order for everyone to prepare for morning worship.

**ADVENT DEVOTIONALS** are on the table at the entrance to the Gathering Area. There are two items to complete the entire season. **Please take both.**

## Calendar for This Week

Today, 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 [Library]  
 1:00 pm           Lebanon County Choral Society Rehearsal  
 3:00 pm           LCCS Concert and Reception  
 4:00 pm           Festival of Lessons & Carols  
                     [Friedens Lutheran Church]

Monday, December 16  
 8:30 am           Strong Bones [social hall]  
 9:00 am - 11:00 am   Church Office Open  
 11:00 am          Staff Monthly Meeting [Library]  
 1:00 pm-2:00 pm   Church Office Open

Tuesday, December 17  
 10:30 am          Lebanon Association Ministerium  
                     [St Paul's, Schaefferstown]  
 12:30pm - 4:30 pm   Pastor Office Hours [preferably by appointment]

Wednesday, December 18  
 9:00 am - 2:00 pm   Church Office Open  
 6:30 pm           Scouts  
 7:30 pm           Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, December 19  
 8:30 am           Strong Bones [social hall]  
 1:00 pm           Women's Bible Study [Library]  
 6:30 pm           Scout Committee Meeting [Social Hall]

Friday, December 20  
 9:00 am - 2:00 pm   Church Office Open

Saturday, December 21  
 9:00 am           Bell Ringing @ Smith Candies

Sunday, December 22     **The Fourth Sunday in Advent**  
 8:00 am           Brief Worship Service  
 8:45 am           Small group meetings  
 9:45 am           Choir Rehearsal  
 10:00 am          Traditional Worship Service

## 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](http://myerstownuccchurch.org)

Kory Leppo----- 717-269-6033 ----- Council President  
 Marie Hibshman 717-343-3247 -----Elder  
 Jim Yoder----- 252-258-4268 ----- Bridge Jim  
 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**   Sarah Wagner

#### 8:00 am Service

**Open Church:**   Bill & Betty Arnold

**Greeter:**           Lindy Bennetch           **Worship Leader:**   Wanda Rabold

#### 10:00 am Service

**Greeter:**           Ed & Candy Hibshman           **Sound:**                   Bob Dash

**Worship Leaders**           Marianne & Steve Fritsch

**Ushers**                   Marie Hibshman, Darryl Brown, Bob Dash, Kenny Patrick

**Counting Team**                   Lois Werner, Sara Zeller, Sally Kulp

**Advent Wreath Lighting:**           Dave, Jen, Noah, & Jacob Bylstone

#### 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    |  |