



**PRELUDE** *Carol of the Bells (Ukrainian 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 (light two of the purple candles)

Now we light the third candle of Advent. This is the candle of JOY (light the *pink* candle)

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

From the prophet Isaiah we read these encouraging words:

*"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 unconditional 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.  
For that, and much more, we give you thanks.

**RESPONSE #113** *Angels We Have Heard on High*

**ADVENT PRAYER OF PREPARATION AND CONFESSION**

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 #123** *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*

**SPECIAL MUSIC** O Holy Night  
- Janie Kelley, soloist  
- David Little, piano

**SCRIPTURE READINGS** Psalm 98  
Luke 2:8-15

**MESSAGE** Christmas Presence (aka: Choosing Joy)

**CAROL #134** *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 #80** *You Shall Go Out with Joy*

## BENEDICTION

**POSTLUDE** *Duet: Away in a Manger, The First Noel*  
- Cathy Draper, flute  
- Tracy Karpowicz, flute

