

Mifflin Avenue United Methodist Church



DECEMBER 15, 2024

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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. 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

11:15 AM

CELEBRATION THROUGH CENTERING

PRELUDE

GREETING, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER REQUESTS

CENTERING WORDS

Rejoice and be glad! God is at work while we wait and hope and pray for God's peace to come upon the earth.

CELEBRATION THROUGH ADORATION

OPENING HYMN AND BRINGING FORTH THE LIGHT

"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"

No. 196

**1. Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.**

**2. Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King,
born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne.**

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: God comes! So don't let go of all the reasons to rejoice.

People: We will sing a song of Advent to the One who fills our lives with joy.

Pastor: God comes! So don't stop lifting your prayers with thanksgiving.

People: We will sing a song of Advent, to the One who hears our words and silence.

Pastor: God comes! So don't stop giving your hearts to God.

People: We will sing a song of Advent to the One who graces us with a peace we cannot begin to understand.

OPENING 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 a joy that can not be contained, but must be shared. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you, That we may walk in the light of Christ.

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY (The Candle of Joy)

Pastor: Joy in the midst of despair – The joy of Christmas is sometimes a stark contrast to those who may be feeling more despair and grief at this time of year.

People: In a world where joy is a distant memory, we call upon our God of joy to come.

Pastor: In this season of Advent, we wait for the coming of joy into our world. We await the birth of the Anointed One, the Promised Child, who comes into our lives in a new way.

HYMN

(Tune: "Away in a Manger")

Ann Freeman Price, No. 217

**Light three Advent candles and know from the start
That joy can be bursting right out of your heart.
Light three Advent candles and wait for the morn
When new birth will happen and light will be born.**

Pastor: Take a deep breath and reflect on those who are having a hard time in this Advent/Christmas season (perhaps it is you). (Silence)

PRAYER

Dear God, we pray for the joy that is found in Jesus, that those who seek it may truly find it. May we celebrate in the joy found in You. AMEN.

CHILDREN'S MOMENTS

CELEBRATION THROUGH CONFESSION AND PARDON

CALL TO CONFESSION

Trusting in God's grace, let us confess our sin.

GENERAL CONFESSION

Loving God, as we journey through Advent, we confess that we often forget the joy of your presence. We become consumed by our struggles and fail to share your light with others. Forgive us for our doubts and our reluctance to rejoice in your goodness. Help us to embrace the joy that comes from knowing you, and empower us to spread that joy to those around us as we prepare for Christ's coming. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

The prophets of old have declared, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God. For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robes of righteousness. Friends, believe the good news: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

HYMN OF ASSURANCE

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

No. 230 V. 4

**O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray'
Cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!**

SHARING THE PEACE

God is in our midst and Christ brings peace and healing.

May the peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you!

In a spirit of joy, share the peace of Christ with one another.

CELEBRATION THROUGH THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Pastor: Prepare the way of the Lord.

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

CHORAL RESPONSE

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

No. 234 (refrain)

"O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord"

FIRST LESSON

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Zechariah 3: 14-20

*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

"Angels We Have Heard on High"

No. 238 (refrain)

"Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!"

*GOSPEL LESSON

The Lord be with you,

And also with you.

A reading from the Gospel of St. Luke

Glory to You, O Lord.

*THE GOSPEL IS READ

Luke 3:7-18

*THE GOSPEL RESPONSE
The Gospel of the living Christ.
Glory to You, Oh Lord.

*GLORIA PATRI

No. 70

CELEBRATION THROUGH PROCLAMATION

SERMON

“There’s No Place Like Home”

Rev. Russel W. Shuluga

CELEBRATION THROUGH COMMITMENT

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

We present our offering today with joyful hearts, anticipating our celebration of God’s gift to us in Christ Jesus. Know that our gifts may touch lives in deep need this season with the joy we have received in Jesus’ name.

THE LORD’S OFFERING

THE OFFERTORY ANTHEM

*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.”***

*OFFERTORY PRAYER

Loving God, we dedicate these gifts and our lives to you. May they bring joy to those in need and be a source of hope in our community. Amen.

CELEBRATION THROUGH SENDING

*BENEDICTION

Be people of joy. Let joy live in your heart and share the joy of Christ with all you meet. Share joy by seeing the good in each other. Share joy by remembering good times and hoping for good times to come. Share joy by praying for our world. In this Advent season, we need to see, feel, and share joy.

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

“The First Noel”
***Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
born is the King of Israel.***

No. 245 (Refrain)



*RECESSIONAL HYMN

“Emmanuel, Emmanuel”
***Em-man-u-el, Em-man-u-el,
His name is called Em-man-u-el.
God with us, revealed in us,
His name is called Emm-man-u-el.***

No. 204

*POSTLUDE

“WE TAKE THE LIGHT OF JESUS INTO THE WORLD”