



First Presbyterian

CHURCH OF EASTON



A Service for the Worship of God
December 17, 2023

The Third Sunday of Advent

Jesus is our Joy

**Indicates an invitation to rise in body and/or spirit as you are able.*

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD

GATHERING MUSIC

TOWER BELLS

PRELUDE

Of the Father's Love Begotten (Hymn 309)

arr. Held

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASSING OF THE PEACE

ADVENT WREATH – LIGHTING THE CANDLES OF HOPE, PEACE AND JOY

Richard Taylor

WE GIVE THANKS TO GOD

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 126

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.
Then our mouth was filled with laughter
and our tongues with shouts of joy.
Then it was said of nations,
the Lord has done great things for them.
The Lord has done great things for us,
and we rejoiced.
Come, let us worship God.

*HYMN 12 (V.1-5)

People, Look East

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O Lord of all, we your people do look East with great anticipation. We look East and sing aloud your praises, anxiously waiting for what is to come so that we can proclaim a joy to the world. But Lord, we confess that much too often we find our joys in other places. So often the joy is the key to a new car. Or the joy is relaxing in the sun on a warm beach. Or the joy is found in the largest box under the Christmas tree. And Lord, we hope that these joys are OK with you, but we acknowledge that at times they crowd out the irreplaceable joy of having you ever-present in our lives – that presence that is always with us regardless of our joys or sadness. Send your Spirit to be a constant reminder that there is no greater joy in our lives than you. In Jesus' name we pray.

Silent prayer

Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

What can be a greater joy than this? That God came to us as a gift in the form of a humble baby and through that gift, we have been found to be unblemished in the sight of God and worthy of his gift of salvation. Glory to God in the highest. Amen.

*RESPONSE OF PRAISE

Gloria Patri

**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.**

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

John 1:6-8, 19-28

SERMON

From Whence Cometh Our Joy?

Rev. Larry Van Hise

ANTHEM

Lord, How Shall I Meet You

The Chancel Choir
text: Paul Gebhardt, 1607-1676
music: Johann Cruger, 1598-1662

Oh Lord, how shall I meet you, how welcome you are right?
Your people long to greet you, my hope, my heart's delight.
Oh kindle, Lord most holy, Your lamp within my breast
To do in spirit lowly all that may please you best.

Your Zion strews before you, green bells and fairest palms;
And I, too, will adore you with joyous songs and psalms.
My heart shall bloom forever for you with praises new
And from your name shall never withhold the honor due.

I lay in fetters, groaning; You came to set me free.
I stood, my shame bemoaning;
You came to honor me.
A glorious crown you give me, a treasure, safe on high,
That will not fail, or leave me as earthly riches fly.

Love caused your incarnation; love brought you down to me.
Your thirst for my salvation procured my liberty.
Oh, love beyond all telling, that led you to embrace
In love, all of excelling, our lost and fallen race.

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

MINUTE FOR MISSION: Christmas Joy Offering

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Humbled by God's generosity, let us offer our gifts to God and God's ministries through Christ's church.

*Please leave your offering in the boxes at the front and rear of the sanctuary
or make your gifts online or via mail.*

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

God, you meet our needs and transform us for service. Accept these gifts as signs of our gratitude and our commitment to witness to Christ's ministry in your world. Amen.

*RESPONSE

Doxology

**Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

WE GO IN GOD'S NAME

*HYMN 40 (V.1-4)

Joy to the World!

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

O Little Town of Bethlehem (Hymn 43)

arr. Held

Worship Leaders

Rev. Larry Van Hise

Gloria Snyder, Organist

Elizabeth Campbell, Chancel Choir Director

The Chancel Choir

Ellis Finger, Liturgist

Ruthann Arras and Carol Butler, Coffee Hour Hosts

Tech Support: Jacob Van Norman, Bill Bartlett, Rich Linnell, Pat Koefoed

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