

Sunday, December 14, 2014 Third Sunday of Advent

Deeply planted in the mystery of life is God's love
gracing the world with presence and purpose.

Deeply planted in the mystery of life
is a spark
holding back darkness with possibility. (light the first candle)

Deeply planted in the mystery of life
is a breath
whispering hope in the silence. (light the second candle)

Deeply planted in the mystery of life
is a stream of living water
filling dry lands and dry people. (light the pink candle)

**We wait, longing for the dawning of God's new day.
We prepare, trying to make room.
God too longs for the world's transformation. God too prepares—making us into vessels of
light and love, getting us ready to receive anew the gift. Amen.**

Prelude

Call to Worship

Let all souls magnify the Lord!

Let all spirits rejoice in God our Savior!

Holy is his name!

He has looked with favor on us all.

The Mighty One has done great things.

Holy is his name!

Prayer of the Day

Lord, we praise you and thank you

For the good news of your son Jesus Christ.

Help us to magnify you in worship today

That all the world will know of your greatness.

Renew us in our worship

That we may be prepared to receive you in our hearts

Each and every day.

Through Christ our Lord,

The King of Kings.

Amen.

Hymn: Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

Prayer of Confession

Sometimes, Lord, we forget to be joyful. You offer new life in Jesus, but we let our worries inhibit joy. You choose us to live the dream of salvation, but we are afraid to trust you. We are afraid to feel too much hope, , afraid of trusting your power to turn death into new life. Turn our spirits, O God, so that in turning, we recover purity of heart. Turn our fear into expectant joy, as you chose Mary to bear Jesus, the hope of the world. (silence) Amen.

Assurance of Pardon: Good Christian Men, Rejoice #165 vv 2-3

Doxology

Responsive Reading Psalm 126:1-6

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.

**Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;**

then it was said among the nations,
“The Lord has done great things for them.”

**The Lord has done great things for us,
and we rejoiced.**

Restore our fortunes, O Lord,
like the watercourses in the Negeb.

**May those who sow in tears
reap with shouts of joy.**

Those who go out weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
**shall come home with shouts of joy,
carrying their sheaves.**

140 Rejoice, the Lord is King

Offering

Prayers of the People

O God of Joy,

We magnify your holy name with gratitude and trust. Help us today to become the means by which the whole world may know you.

Today we lift up our prayers of joy and thanksgiving, as well as our prayers of intercession and supplication.

We thank you for the successful surgery that Wayne has undergone. Thank you for the physicians and caregivers who made it possible. We ask that you to continue to heal him and make him whole. We ask that you guide his feet and heart that he rehabilitates quickly. We also ask you to help Sharon be strong and well-rested as they continue the process.

We also thank you for a wonderful fellowship Friday night. Thank you for Jenna and Regina’s leadership during the party and for each and every giggle and laugh we had.

We look ahead to your birth. Prepare the way in each every heart that we are ready to receive you in trust and joy.

We also lift up our prayers for ourselves and others in time of need. For those who are struggling to find food, shelter, or a source of heat to keep warm, we pray you find a way for them. Help them to have dignity in the place where they dwell. We lift up all the structures and systems in government and society that prevents justice rather than promotes it.

We pray you heal our community. For those who suffer from addictions. For those who do wrong because they know no other way. For those who struggle to trust others because of the past.

We lift up those struck with tragedy last night in the truck accident on Hwy 54. Thank you for the crews who came to help and to protect other travelers while they cleaned it up. We pray for safety during this season of joy on all roads and in the skies.

We now take a time to silently lift up our prayers.

For you are the Mighty One, who has done great, miraculous things! We thank you and praise you, rejoicing in what you have done and promise to do. Through Christ our Savior, who taught us all to pray using these words, "Our Father, who art in heaven...Amen."

BH #15 Rejoice! Rejoice, Believers

Time out for Teaching: Joy

Think for a moment.

When have you ever felt joy?

I'm not just talking about a super-happy moment.

I mean the kind of fullness of heart.

Joy can take different forms.

