



Union Lutheran Church

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Welcome to Union Lutheran Church! We are a Christian faith family, gathered to love God and love our neighbors. All are welcome, no matter where you are in your faith journey, young or old, rich or poor, contemporary or traditional, female or male, and no matter your walk of life. We extend the same invitation that the Samaritan woman made to her village as they questioned her about Jesus, *“Come and See”* (John 4:7-30). If you are searching, wondering or hoping for God, we invite you to Union Lutheran Church, to *“Come and see that the Lord is good!”*

We worship every Sunday at 10:30 a.m., preceded by 9:30 a.m. Sunday School for all ages.

Some helpful notes as you worship with us:

P = Pastor, C = Congregation

December 17 and 18, 2024

The Light of Grace

A Series of Special Services for Advent

Week 3: The Light of Grace ~ Joy: Elizabeth

HYMN: *Joy to the World*

- 1** Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her king;
let ev'ry heart prepare him room
and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.
- 2** Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
- 3** No more let sin and sorrow grow
nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.
- 4** He rules the world with truth and grace
and makes the nations prove the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748 Tune: George F. Handel, 1685-1759, adapt. Augsburg Fortress License # SBL10475H © AF Hymns License

INVOCATION & LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

P In the name of the Father and of the ✚ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

(Three candles are lit on the Advent wreath.)

P Today we light the third Advent candle, the candle of joy. When Mary, the mother of our Lord, visited her kinswoman Elizabeth, Elizabeth's unborn son John leaped for joy at the sound of Mary's greeting. Elizabeth was filled with joy, knowing that the promised Messiah would soon be born. We, too, rejoice as we prepare to celebrate our Savior's birth.

C We will rejoice in the Lord, now and forever!

P The prophet Isaiah foretold a highway, the Way of Holiness, a place where the redeemed would walk. Following that holy Way, the redeemed would live in the presence of God and know everlasting joy. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

C We will rejoice in the Lord, now and forever!

CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

P In the midst of our joy, we are called to repent and acknowledge our need for a Savior. Let us confess our sins to God and ask his forgiveness.

C **Almighty God, while we rejoice in the birth of our Savior, we do not always find joy in following him. We seek to satisfy ourselves with earthly joy, joy that does not last. We turn away from the guidance of your Word and follow our own selfish desires. We do not walk in love as Jesus walked and instead put our needs ahead of the needs of others. Have mercy on us and forgive our sins for Jesus' sake. Lead us to find joy in following Jesus our Lord.**

P God had mercy on us and sent his Son to be our Savior. I announce to you that your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the ✝ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

C **Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!**

HYMN OF RESPONSE: *Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)*

1 **Amazing grace how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost but now I'm found Was blind but now I see**

2 **'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear The hour I first believed**

Refrain

**My chains are gone I've been set free
My God my Savior has ransomed me
And like a flood His mercy rains Unending love amazing grace**

3 **The Lord has promised good to me His word my hope secures
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures *Refrain 2x***

4 **The earth shall soon dissolve like snow
The sun forbear to shine
But God who called me here below Will be forever mine
Will be forever mine You are forever mine**

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PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Almighty God, your servant Elizabeth and her unborn son, the prophet John, rejoiced at the greeting of Mary, the mother of our Lord. We give you praise and thanks for the many earthly joys of this Advent season, but above all, we praise you for the gift of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. By your grace, through faith in Jesus,

we share the joy of Elizabeth and John. We know joy in our Lord right now and will rejoice in his presence for all eternity. Lead us to share this joy with others through acts of love and service and through our witness to our Savior. We pray that by the power of your Spirit, they, too, will come to rejoice in Jesus. Hear our prayer and accept our praise in Jesus' name.

C Amen.

HYMN: *Glorious Day*

**1 One day when heaven was filled with His praises
One day when sin was as black as could be
Jesus came forth to be born of a virgin
Dwelt among men my example is He
The Word became flesh And the light shined among us
His glory revealed**

Refrain

**Living He loved me, dying He saved me
Buried He carried my sins far away
Rising He justified freely forever
One day He's coming, O glorious day (o glorious day)**

**2 One day they led Him up Calv'ry's mountain
One day they nailed Him to die on a tree
Suffering anguish despised and rejected
Bearing our sins my Redeemer is He
Hands that healed nations, Stretched out on a tree,
And took the nails for me *Refrain***

**3 One day the grave could conceal Him no longer
One day the stone rolled away from the door
Then He arose over death He had conquered
Now has ascended my Lord evermore
Death could not hold Him The grave could not keep Him
From rising again *Refrain*
O glorious day, O glorious day**

Bridge

**One day the trumpet will sound for His coming
One day the skies with His glories will shine
Wonderful day my beloved one bringing
My Savior Jesus is mine *Refrain***

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus; it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you." Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way; even if they are fools, they shall not go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

New Testament Lesson: Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Holy Gospel Reading: Luke 1:39-45

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."

