



*Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church
Sunday, December 11th 2022*

Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church
Community Worship Service
Third Sunday of Advent, December 11th

9:30 A.M. Livestream is available on the LTUMC YouTube channel:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgtuJe20i8DN7S_Cfg1sWCg

RINGING OF THE BELL – *Please observe silence as we prepare for the service.*

PRELUDE

In Dulci Jubilo Paul Manz

GREETING

Rejoice! God's promises are ever near.

We wait for Christ's birth with patience.

Rejoice! God's strength is with us.

We rest in the power of God's mighty love.

Rejoice! We gather in the joy of our salvation.

In this love, we gather to worship and pray.

HYMN #220

Angels from the Realms of Glory

Located in the back of the bulletin - (Printed w/ permission)

Lighting the Advent Wreath

Reader One: *"The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus. It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing . . . A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray . . . And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (Isaiah 35:1-2, 8, 10 NRSV).*

Reader Two: *The prophet Isaiah tells us about the joy of ascending to God's house. The prophet tells us to imagine being set free, being unburdened, being released to live, to fully live in the grace and wonder of life itself, surrounded by those who love us like no one else. And then he tells us that the journey to get there is just as much a joy.*

Reader One: *The Psalmist says "Happy are these whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord . . . who made heaven and earth . . . who keeps faith . . . who executes justice . . . gives food . . . sets prisoners free . . . opens eyes . . . lifts up . . . watches over . . . upholds . . . The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord!" (Psalm 146 NRSV)*

Reader Two: *We light these candles, the candle of joyous hope, of proclaimed peace, and of deep and everlasting joy, as a sign that we are those who walk with a skip in our step because we can see the destination, and it is pure joy. We are ascending to God's promise.*

(Light the three candles on the Advent wreath. Today's candle is a distinct color, pink.)

OPENING PRAYER *(Please be seated)*

We praise you, O God, for being not only the God of history but the God of our story. You have gathered us here today to remind us that although you are the one to whom all power belongs, yet you care for the weak and powerless. You care for us. We praise you for joining your story to ours in such a special way through Jesus, our Lord. He proved his great love for you and for each person in the way he lived—releasing what was captive, lifting up the burdened, empowering the powerless. God, source of lovingkindness and strength, we worship you. Jesus, foundation of our faith, we worship you. Holy Spirit, ground of our very being, we worship you. Amen

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Isaiah 35:1-10

- 35:1 The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus
- 35:2 it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God.
- 35:3 Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees.
- 35:4 Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you."
- 35:5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
- 35:6 then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert;
- 35:7 the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes.
- 35:8 A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.
- 35:9 No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there.
- 35:10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Psalm 146:5-10 (Psalter Lesson ~ Please read the bold text)

146:5 Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD their God,

146:6 who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever;

146:7 who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets the prisoners free;

146:8 the LORD opens the eyes of the blind. The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous.

146:9 The LORD watches over the strangers; he upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

146:10 The LORD will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the LORD!

James 5:7-10 (Epistle Reading)

5:7 Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains.

5:8 You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.

5:9 Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors!

5:10 As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Matthew 11:2-11 (Please stand for the Gospel)

11:2 When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples

11:3 and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?"

11:4 Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see:

11:5 the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them.

11:6 And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

11:7 As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind?

11:8 What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces.

11:9 What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.

11:10 This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.'

11:11 Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

L: This is the word of the Lord for the people of Christ.

P: Thanks be to God.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

(Let us offer our silent confessions.)

Patient Lord, forgive our lack of faith in your loving power. We look around us and all that we see is what we don't have. We fail to notice the daily blessings you lavish upon us. Clear our blindness to the needs of others. Strengthen us and move us from lame excuses for not serving you. Help us to truly listen to one another, not with our pat answers ready, but with loving and generous hearts. Heal us and make us ready to truly be your disciples. In Jesus' Name, we pray. AMEN.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Behold and believe in the wondrous power and love of God! It is poured out for you and for God's beloved world. Rejoice in this good news, for it is given especially to you. AMEN.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God! Amen.

HOMILY

STATEMENT OF FAITH #883 (United Church of Canada)

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 love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.***

***In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.***

We are not alone.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

GLORIA PATRI (UMH #70)

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

HYMN #230

O Little Town of Bethlehem
Located in the back of the bulletin - (Printed w/ permission)

OFFERING

<https://www.wnccumc.org/online-donations-to-churches>

OFFERTORY

Joseph Dearest, Joseph Mine arr. Michael Burkhardt

DOXOLOGY

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Generous God, as we bring our gifts to you this day, we acknowledge that we have been given so much by your goodness, but we have been tight-fisted and slow in giving to help others. In this Advent season of preparation, we ask you to help us live in a new way, to walk a new highway, to set ourselves on the path that leads to a closer walk with Jesus, our example and redeemer. May this be the season when he finds the highways to our hearts prepared for his coming. In the name that is above all others. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASTORAL PRAYER AND PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN #224

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice
Located in the back of the bulletin - (printed w/permission)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

In Dulci Jubilo Robert J. Powell

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Flowers on the Altar

Flowers on the altar are given by Barb & Jerry Kline and Marcus & Kim Dodson & family to the Glory of God.

