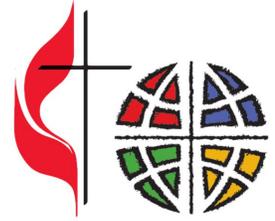


Spirit of Grace

ELCA UMC



December 12th, 2021

Advent III

Prelude

Welcome

Advent Litany

We come to know you, Holy One, as Wisdom Incarnate, as Flickering Flame, as Spirit of Life, as Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love, Enfleshed.

You come to us as the Stranger, and the Strange.

Often we do not recognize you.

Often we turn away from your gifts and your demands.

Yet you come to us in the Wilderness, in the Impossible Made Possible, in Silence and Singing and Sighs Too Deep for Words.

You abhor dominance, mastery, fear, and control.

You are made known to us in Vulnerability, and Courage, and Divesting from the Powers of Empire.

We come to you this Advent in need, with longing, in pain, captive to fear, desiring a more just world, a more livable life for all of us, for the earth, for every living thing caught and held in this inescapable network of mutual interdependence we call this one wild and precious Life.

Advent III - Joy

The Joy of God-With-Us does not come a naive optimism, or surface level feel-good-ness.

Joy cannot be imposed from on high. Joy cannot be commanded.

The Joy of God-With-Us is mingled with grief, exists side by side with mourning, knows that pain and death are all too real, but do not have the final word. This joy tends tenderly to beauty, and softness, and the gladness that comes from paying attention to what matters.

The Joy of God-With-Us is collective, liberating us from deadly despair.

Joy is gestating in darkness; it comes unexpectedly.
Joy invites our expectation, and demands our participation.
Prepare the way, for joy with sorrow.
May Joy be birthed among, within, and through us, this Advent.
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel...

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Come Now, O Prince of Peace - ELW 247
verse 2, sung three times

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who alone does wonders
who lifts up the lowly,
who fills the hungry with good things.
Amen.

Let us confess our sin, trusting in the tender mercy of our God.

Silence is kept for reflection.
God for whom we wait,
in the presence of one another,
we confess our sin before you.
We fail in believing that your good news is for us.
We falter in our call to tend your creation.
We find our sense of self in material wealth.
We fear those different from ourselves.
We forget that we are your children
and turn away from your love.
Forgive us, Blessed One,
and assure us again of your saving grace.
Amen.

God, in Christ Jesus, has looked with favor upon you!
Through the power of the Holy Spirit,
† your sins are forgiven.
You are children of the Most High,
inheritors of the eternal promise,
and recipients of divine mercy.
God strengthens you anew to follow the way of peace.
Amen.

Greeting & Prayer of the Day

The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

God of joy,

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, and open our ears to the preaching of John, that rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance, yielding goodness and joy for all of creation. Through Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, and your Holy Spirit, we pray.

Amen.

First Reading: Zephaniah 3:14-20

Shout for joy, fair Zion;

Shout, Israel, be glad!

Rejoice with all your heart, fair Jerusalem!

YHWH has averted your punishment
and swept away your foes.

Israel, YHWH is among you as ruler;
never again need you fear disaster.

On that day this must be the message to Jerusalem:

Fear not, Zion,

let not your hands hang limp in despair,

for YHWH your God is in your midst,

a warrior to keep you safe;

who will rejoice over you and be glad of it;

who will show you love once more,

and exult with songs of joy

and soothe those who are grieving.

At the appointed time

I will take away your cries of woe

and you will no longer endure reproach.

When that time comes,

I will deal with all who oppress you;

I will rescue the lost and gather the dispersed.

I will win for my people praise and renown

throughout the whole world.

When that time comes,

I will gather you and bring you home.

I will win for you renown and praise

among all the peoples of the earth,

when I restore your fortunes before your eyes.

It is YHWH God who speaks.

Word of God, Word of Life
Thanks be to God.

Isaiah 12:2-6

You are my deliverer, O God!
I trust you and am no longer afraid of you –
you are my strength and my refuge.
You are my deliverer.
With joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation.
And on that Day you will say:
Give thanks to YHWH,
invoke God's holy name!
Make known among all the people
what YHWH has done.
Proclaim that God's Name is exalted.
Sing praises to YHWH, for God has triumphed.
Let this be known throughout the world!
Cry out, shout aloud, you who dwell in Zion,
for the Holy One of Israel
dwells among us in majesty.

Gospel: Luke 3:7-18

The Holy Gospel according to Luke the 3rd chapter.

John said to the crowds who came to be baptized by him, "You pack of snakes! Who warned you to escape the wrath to come? Produce good fruit as a sign of your repentance. And don't presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Sarah and Abraham as our mother and father,' for I tell you that God can raise children for Sarah and Abraham from these very stones. The ax is already laid at the root of the tree; every tree that doesn't produce good fruit will be cut down and tossed into the fire."

When the people asked him, "What should we do?" John replied, "Let the one with two coats share with the one who has none. Let those who have food do the same."

Tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to John, "Teacher, what are we to do?"

John answered them, "Exact nothing over and above your fixed amount."

