



PRELUDE A Wexford Carol
- David Little, piano

WELCOME

LIGHTING THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE

The Advent wreath is a circle with no beginning and no end. It is a symbol of God's unending love and faithfulness.

Its light reminds us of Jesus, the light of the world. In him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. (John 1:4-5)

Today we relight the first two candles of the Advent wreath. The candle of HOPE and the candle of PEACE.

Now we light the third candle of Advent. This is the candle of JOY.

As the coming of Jesus, our Savior, draws nearer, our joy builds with our anticipation of his birth.

From the Book of Isaiah we read the words of our Lord:

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest." Isaiah 9:2-3

Let us pray:

We rejoice in you, O Lord, because you keep your promises. Deepen our joy as we wait, and help us to hear your good news as you fill our lives with your loving Spirit. Amen.

CAROL #107 *Awake, Awake, and Greet the New Morn*

PRAYER OF PRAISE

God of joy,
we rejoice in the knowledge of who you are,
we rejoice in your presence with us,
and we live within the joy of your love for us.
Our contentment comes and goes,
our happiness ebbs and flows, and
our feelings often depend upon our circumstances.
But our joy is deeply rooted
in our identity as your beloved children,
and the anticipation of your coming Kingdom.
For that, and much more, we give you thanks.

RESPONSE #360 *Christ is Coming!*

ADVENT PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND REFLECTION

**God, our Light and our Salvation,
Forgive us for those moments when we have walked
in darkness, stumbling in the dim light of the world's
despair, of quarrels and bickering. Renew us in joy
and strengthen us in peace, that our light may shine
and become a beacon of hope for others.**

(silent prayer and reflection)

WORDS OF ASSURANCE—from Isaiah 40:1

Comfort, comfort now my people, says your God.
Beloved, know this:
Your sins are forgiven.
The Lord, Emmanuel, abides with you.
The peace announced by the angels is at hand.

Thanks be to God!

PASSING THE PEACE

HYMN #113 *Angels We Have Heard on High*

SCRIPTURE READINGS Psalm 98
Luke 2:8-15

MESSAGE Christmas Presence

HYMN #314 *Joy to the World*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

*Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your 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 yours is the kingdom,
and the power,
and the glory
now and forever. Amen.*

SONG #94 *Now the Heavens Start to Whisper*

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE A Sussex Carol
- David Little, piano

