

***South Avenue UMC and Mifflin Avenue UMC Churches***



**December 17, 2023**  
**3rd Sunday of Advent**

Pastor Russel contact information:

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Welcome Visitors: We are pleased you have chosen to worship with us today. If you have questions concerning the service, please feel free to ask an usher or a person sitting near you. If you do not have a permanent church home, please consider joining us. Large Print Bulletins: We have bulletins in LARGE print available. Please ask an usher for one. 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 – 10:30 AM

CELEBRATION THROUGH CENTERING

GREETING, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER REQUESTS

CENTERING WORDS

At last! Hope! Peace! Joy! God is doing something new for God's people. The glory of the Lord is shining upon God's people! Rejoice!

PRELUDE

'Noel Basque: "Two Variations on a French Noel'

Dom Paul Benoit

CHIMES AND BRINGING FORTH THE LIGHT

CELEBRATION THROUGH ADORATION

OPENING HYMN

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

No. 240

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: Surely God is our salvation.

**People: We will trust in God and not be afraid.**

Pastor: Surely God is our strength and our might.

**People: We will make known God's deeds among the nations.**

Pastor: We gather in this season of Advent to wait, watch, and wonder.

**People: We gather to share the joy we find in the Christ-child, and the joy that God finds in us!**

Pastor: Come, let us worship God!

OPENING PRAYER

**God of Joy, we rejoice in your holy name and eagerly anticipate your incarnation among us. So we will shout aloud and sing for joy for you are in our midst! Amen.**

INTROIT

"Angels From the Realms of Glory"

No 220, Vs. 1 & 4

CHILDREN'S MOMENTS

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY (The Candle of Peace)

Pastor: Hope is assertive, but peace is subversive. But joy? Joy is rebelliously provocative.

**People: How dare joy make its way into our dreary, despairing world? How dare joy show up in all its flashiness—it even gets a pink candle for crying out loud!**

Pastor: How dare we, in the midst of war and hate and despair, deep division and grief and violence, come together and rejoice?

**People: How dare some shepherds start speaking of good news and the heavenly host declaring peace on earth in the midst of a violent Roman occupation?**

Pastor: But if they did it, why can't we? Why can't we sing for joy that God is breaking open into our world again?

**People: Why can't we be rebellious against the politicians and news anchors and doomsday sayers that there is joy for the world—no—joy to the world!**

Pastor: We light this candle because God is provoking us to sing for joy, to sing and dance and laugh so hard we have tears, because there is peace and hope in this world.

## HYMN AND LIGHTING THE CANDLE OF PEACE

(to the Tune "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel")

No. 211

*O come to us like joy of heaven's dawn,  
From Mary's womb a faithful paragon  
Brought forth into this world by love's power  
Your Spirit through her labors in that hour  
Rejoice, rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to us  
and all things shall be well*

### PRAYER

God of joy, call us to sing, remind us to dance, tickle us into fits of laughter, because You are in our world and in our lives and doing something new, right now. Death and despair have nothing on You, and we rejoice in You, our Savior. Amen.

## CELEBRATION THROUGH COMMITMENT

### INVITATION TO THE OFFERING OFFERTORY

'Variation on a French Noel'

Dom Paul Benoit

### \*DOXOLOGY

To the Tune "What Child Is This"

*"Praise God, from whom all blessings flow. Praise God, all creatures here below.  
Praise God above, ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.  
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary."*

### THE LORD'S OFFERING

### \*OFFERTORY PRAYER

Pastor: Holy One, this Advent season we wait in joy.

**People: And we give in joy.**

Pastor: Joy for all you have given us.

**People: Joy because of your sacred promises.**

Pastor: Receive these generous offerings.

**People: And use them to spread your joy in our world. Amen.**

## CANTATA

Jonathan Willcocks

Soloists: Patricia Deleonibus, Glenn Matteson, Deborah Webb, Dean Patterson

- I. Out of Your Sleep
- II. Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus
- III. Our Christ Is Born
- IV. A Child Is Born
- V. Lullay My Liking
- VI. God Rest You Merry
- VII. Infant Holy
- VIII. Celebration Carol
- IX. Christ Is Born

\*BENEDICTION

Pastor: Rejoice in God always, and again I say, rejoice for God has created you with the capacity for joy.

**People: We will find what makes us joyful and make that our gift to the world.**

Pastor: Trust in God's good will for all of creation and open yourself to God's gentle, transforming love.

**People: We will welcome new possibilities in our lives. We will offer ourselves to God's goodness.  
We will go forth in hope, and peace, and joy.**

\*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

'The First Noel'

No. 245 (Refrain only)

\*RECESSIONAL HYMN

"Emmanuel, Emmanuel"

No. 204 (sing twice)

\*POSTLUDE

'Variation on a French Noel'

Dom Paul Benoit

***WE TAKE THE LIGHT OF CHRIST INTO THE WORLD***

***ALL ARE INVITED TO ROOM 112 FOR FELLOWSHIP AND  
REFRESHMENTS***