

The Falls Village Congregational Church

December 17, 2023 10:00 a.m.

3rd Sunday in Advent

The Reverend Richard W. Reifsnyder, Worship Leader

Welcome and Announcements

Ringling of the Church Bell

Prelude – *Sing a Song of Bethlehem* - arr. J. Carter

THE CHURCH GATHERS TO PRAISE

Call to Worship (from Isaiah 40)

Prepare the way of the Lord.

Make straight a pathway in the desert for our God

Every valley shall be exalted

And every mountain and hill shall be laid low.

The crooked shall become straight

And the rough place shall become a plain

The glory of the Lord shall be revealed

All people shall see it together

Prayer for God's Presence:

In hope, O Lord, we wait for your kingdom to be revealed.

Limited in our ability to understand, in hope we wait. Confronted by our mortality, in hope we wait. Troubled by doubt, in hope we wait. Come, Lord Jesus, that in this season of waiting, and in this time of worship, we may come to know you more fully. Amen.

Hymn #699 “*Rejoice the Lord is King*”

Prayer of Confession (Unison, based on I Thes 5:18)

Mighty and powerful God, your word says, “Rejoice always.” But we would rather sulk about the things that don’t go right. Your word says, “Pray without ceasing.” But we go for days without even thinking about you. Your word says, “Give thanks in all circumstances.” But our thankfulness is fleeting, because we think we deserve blessings. Forgive us, Lord, and help us to live more fully in an attitude of joy, of thanksgiving, of prayer. Amen.

Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon

Responsive Reading – Psalm 122, p. 761

Gloria Patri

Passing of the Peace

The peace of Christ be with you

And also with you.

Let us pass the peace of Christ.

TO HEAR GOD’S WORD

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Diane Montagna and Christine Wallace

#121 Prepare the Way of the Lord” 2x

Scripture Reading: Mark 1:1-11

Rich Reifsnyder

Prayer

Sermon:

“God’s Strange Comfort”

The Rev. Richard W. Reifsnyder

TO RESPOND IN FAITH

The Offertory -- *An Advent Prayer* - A. Pote

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord’s Prayer

THE CHURCH DISPERSES TO SERVE

Closing Hymn: #159 “*There’s A Song in the Air*”

Benediction

Benediction Response (gather in a circle around the sanctuary)

God Be with You till We Meet Again

.....
You are invited to place your offerings as you leave in the plate at either entrance to the church.

699

Rejoice, the Lord Is King!

Descant

3. Re - joyce in glo - rious hope! For Christ, our Judge, shall come

1. Re - joyce, the Lord is King! The ris - en Christ a - dore!
 2. God's reign can nev - er fail, Christ rules o'er earth and heaven;
 3. Re - joyce in glo - rious hope! For Christ, our Judge, shall come

to glo - ri - fy the saints for their e - ter - nal home:

Re - joyce, give thanks, and sing, and tri-umph ev - er - more:
 the keys of death and hell are to our Je - sus given:
 to glo - ri - fy the saints for their e - ter - nal home:

lift up your heart, lift up your voice!

lift up your heart, lift up your voice!

Re - joyce, a - gain I say, re - joyce!

Re - joyce, a - gain I say, re - joyce!

Psalm 122

RESPONSE

Leona von Brethorst
Arr. Ken Barker

God has made me glad, God has made me glad, I

will re-joyce, for God has made me glad.

R

- 1 I was glad when they said to me,
"Let us go to the house of the LORD!"
- 2 **Our feet are standing**
within your gates, O Jerusalem.
- 3 Jerusalem—built as a city
that is bound firmly together.
- 4 **To it the tribes go up,**
the tribes of the LORD,
as was decreed for Israel,
to give thanks to the name of the LORD.
- 5 For there the thrones for judgment were set up,
the thrones of the house of David.
- 6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
"May they prosper who love you.
- 7 **Peace be within your walls,**
and security within your towers."
- 8 For the sake of my relatives and friends
I will say, "Peace be within you."
- 9 **For the sake of the house of the LORD our God,**
I will seek your good. R

The Third Sunday of Advent – The Candle of Joy

Every year we light candles as we prepare for the coming of Christ.
More and more candles, more and more light,
as we watch and wait for Jesus, the Light of the World.

Today we relight the candles of hope and peace (light two purple candles) and light the candle of joy. In Jesus we are invited to know an inward joy deeper than happiness built on external things. It is said finding joy is a matter of getting priorities straight—putting Jesus (J) first, the others (O) next, and finally yourself (Y). J-O-Y

(light pink candle)

Listen to God's promises in Isaiah 61:1-3

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; ²to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

Let us pray together

God of Promise, come into our darkness.

Renew your hope and peace and joy in us,
for you alone bring life out of death.

Song: "Prepare the Way of the Lord" J. Berthier (Taizé Community)
Prepare the way of the Lord, Prepare the way of the Lord
And all the people will see the salvation of our God (2x)

MARK 1:1-11

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

²As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;

³the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,’”

⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

159

There’s a Song in the Air!

1. There's a song in the air! There's a star in the sky!
2. There's a tu - mult of joy o'er the won - der - ful birth,
3. We re - joice in the light, and we ech - o the song

There's a moth - er's deep prayer and a ba - by's low cry!
for the Vir - gin's sweet boy is the Lord of the earth.
that comes down through the night from the heav - en - ly throng,

And the star rains its fire while the an - gel choirs sing,
See, the star rains its fire while the an - gel choirs sing,
and we wel - come the glo - ri - ous gos - pel they bring,

for the man - ger of Beth - le - hem cra - dles a king!
for the man - ger of Beth - le - hem cra - dles a king!
and we greet in the cra - dle our sav - ior and king.