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Rev. Amy E. Northridge, Pastor  
Louis Allison, Tech Director  
Travis Pinci, Accompanist, Children's Music Coordinator, & Church Administrator

December 14, 2025

9:45 AM

**Third Sunday of Advent**  
**In the Dark Streets Shineth: The Light of Joy**

*Thank you for worshiping with us today. If you are a guest, we invite you to take a moment to complete a visitor's card located in the back of the pew in front of you and place it in the offering plate when it is passed. We also invite you to sign your name in our guest book located in the back entrance of the sanctuary.*

*We welcome infants and children and all their wiggles & voices in our worship! For your comfort, we also have a children's corner in the back narthex where your child can relax and play and you can still participate in the worship experience. We have children's books and activity bags for them to enjoy! Additionally, after the children's message, children from 3 years old—6th grade are invited to participate in Sunday school in our classroom downstairs. They can choose to attend Sunday school or return to their seats to sit with their parents. Please see a member of the welcoming team for assistance!*

**WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**  
**JOYS & CONCERNS**

**INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME**

**PRELUDE**

*O How Joyfully*

Traditional

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

L: We wait for joy that is deeper than laughter.

**C: We wait for the song that rises before the dawn.**

L: In the stillness, we sense it — joy finding its way.

**C: In the shadows, something begins to sing.**

L: Our hearts lean toward the light.

**C: We are searching for your joy in the darkness.**

\*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

L: God of the dawn,

**C: your joy surprises us in the most ordinary places. When our hearts are heavy and our songs feel far away, teach us to listen for your laughter rising in the shadows. Turn our waiting into singing, our longing into joy. Find us in the dark streets and shine your light, O God. Amen.**

**\*OPENING HYMN NO. 117 NCH** (black hymnal)

*Lift Up Your Head, O Mighty Gates*

# Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates

Georg Weissel, 1641

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**Piano**  $\text{♩} = 150$

1. Lift up your heads, O mighty gates; be - hold, the glo - rious  
2. Fling wide the por - tals of your heart; make it a tem - ple,  
3. Re - deem - er, come, I op - en wide my heart to you; here  
4. So Come my Sav - ior; en - ter in! Let new and no - bler

7

Ru - ler waits; the Sov - ereign One is draw ing near; the  
set a - part from earth - ly use for heaven's em - ploy, a -  
Christ a - bide let me your in ner pres ence feel; your  
life be - gin; Your Ho - ly Spir - it guide us on, un -

13

Sav - ior of the world is here!  
- dorned with prayer and love and joy.  
grace and love in me re - veal.  
- til the glo - rious crown be won.

\*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

## \*TIME OF CONFESSION

### INVITATION TO CONFESSION

#### TIME OF CONFESSION

P: God of joy and promise

**C: we confess that we forget to rejoice. We let worry cloud our vision, and cynicism crowd out your wonder. We withhold laughter out of fear that joy might not last. Forgive us, O God. Remind us that joy is not the absence of sorrow but your presence even in the midst of it. Turn our waiting into singing, our silence into praise. Find us in the dark streets and shine your light, O God. Amen.**

#### REMINDER OF GRACE

P: Hear the good news: God's joy is already rising within you. In Christ, your heart is renewed, your song restored. In Christ, you are forgiven—this day and always.

**C: Thanks be to God. The light shines, and the darkness cannot overcome it. Amen.**

ACT OF PRAISE NO. 108 (red hymnal, vs. 1 & 2)

*O Little Town of Bethlehem*

**ALL SING: O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie; above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by; Yet in thy dark streets shineth the Everlasting Light; The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**

**For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above, While mortals sleep, the angels keep Their watch of wondering love. O morning stars, together Proclaim the holy birth! And praises sing to God the King, And peace to men on earth!**

## CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

*Travis Pinci*

## SCRIPTURE

*Isaiah 35:1-10 (CEB)*

*Luke 1:46-55 (CEB)*

## SERMON

*Rev. Susan Emmons*

*To a Girl Named Mary an Angel Came*

\*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

## Canticle of the Turning

Rory Cooney

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**Piano**  $\text{♩} = 80$

1. My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the God of my heart is  
 2. Though I am small, my God, my all, you work great things in  
 3. From the halls of pow'r to the for - tress tow'r, not a stone will be left on  
 4. Though the na - tions rage from age to age, we re - mem - ber who holds us

5  
 great, and my spir - it sings of the won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait, You  
 me, and your mer - cy will last from the depths of the past to the end of the age to be. Your  
 stone. Let the king be - ware for your jus - tice tears ev - 'ry ty - rant from his throne. The  
 fast: God's mer - cy must de - liv - er us from the conquer - or's crushing grasp. This

10  
 fixed your sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my weak - ness you did not spurn, so from  
 ver - y name puts the proud to shame, and to those who would for you yearn, you will  
 hun - gry poor shall weep no more, for the food they can nev - er earn; there are  
 sav - ing word that our fore - bears heard is the prom - ise which holds us bound, till the

14  
 east to west shall my name be blest. Could the world be a - bout to turn? My heart shall sing of the  
 show your might, put the strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.  
 ta - ble spread, ev 'ry mouth be fed, for the world is a - bout to turn.  
 spear and rod can be crushed by God, who is turn - ing the world a - round.

