

Spirit of Grace

ELCA UMC



December 11th

Advent III

- Gathering -

Prelude

Welcome

Advent III Litany - 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...

Advent Prayer & Candle Lighting

Praise to you, O God, who holds our joy and sorrow. Your bring water to parched ground and life out of death. Bless us as this light grows, and send sorrow and sighing to flee away. Give us strength and patience, trusting that you are true to your promises. Transform the lives of all who suffer with your wonders near at hand.

Amen.

Candle Lighting

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah

***Light three candles to watch for Messiah: let the light enter our world
Lift your heads and lift high the gateway for the King of glory.***

Confession & Forgiveness

Blessed be YHWH, the God of Israel,
who alone does wondrous things.

Blessed be God's name forever.

Amen.

Beloved, now is the time to wake from sleep.
Let us confront our sins,
and confess them to the one who is merciful and just.
Silence is kept for reflection.

God of new beginnings,
**we confess that we have not welcomed your holy reign.
We have strayed from your paths.
We prepare for war instead of peace.
We dishonor one another and your creation.
Purify us with your refining fire
and set us again on your way of love,
that we may bear fruit worthy of repentance,
and welcome your coming among us.
Amen.**

People of God,
a new thing is growing in our midst,
a tender branch,
a living sign.
By water and the Spirit you are joined to this wonder.
You have put on \dagger Christ,
and your sins have been washed away.
Rejoice in the way of the Lord.
Amen.

Opening Hymn

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel – ELW 257
verses 1+7

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.

Everlasting God, throughout the ages you have guided and protected your people, leading them in your way of peace and justice for all. And through it all you have blessed us with joy that words cannot express. May this joy live in our hearts and see us through to the next day – and the next, and the next, and the next – til at last we see your Kingdom come among us here on earth. In the name of your son, Jesus Christ, our teacher and friend, we pray.

Amen.

- Word -

First Reading: Isaiah 35:1-10

Let the desert and the wilderness exult!
Let the Arabah rejoice and bloom like the crocus!
Let it blossom profusely,
let it rejoice and sing for joy!
The glory of Lebanon is bestowed on it,
the splendor of Carmel and Sharon.
They will see the glory of YHWH,
the splendor of our God.
Strengthen all weary hands,
steady all trembling knees.
Say to all those of faint heart:
'Take courage! Do not be afraid!
Look, YHWH is coming, vindication is coming,
the recompense of God –
God is coming to save you!
Then the eyes of the blind will be opened,
the ears of the deaf will be unsealed.
Then those who cannot walk will leap like deer
and the tongues of those who cannot speak will sing for joy.
Waters will break forth in the wilderness,
and there will be streams in the desert.
The scorched earth will become a lake;

the parched land, springs of water.
The lairs where jackals used to dwell
will become thickets of reed and papyrus.
And through it will run a highway,
a road called the Sacred Path.
The unclean may not travel by it,
but it will be for God's people alone;
and no traveler – not even fools – will go astray.
No lions will be there,
nor will any fierce beast roam about it,
but the redeemed will walk there –
for those whom YHWH has ransomed will return.
They will enter Zion shouting for joy,
with ever lasting joy on their faces;
joy and gladness will go with them,
and sorrow and lament will flee away.

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

Psalm: Luke 1:46b-55

My soul proclaims your greatness, O God,
and my spirit rejoices in you, my Savior.
For you have looked with favor
upon your lowly servant,
and from this day forward
all generations will call me blessed.
**For you, the Almighty, have done great things for me,
and holy is your Name.**
Your mercy reaches from age to age
for those who fear you.
**You have shown strength with your arm;
you have scattered the proud in their conceit;**
you have deposed the mighty from their thrones
and raised the lowly to high places.
**You have filled the hungry with good things,
while you have sent the rich away empty.**
You have come to the aid of Israel your servant,
mindful of your mercy –
**the promise you made to our ancestors –
to Sarah and Abraham
and their descendants forever.**

Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 11th chapter.

While John was in prison, he heard about the works the Messiah was performing, and sent a message by way of his disciples to ask Jesus, "Are you 'The One who is to come' or do we look for another?"

In reply, Jesus said to them, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see:

'Those who are blind recover their sight;
those who cannot walk are able to walk;
those with leprosy are cured;
those who are deaf hear;
the dead are raised to life;
and the *anawim* – the have-nots –
have the Good News preached to them.'

"Blessed is the one who finds no stumbling block in me."

As the messengers set off, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out to the wasteland to see – a reed swaying in the wind? Tell me, what did you go out to see – someone luxuriously dressed? No, those who dress luxuriously are to be found in royal palaces. So what did you go out to see – a prophet? Yes, a prophet – and more than a prophet! It is about John that scripture says,

'I send my messenger ahead of you
to prepare the way before you.'

"The truth is, history has not known a person born of woman who is greater than John the baptizer. Yet the least born into the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Rev. Miranda Bermes-Goller

Hymn of the Day

Awake, Awake, and Greet the New Morn – ELW 242
verses 1+4

Affirmation of Faith – The Apostles' Creed

Please stand as you are able as we confess our faith in God together using the words of our common creed:

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, t
he resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. 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

As we prepare for the fullness of Christ's presence, let us pray for a world that yearns for new hope.

A brief silence.

Abundant God, we rejoice in your creation. Revive lands we have squandered and depleted. Make gardens flourish in cities and neighborhoods. Cleanse polluted air and water so living things may breathe, drink, and praise you.

God in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Gracious God, we rejoice in the gifts of your Spirit. Equip leaders in your church with the courage and strength needed to prepare the way for your love, peace, and justice to be birthed among us on earth.

God in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Righteous God, we rejoice in your justice. End racism and oppression. Deliver all who are unjustly imprisoned or persecuted. Reconcile nations and peoples in conflict across the world. Help us pray for our enemies.

God in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Healing God, we rejoice in your compassion. Comfort any in distress because of worry, illness, or loss. Strengthen and protect health care workers, rescue teams, crisis counselors, and all who risk themselves to keep others safe.

God in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Abiding God, we rejoice in your company. Give us calm and patient hearts as we gather with family and friends. Keep us mindful of those for whom this season is not happy. Console the grieving and surround them with loving support.

God in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of our longing, you know our deepest needs and prayers, those spoken aloud and held silently within. By your Spirit, gather all our prayers and join them with the prayers of all your children, across time and space. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

Offering

At this time, if you are willing and able, please consider giving to Spirit of Grace Church to support our ongoing ministry. Checks can be mailed to 1140 Tucker Road, Hood River OR, 97031. Online Donations can be made through the link below:

[Spirit of Grace Church](#)

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Loving God of endless grace and mercy, you provide for our every need. Accept this offering returned to you, and make of these gifts a banquet of blessing for all peoples; through Jesus Christ, who shows us how to live your love in this world.
Amen.

The Disciple's Prayer

Gathered together by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us, using the language or translation that you are most familiar with – the language of your heart. Together, we pray:

**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.**

- Sending -

Announcements

Sending Song:

He Came Down – ELW 253
verses 1-4

Benediction & Dismissal

God the eternal Word,
who dwells with us in Jesus,
and who holds us in the grace of the Holy Spirit,
✠ bless you now and forever.

Amen.

Go in peace, the Spirit of God is alive in you!

Thanks be to God!



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Church Office Hours
Closed on Fridays

Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller
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Prayer of the Day:

Hymn of the Day:

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