Christmas Eve Service

*Our Christmas Eve Communion & candlelight service will be **December 24th at 7:30 PM***

Our Daily Bread Devotionals

The next quarter: December – February of Our Daily Bread devotionals are available. They are located at both entrances of the sanctuary and in the Fellowship Hall.

A Heartfelt Thank You!

Marcus, Charlie and Saunders are grateful for the Christmas bonus from all of you. Thank you for your generosity, prayers and support year-round.

Building Committee Update

The new septic system and tree work are underway. Bartlett Tree Service is readying trees, and Jamie Wilson will install the new septic system under the front ground of the church in the next few weeks. This completed work lets us develop an improved Fellowship Hall with over 1100 additional square feet adjoining the north side of our present building. We will hire a contractor to help our architect and us with the final design work and cost before the year's end. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

PRAYER CONCERNS OF THE COMMUNITY

Please pray for those who have long-term illness, health concerns and special intentions.

Please pray for those having or had a surgery and their recovery. Especially for a full and healthy recovery for Renee Alexander and Frank Tindall, Kitty Neff's son.

We lift up those who are actively searching for employment and pray for perseverance for them.

Our heartfelt prayers for all who have experienced the recent passing of a loved one.

Please continue to pray for our student scholars preparing for final exams and coming home for Christmas, our local students, teachers and staff.

STAFF & LAY VOLUNTEERS

Pastor: Marcus Dodson: 828-553-0282, marcus61dodson@gmail.com

Organist: Charlie Steele: cwsorgan@comporium.net

Church Administrator: Saunders Grommesh, 469-569-2314, administrator@laketoxawayumc.org

Lay Leaders: Paula Markert: 828-553-9434 & Scott Walter: 314-374-2969

Audio/Visual for Livestream Chair: Andy Harvill: 828-884-3548

Liturgist: Carole Guffey

Hymns are located on the next few pages and used with permission via One License #737113-A

220 Angels from the Realms of Glory

1. An - gels from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er
 2. Shep-herds, in the field a - bid - ing, watch-ing o'er your
 3. Sa - ges, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, bright - er vi - sions
 4. Saints, be - fore the al - tar bend - ing, watch - ing long in

all the earth; ye who sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry
 flocks by night, God with us is now re - sid - ing,
 beam a - far; seek the great De - sire of na - tions;
 hope and fear, sud - den - ly the Lord, de - scend - ing,

Refrain

now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:
 yon - der shines the in - fant light: Come and wor - ship,
 ye have seen his na - tal star:
 in his tem - ple shall ap - pear:

come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born King.

WORDS: James Montgomery, 1816 (Lk. 2:8-20; Mt. 2:1-12; Mal. 3:1)
 MUSIC: Henry T. Smart, 1867

REGENT SQUARE
 87.87.87

230 O Little Town of Bethlehem

1. O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie;
 2. For Christ is born of Ma - ry, and gath - ered all a - bove,
 3. How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly, the won - drous gift is given;
 4. O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;

a - bove thy deep and dream - less sleep the si - lent stars go by.
 while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - dering love.
 so God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heaven.
 cast out our sin, and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.

Yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light;
 O morn - ing stars to - geth - er, pro - claim the ho - ly birth,
 No ear may hear his com - ing, but in this world of sin,
 We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;

the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
 and prais - es sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth!
 where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.
 O come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Em - man - u - el!

WORDS: Phillips Brooks, ca. 1868
 MUSIC: Lewis H. Redner, 1868

ST. LOUIS
 86.86.76.86

Alt. tune: FOREST GREEN

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice 224

1., 2., 3. Good Christian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and

voice; give ye heed to what we say: News, news!
 voice; now ye hear of end - less bliss: News, news!
 voice; now ye need not fear the grave: News, news!

Je - sus Christ is born to - day! Ox and ass be -
 Je - sus Christ was born for this! He hath o - pened
 Je - sus Christ was born to save! Calls you one and

fore him bow, and he is in the man - ger now.
 heav - en's door, and ye are blest for - ev - er - more.
 calls you all to gain his ev - er - last - ing hall.

Christ is born to - day, Christ is born to - day!
 Christ was born for this, Christ was born for this!
 Christ was born to save, Christ was born to save!

WORDS: 14th cent. Latin; trans. by John Mason Neale, 1855
 MUSIC: German melody; harm. by Gary Alan Smith, 1988

IN DULCI JUBILO
 66.727.78.55