19  
 day you bring. Let the fires of your justice burn. Wipe a - way all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the

24  
 world is a - bout to turn.

\*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

P: God of laughter and song, you are the joy that rises even before the dawn. When our hearts grow weary, you hum a melody of hope. Open us to your gladness, O God.

**C: Find us in the dark streets and shine your light, O God.**

P: We pray for the world—for those who have forgotten how to smile, for those who live with constant sorrow, for children whose laughter is silenced by fear. Let joy break through despair like sunlight on snow.

**C: Find us in the dark streets and shine your light, O God.**

P: We pray for our community—for celebrations that bring people together, for music and art that lift our spirits, for helpers and friends who make hard days easier. Make this church a place where joy is shared freely.

**C: Find us in the dark streets and shine your light, O God.**

P: We thank you, O God, for signs of joy among us—for milestones reached, for kindness received, for laughter that has healed something deep inside. We name our joys aloud now, as gifts of your goodness.

*(Pause for spoken joys.)*

P: Thank you for the joy these blessings bring.

**C: Find us in the dark streets and shine your light, O God.**

P: We remember those for whom joy feels far away—those who grieve, those who ache in body or spirit, those who watch and wait for your healing light. Hear now the names and needs we lift before you.

*(Pause for spoken concerns.)*

P: Give us not happiness—but the deep-seated joy in you when we feel discouraged and filled with grief.

**C: Find us in the dark streets and shine your light, O God.**

P: God of Joy, keep singing over us until every heart knows your glad refrain. Help us to trust that even now, your dawn is breaking. Through Christ, the Light of the World, we pray, so together we join in the prayer Christ has taught us.

**ALL: 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 sins, as we forgive those who sin 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.**

\*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

## TIME FOR SHARING

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY & DISCIPLESHIP

OFFERTORY

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

L: God of joy,

**C: you delight in cheerful giving and grateful hearts. Take these gifts and let them dance with your joy. May they bring comfort where there is sorrow, and laughter where there is longing. Let your light of joy spread through our giving. Amen.**

**\*CLOSING HYMN NO. 106 NCH** (black hymnal, see below)

*My Heart Sings Out with Joyful Praise*

# My Heart Sings Out with Joyful Praise

Ruth Duck

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Piano  $\text{♩} = 80$

The musical score is written for piano in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a tempo marking of a quarter note equals 80. The melody is simple and joyful, with lyrics written below the notes. The second staff continues the melody and includes a measure rest for 5 measures. The third staff continues the melody and includes a measure rest for 9 measures. The fourth staff concludes the piece with a double bar line and a final chord.

1. My heart sings out with joy - ful praise to God who rais - es  
2. The arm of God is strong and just to scat - ter all the  
3. The prom - ise made in a - ges past at last has come to

5  
me, Who came to me when I was low and changed my des - ti -  
proud. The ty - rantstumble from their thrones and van - ish like a  
be, for God has come in power to save, to set all peo - ple

9  
- ny, The Ho - ly One, the Living God, is al - ways full of grace To  
cloud. The hun - gry all are sat - is - fied; the rich are sent a - way. The  
free. Re - mem - bering those who wait to see sal - vation's dawning day, Our

14  
those who seek their Maker's will in ev - ery time and place.  
poor of earth who suf - fer long will wel - come God's new day.  
Sav - ior comes to all who weep to wipe their tears a - way.

\*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

## **\*BENEDICTION<sup>1</sup>**

L: Go now, disciples of Christ, and shine your light.

**C: This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine — with joy.**

L: Where will you shine your light?

**C: We will shine our light of joy —on ourselves, our families, our friends, and our community.**

P: God will use your shining light of joy to bless all of creation. So go, children of the Light, and know that the Light of the World goes with you —Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

## **POSTLUDE**

### **Special Thanks to our Advent Team!!!**

Elaine Bevivino

Lana Fritz

Deb Herlocker

Cindy Hogentogler

Melody Stine

Thank you to Rev. Susan Emmons for presiding over worship today.

Thank you to Lee & Patsy Brown for providing our Christmas trees and the wreaths on our front door!

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**Welcome Team Members—**Tori Everhart & Barb Stebbins

**Liturgist—**Cindy Hogentogler

**Tech Team—**John Kollasch, Ron Miles

<sup>1</sup>The Benediction was written by Deb Herlocker for our Advent Series.

\*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.



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