Soldiers likewise asked, "What about us?" John told them, "Don't bully anyone. Don't accuse anyone falsely. Be content with your pay."

The people were full of anticipation, wondering in their hearts if John might be the Messiah. John answered them all by saying, "I am baptizing you in water, but someone is coming who is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not fit to untie! This One will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire. A winnowing fan is in his hand to clear the threshing floor and gather wheat into the grainery, but the chaff will be burnt in unquenchable fire."

Using exhortations like this, John preached the Good News to the people.

Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller

Hymn of the Day: Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn - ELW 242

A New Creed - Statement of Faith of the United Church of Canada

Please stand as you are able as we confess our faith in God together:

**We are not alone
we live in God's world.
We believe in God:
who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others
by the Spirit.
We trust in God.
We are called to be the Church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our redeemer and our hope.
In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.
We are not alone.
Thanks be to God. Amen.**

Joys & Concerns

If you have any joys, concerns, or prayer requests to share, please type them into the comment section of the livestream so that we may lift them up together as a community.

Prayers of the People

In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God's presence.

A brief silence.

Creating God, your Spirit brought forth the earth and all that is in it. Breathe life into us, that we are inspired to live in harmony with one another and the planet, working to heal all that has been broken.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Shepherding God, you lead your people in paths of righteousness. Raise up prophets in our own day who warn against captivity to greed and point us to the freedom and joy found in generosity.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Healing God, you draw near to all who find themselves in crisis. Send your Spirit to rest on all those whose lives have been upended this week due to natural disasters. Give them comfort and peace, as you call us to be a source of help and hope for the future.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Nurturing God, you come near in times of worry and need. Attend to all who are hungry, shelterless, imprisoned, or ill this day. In these uncertain times, cradle us in your arms, that we in you we might find our hope, peace, joy, and love.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

Offering

Thanksgiving for the Word

O God of justice and love,
We give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of
your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the
end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior, to whom,
with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and forever.
Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Gathered together by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us, using the
language you are most familiar with - the language of your heart.

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

Announcements (see end of worship bulletin)

Blessing

The God of hope
fill us with all joy and peace in believing,
so that we may abound in hope and love
by the power of the Holy Spirit,
through Christ Jesus, for whom we wait.
Amen.

Sending Song: He Came Down - TFWS 2085

Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is near.
Thanks be to God.

Spirit of Grace
ELCA/UMC

1140 Tucker Rd. Hood River, OR 97031
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www.hoodriverchurch.org

Church Office Hours
Closed on Fridays

Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller
M-W 9-12, or by appointment
spiritofgracepastor@gmail.com

Jennifer Fowler, Office Assistant
Mon 9:30-2, Wednesday 9:00-2, Thursday 9:00-2
office@hoodriverchurch.com

Linda Boris, Pastoral Assistant
Tuesday 10-1

Announcements

Christmas Eve Readers

We are still in need of a few readers for Christmas Eve worship! Contact Linda Boris of email office@hoodriverchurch.com if you would like to help.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee will be meeting this Monday, December 13th, at 5:30 in person to prepare the budget for 2022.

Advent Midweek Worship

You are invited to join us on Wednesdays at 6:30pm via Zoom this Advent as we explore the ways our bodily senses form our faith and shape our spirituality. **This week we will be exploring the sense of Taste!** Each service will include music and readings, as well as an embodied practice, followed by a time of fellowship. Log in information can be found on our website at hoodriverchurch.com.

Handbell Choir

Our Handbell choir will be helping us ring in the Christmas season next week, December 19th, during worship!

Christmas Tree Decorating

Thank you to Alan Yenne and Craig Terry for the donation of a Christmas Tree for our Sanctuary! All are invited to join us on December 19th after worship as we prepare for Christmas by decorating the tree. Cookies, Coffee, and Cocoa will also be served, depending on our county's COVID numbers.

Board Meeting

The Spirit of Grace Board will be meeting next Monday, December 20th, at 6:00 pm via Zoom.

December Newsletter

Our December Newsletter was sent out at the beginning of the month, and can also be found on our website. Be sure to look through it for important updates and announcements about the life of our congregation! Printed copies are available in the Narthex.

Happy Hands Holiday Sale

The Happy Hands Holiday sale continues after worship today! If you are with us in person, take some time to look over these handmade items and consider them for gifts this holiday season.

Attributions

Advent Wreath litany - enfleshed, 2018, Rev. Anna Blaedel

Come Now, O Prince of Peace Geonyung Lee

Awake! Awake 1983 GIA Publications, Inc.

He Came Down 1990 WGRG The Iona Community (Scotland), admin. by GIA Publications, Inc.



Christmas Eve Worship

A SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS
PROVIDED BY

Spirit of Grace

A LUTHERAN - METHODIST
COOPERATIVE CHURCH

In the interest of everyone's safety, all in attendance
will be required to wear a face mask. Full vaccination
against COVID-19 is highly encouraged.

A live-stream of the service can also be accessed at
facebook.com/hoodriverchurch

7:00 PM
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24TH
1140 TUCKER ROAD
HOOD RIVER, OR