SERMON

Pastor Heidi Punt

HYMN OF RESPONSE: *House of the Lord*

**1 We worship the God who was. We worship the God who is.
We worship the God who evermore will be.
He opened the prison doors. He parted the raging sea.
My God He holds the victory.**

Refrain

**There's joy in the house of the Lord.
There's joy in the house of the Lord today.
And we won't be quiet, We shout out Your praise.
There's joy in the house of the Lord.
Our God is surely in this place.
And we won't be quiet, We shout out Your praise.**

**2 We sing to the God who heals. We sing to the God who saves.
We sing to the God who always makes a way.
'Cause He hung up on that Cross.
Then He rose up from that grave.
My God's still rolling stones away.**

Refrain

**There's joy in the house of the Lord.
There's joy in the house of the Lord today.
And we won't be quiet, We shout out Your praise.
There's joy in the house of the Lord.
Our God is surely in this place.
And we won't be quiet, We shout out Your praise.**

Bridge

**We were the beggars, Now we're royalty.
We were the prisoners, Now we're running free.
We are forgiven, accepted, Redeemed by His grace.
Let the house of the Lord sing praise. x2**

Refrain x 2

Ending

**We were the beggars, Now we're royalty.
We were the prisoners, Now we're running free.
We are forgiven, accepted, Redeemed by His grace.
Let the house of the Lord sing praise.**

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APOSTLES' CREED

C I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under

Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

ADVENT OFFERING *All loose offering and designated gifts will go towards the NALC Disaster Relief.*

PRAYERS

P Lord Jesus, Elizabeth rejoiced to greet Mary, and the unborn child John leaped for joy. During this busy season, fill us with joy as we prepare to celebrate your birth and look forward to your return on the Last Day. Jesus, our King and Savior,

C **In you, we have eternal joy!**

P Lord Jesus, the prophet Isaiah foretold your birth. When you came to save your people, everlasting joy would crown their heads. Through your death and resurrection, you have won forgiveness for us. We find joy in your gifts, in your Word and sacraments, and one day we will rejoice in your glorious presence. Jesus, our King and Savior,

C **In you, we have eternal joy!**

P Lord Jesus, during your earthly ministry, you reached out to others with compassion and healing. There are many people who do not know joy during this Christmas season. They suffer from illness, grief or difficult times with work or family. Help them to find comfort, encouragement and joy in the promises of your Word. Jesus, our King and Savior,

C **In you, we have eternal joy!**

P Lord Jesus, during this Christmas season, we search for just the right gifts to give to family members and friends. Lead us to share our blessings with those who are in need, not only during this season of joy, but all throughout the year. Jesus, our King and Savior,

C **In you, we have eternal joy!**

P Lord Jesus, we are preparing with repentant joy to celebrate your first Advent, your birth in Bethlehem. We also look forward to your Second Advent, your return on the Last Day. Angels and shepherds rejoiced at your birth and we will, at your return, rejoice in your presence forever. You have promised that you are coming

soon, and we reply, “Come, Lord Jesus!” Jesus, our King and Savior,

C In you, we have eternal joy!

P Amen.

THE LORD’S PRAYER

C 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen

BENEDICTION (*Isaiah 35:8-10; Romans 15:13*)

P And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness ... the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing;

C Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

P May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

C Amen.

HYMN: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

**1 O come O come Emmanuel And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here Until the Son of God appear**

Refrain

Rejoice rejoice Emmanuel Shall come to thee O Israel

2 O come Thou Dayspring come and cheer

Our spirits by Thine advent here

Disperse the gloomy clouds of night

And death's dark shadow put to flight *Refrain*

Refrain **Oh oh**

3 O come Thou Key of David come

And open wide our heavenly home

Make safe the way that leads on high

And close the path to misery *Refrain*

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