**Salem United Church of Christ Moorestown**

**Church Office (610) 759-1652 – www.salemuccbathpa.org**

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**Ministers of the Church – Every Member of Salem UCC**

**Third Sunday of Advent**

**December 13, 2020**

**PRELUDE**

**WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH**

 **Reader One:** We want everything to look nice: the decorations of the season, our homes with their lights and tinsel, wreaths and ribbons. We want to lighten the darkness around us, bring beauty to the sadness that wears us down. We decorate, because it is tradition, because it lifts our hearts. Because it makes us feel like children again. We deck our halls because company is coming.

 **Reader Two:** The prophet Isaiah smiled when he said, “God will give a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, a mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.” No matter how far we feel from the spirit of the season, God promises to decorate us with love and with joy.

 **Reader One:** We light this candle as a sign of our joy in the beautiful things of this season – not just the things that glitter and flash, but the deeper things, the beauty of the heart and the soul, the beauty of love shared in service and hospitality. We light this candle of joy because company is coming.

 **“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” *(3rd verse)***

 *O come, thou Wisdom from on high, and order all things, far and nigh; to us the path of knowledge show, and cause us in her ways to go. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: Love has come down to us this Advent Season.
**All: Divine love which heals and transforms our lives.**
One: With great joy, we receive that love and share it with others.
**All: We open our hearts to all God’s children, the last, the least, and the lost, as**

 **well as those who feel privileged.**
One: The Lord has done and continues to do great things for us.
**All: Praise be to God who loves us so much and who challenges us to be people**

 **of joy in this darkened world. Amen.**

**ADVENT PRAYER OF JOY** *(video used with license and permission/worship house media)*

 **HYMN #167** *“O Come, All Ye Faithful” (verses 1 and 2)*

 *O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant! O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem
Come and behold Him Born the King of Angels; O come, let us adore Him. O come, let us adore Him. O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!*

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation. Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above! Glory to God, all glory in the highest; *O come, let us adore Him. O come, let us adore Him. O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!*

**DRAMATIC READING** *“A Song of Happiness”* *(based on Psalm 126)*

**A TIME OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE**

**All: Incarnate God, we sing of a silent night, but we long to hear your voice.**

**We sing of joy to the world, but we are all too familiar with sorrow. We sing , O come all ye faithful, but our own faith is often lacking. Draw near to us, O child of Bethlehem. Be the answer to our unspoken questions, the courage that scatters our secret fears, and the love that humbles our hardened hearts. Hear now our silence confessions.**

*(silence is kept)*

One: Friends, believe the good news, In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

**All: Thanks be to God. Amen.**

**PASSING OF THE PEACE!**

Leader: Peace be with you.

**People: And also with you!**

Leader: Share the peace of Christ with one another using the comments on the Facebook

 page.

**TODAY’S GOSPEL LESSON** John 1:6-8, 19-28

**CHILDREN’S MESSAGE**

**TODAY’S MESSAGE** *“Testify to the Light”*

**SPECIAL MUSIC** *“All is Well”*

**OFFERING** *(for those worshipping virtually)–*I invite you at this time to consider ways to express your thankfulness for all that God provides by giving of your time and talents in new ways in this time. I also ask you to consider how you will offer your tithes and offerings to support the ministry of our church at this time as well – some options are: on-line giving available through our website or your smartphone, mail check in weekly or set aside your offering each week and mail it in monthly. Thank you.

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION.**

One: Holy God, accept the praise and thanksgiving of our hearts,

 which rejoice in your goodness and love. Let our gifts point to your

 presence in the world, and may they bring with them the hope, peace, joy

 and love of Jesus, Emmanuel, God-with-us. Amen.

**JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**PASTORAL PRAYER & THE LORD’S PRAYER** (debts and debtors)

**HYMN #167** *“Long Ago, Prophets Knew” (verses 1 and 4)*

 *Long ago, prophets knew Christ would come, born a Jew, come to make all things new; bear his people's burden, freely love and pardon. Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring! Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing! When he comes, when he comes, who will make him welcome?*

 *Journey ends! Where afar Bethlehem shines, like a star, stable door stands ajar, unborn Son of Mary, Savior, do not tarry! Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring! Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!
Jesus comes! Jesus comes! We will make him welcome!*

**BENEDICTION**

 In this Advent season, we need to see, feel, and share joy.

 Be people of joy.
 Let joy live in your hearts.

 As you go out into the wonder of God’s creation,

 Share the joy of Christ with all you meet. Amen.

**THREE FOLD AMEN**

**POSTLUDE**

*\* Portions of this worship service were adapted from “ebpctn.org”, “reworship”, “ministry matters”, “liturgylink”, “seasons of the spirit”*

**ACOLYTE: Danika Pysher.**

**PRESENTED TO THE GLORY OF GOD: The FLOWERS by Ed and Kim Taylor in honor of Jack and Peggy Troxell’s 60th Wedding Anniversary. The MEMORIAL CANDLE is burning in memory of Bruce by Betty Jackson.**

**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE: Our Christmas Eve Service will be virtual only. You will find this service on Facebook or our website anytime you wish on Christmas Eve. We hope you will enjoy this service with your family. HAVE A SAFE, HEALTHY AND MERRY CHRISTMAS.**

**COVID CHRISTMAS CAROLING.** Join us the 4th Sunday in Advent, December 20th at 2 PM (weather permitting) for an outdoor time of fellowship, storytelling, singing Christmas carols and decorating the Christmas tree in the courtyard with bird friendly ornaments. Please make or purchase a bird friendly ornament and bring it with you to decorate the tree. We will gather outside in the front of the red sanctuary doors and in the courtyard. Social distancing and masks covering your mouth and nose will be required. Hope you can join us for this “in person” gathering. Remember to dress for the weather. The gathering

will last approximately ½ hour. If standing for ½ hour is difficult for you, please bring your own chair.

**MAKE YOUR OWN ADVENT WREATH:** Since we are gathering this Advent season virtually, or you will be using the home worship mailer, Pastor Kaye invites you to create your own Advent wreath to use on Sunday mornings during the virtual worship services. All you really need are 5 candles one for each Sunday in Advent and one for Christmas Eve. You can arrange 4 candles in a circle and place one in the center of the circle for the Christ candle. This might be a nice family project. See your December Newsletter for further information.

**2021 OFFERING ENVELOPES:** If you won’t be at the Covid Christmas Caroling to pick up your 2021 offering envelopes, please call the church office to schedule a time to pick them up. 610-759-1652.

**We are looking for people who would like to help with recording the service or virtual worship. Please speak to Ed Taylor or Vicki Troxell, if you are interested.**

**SEARCHING FOR A TREASURER:** We are still looking for someone to be treasurer of Salem. Please speak to Vicki or any Consistory member, if you are interested in the position or if you have questions about the position.

**THE ALTAR GUILD HAS THE YELLOW GARBAGE BAGS TO SELL, THE COST IS $10,00/ROLL.** If you are interested, please speak to Donna Schlegel or call the church office at 610-759-1652.