Sudden joy may be like in the psalm today,

A turn from sowing in tears to shouts of joy at God's restoration.

Joy can also be a way of life, even if it has a little sadness in it. Joy could be a life of trust in and gratitude towards God.

Now, what holds you back from joy?

For if we were to take time in dwelling on what God has done for us,

And to actually believe and trust that God can do all things,

Then Joy could be our lifelong companion.

But there could be times when we are afraid to trust God, or forget Him, and prevent us from feeling that joy.

Mary says, "My soul magnifies the Lord!" Her famous song, also known as the Magnificat, recognizes that within her is true joy, given by God. That joy begins within her as Jesus. And she knows that as she nurtures this child, that joy shall grow and fill the entire world. Through her God is being magnified.

You and I get to be the continuation of pure unadulterated joy. We too, as much as we may be afraid to trust at times, get a similar charge to Mary's: magnify the Lord. And when we grow in our trust in Him, we do magnify Him. Today in extra songs and the scriptures I challenge you to grasp ahold of that joy. Amen.

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Isaiah:

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.
They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.

God:

For I the LORD love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
Their descendants shall be known among the nations,
and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.

Isaiah:

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 robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations

PH 158 Angels We Have Heard on High (vv 1-2)

LUKE 1:46B-55

^{46b} My soul magnifies the Lord,
⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
⁵⁰ His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

Sermon: Who Am I to Say No?

Who am I to say no, to Almighty God?

I have just found out to my surprise that I am with child.

And this child is the Messiah!

And of all the people the Lord could have chosen, he chose me to be his mother.

I have no words to describe my excitement and surprise!

I don't deserve this kind of thing. I'm no one special. I'm just a girl. I'm not wealthy, or educated. I have never nursed a baby. I don't know very much about having children, except for what I have learned at my mother's knee.

I'm scared.

The Messiah deserves the very best mother. And what if I, young, and inexperienced, should fail?

There are all sorts of ways that I can fall short. What if I make a mistake in raising him right! And he grows up a rebel, or a trouble maker? What if he divides our people instead of bringing us together? What if the Romans, afraid as they are of change, refuse to let him be our king? I'm also a little nervous.

The baby isn't showing yet. But as he grows inside of me, it will be obvious. It will appear that I have scandalized our families. I'm pregnant and I'm not even married. It will be embarrassing. Joseph has every right to break off the engagement.

Lord, help me stay strong and courageous. Help me to trust you.

But if I trust in the Lord, things will be okay. For he has already done marvelous things, miraculous things! And He has willed that I, an uneducated girl, to carry the Messiah. If all that the Lord intends, shall be done through him, then everything is going to be okay. In his wisdom, if I was the wrong person for this work, the Mighty One would not have chosen me. And He did.

I get to do something that has never been done before. I am the mother of the Messiah. And I get to love him first, nurture Him. I get to give him birth, and raise him up to be a man of God. I get to teach him his first lessons, like how to be nice to others and to honor his parents, including his father in heaven.

I, once an insignificant girl, am spilling over with joy. For the Lord God has already done things that no one has ever seen, provide me with a son in a miraculous way, just like Sarah, mother of Isaac, Rebekah, mother of Jacob, Hannah, mother of Samuel! All of these great women of the prophets, and would that I be counted among them!

This good news makes my heart skip like a lamb. For through me, the Mighty One shall change the world from oppression and suffering into justice and peace. The Lord shall multiply the joy I

have in me that it may spread throughout the land! With that Good News, shouldn't we all magnify the Lord? Let it be done through me! Alleluia! Amen!

BH #13 Prepare the Way

Benediction: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, 23-24

Reader 1: Always be joyful.

Reader 2: Never stop praying

Reader 3: Whatever happens, keep thanking God because of Jesus Christ.
This is what God wants you to do.

Pastor: I pray that God, who gives peace, will make you completely holy. And may your spirit, soul, and body be kept healthy and faultless until our Lord Jesus Christ returns.²⁴ The one who chose you can be trusted, and he will do this.