



December 13, 2020

***Mifflin Avenue United Methodist Church***  
***Pastor: Reverend Russel W. Shuluga***

**Pastor Russel's contact information:**

Phone: (412) 735-5072

Email: Shulugarussel@gmail.com

Church Office: (412) 731-2511

Office e-mail: office@mifflinave.org

Website: [www.MifflinAve.org](http://www.MifflinAve.org)

**Welcome Visitors:** We are pleased you have chosen to worship with us today. If you do not have a permanent church home, please consider joining us.

May God bless your experience in worship with us today.  
We are here to serve, so please let us know how we might better serve you.

# Order of Worship Third Sunday of Advent

## CENTERING

### GREETING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### GATHERING WORDS

Pastor: God has a vision for a world with justice and joy for all. Will we join in the dream?  
People: **Will we rejoice with God?**

## PRAISING

OPENING HYMN: "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing" No. 240

### CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Rejoice always!  
People: **Rejoice in the One who loves justice.**  
Leader: Give thanks in all circumstances.  
People: **Give thanks to the One who loves justice.**  
Leader: Make straight the way of the Lord.  
People: **Prepare for the One who loves justice!**

### OPENING PRAYER

**God of justice and joy, we gather together in your name to proclaim the good news of your presence among us. Where there is oppression, we will shout a message of your liberating love. Where there is sorrow, we will sing a song of your healing love. And where there is fear, doubt, confusion, or anger, we will shine the light of Jesus Christ, your incarnate love, in whose name we pray. Amen.**

INTROIT "He Touched Me" No. 367

## CELEBRATING

### ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY (The Candle of Joy)

Pastor: We have lit the first two candles, one for hope and one for peace. Today we light the third candle, the candle of joy.

People: **Sometimes on our journey, our feet get heavy, our shoulders feel burdened, and our hearts seem slow. Sometimes in the preparation, the busyness overwhelms us, and we get lost in the doing and the planning and the running. And what we lose is a sense of why. Why do we do all of this? Why is this journey necessary?**

Pastor: And the answer is simple: for the joy of it. We forget the joy when we get caught up in the to-do lists. We forget the joy when we worry more about how things look than connecting with others. How often do we let our preparations—or our memories—push joy to the side? Joy is like an underground spring that wells up within us, but joy is also a choice, an attitude.

People: **So today we open ourselves to joy, trusting that God has already planted it in us. All we need to do is give it care and offer it to share.**

Pastor: We light the candles of peace and hope and joy to light our way as we journey.  
(Lighting the Candle of Joy)

Pastor: Matthew tells us that when John asked if Jesus was the one to come, Jesus responded by saying look around you.

People: **Our call in this Advent journey is to look around us to see the one who comes already at work among us and to celebrate that presence with joy.**

Pastor: Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, that God may teach us the ways of peace and hope and joy.

PRAYER

**Loving God, we open ourselves to you, trusting that this is how you made us: you created us for joy-filled hearts and lives. Show us the creative power of hope. Teach us the peace that comes from justice. Fill us with the kind of joy that cannot be contained, but must be shared. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you, that we may walk in the light of Christ. Amen.**

CHILDREN'S MOMENTS

**PRAYING**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

PASTORAL PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER

**HEARING**

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Leader: Prepare the way of the Lord.

People: **We listen for the word of God.**

FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 61:1:1-4, 8-11

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL LESSON

The Lord be with you,

**And also with you.**

A reading from the Gospel of St. John

**Glory to You, O Lord.**

THE GOSPEL IS READ

John 1: 6-8, 19-28

THE GOSPEL RESPONSE

The Gospel of the living Christ.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**PROCLAIMING**

SERMON

"Two Babes in a Manger"

Rev. Russel W. Shuluga

**RESPONDING**

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

THE LORD'S OFFERING

\*\*OFFERTORY PRAYER

**O Lord, you have done great things for us. As we rejoice in your blessings, let us also rejoice in the opportunity to spread your joy to others through these offerings. May these gifts help transform our community and our world. May they bring your kingdom of justice, that we may all shout with joy! Amen.**

## SENDING

### CHARGE AND DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

Pastor: Practice joy!

**People: We will practice joy by reaching wide and opening our hearts.**

Pastor: Practice joy!

**People: We will practice joy with an affirming dance of our life stories.**

Pastor: Practice joy!

**People: We will practice joy through a thankful heart.**

Pastor: Practice joy!

**People: We will practice joy by touching one another, in gratitude for community.**

Pastor: Practice joy!

**People: We will practice joy by celebrating the aliveness of the present.**

Pastor: Practice joy!

RECESSIONAL HYMN

“Away in a Manger”

No. 217

*“We take the light of Jesus into the world”*

Liturgist: Candy Morgan