# ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

10 a.m. December 17, 2023

PRELUDE Meditation: "Joseph Dearest, Joseph Mine"

by Gilbert Martin

INTROIT "Prepare the Way of the Lord"

CUMC Adult Choir

by Jacques Berthier

WELCOME ALL CHILDREN OF GOD

**GREETINGS** 

One: The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: The risen Christ is with us.

All: Praise the Lord!

PASSING OF THE PEACE

One: The peace of the Lord be with you

All: And also with you

One: Let us share God's love and peace with one another.

\*HYMN "Hail to the Lord's Anointed" UMH #203

**CALL TO WORSHIP** 

One: When the Lord restores our fortunes,

All: we are like those who dream.

One: Our mouths are filled with laughter;
All: Our hearts sing with shouts of joy.
One: Worship the Lord of our salvation.

All: Worship the Lord!

# ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING & MEDITATION

The Krapf Family

Reader 1: When God's people were surrounded by hardship, suffering, and grief, Isaiah proclaimed: 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.

Reader 2: We come today as people who are also surrounded by suffering and grief. And yet, the Spirit hovers among us, tending and anointing, inspiring freedom where there is captivity, declaring blessing in places the world has cursed, and igniting fierce joy where mourning and heartache prevail.

Congregation: We wait as people who experience hardship and pain, yet we are called to witness to the persistent joy that sustains our life as God's people.

Reader 1: We light these candles as signs of our shocking hope, just peace, and fierce joy. May our lives shine with the fierce, tenacious joy of the Light who lives in our hearts as we wait and work for the coming of God's kin-dom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Light three candles of the Advent Wreath

# **CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS**

# PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Merciful God, we hear John's fervent cry: "Make straight the way of the Lord," but we don't know what we should do. Our lives carry on as they have before. Nothing seems to change. Yet we long to be caught up in the ecstatic visions of prophets and mystics. We yearn to tune our ears to the heralds who testify to your light. Help us to walk in the ways that lead to life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

### SILENT PRAYER

### WORDS OF ASSURANCE

The God of peace sanctifies us, that our souls may be sound and blameless. The one who calls is faithful. The one who saves fashions us for eternal life.

# A CHRISTMAS PAGEANT Insert

# INVITATION TO GIVE OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

God gives us many gifts, but the greatest of these is Jesus our Savior in whom we have the promise of abundant and eternal life. Nothing we give in return can repay God. So we strive to give not just a portion of our resources, but our whole hearts and souls in loving and obedient service. Let us offer ourselves and gifts to the Lord.

## WEEKLY OFFERING & NOISY OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM "Heavenly Hosts" Tyler Stankiewicz by Tony Wood, Benjamin Backus, Joel & Luke Smallbone, Matt Hales & Ted Tjornhorn

\*DOXOLOGY "Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow" UMH #95

### PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

God of peace, you have restored our hope and sanctified our dreams. May this offering express the joy we feel for the gift of your salvation. May our gifts reflect our wonder and gratitude for being clothed in the garments of salvation and the robes of righteousness. May our tithes and our very lives help restore the dreams of the downhearted, and fill the hungry with good things. Amen.

# **JOYS AND CONCERNS**

# PRAYER FOR PEACE

God of peace and justice, you have taught us to love our neighbors as ourselves, to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. Today we raise Israel and Gaza, Ukraine and Russia, and all parts of the world where people are suffering from war. Provide protection and comfort to the innocent who have been impacted. Transform the hearts and minds of all those who perpetuate violence and oppression. Grant wisdom to world leaders in advancing efforts toward world peace; may they not be compromised by self-interest and blind indifference. Stop the wars o, God. Amen.

"Joy to the World" \*HYMN

\*BENEDICTION AND SENDING FORTH

One: Go forth, sanctified in the love of God.

God has turned our weeping into laughter.

One: Go forth, clothed in the garments of salvation and the robes of righteousness.

Christ has turned our sorrow into joy. All:

One: Go with God.

"Cradle Song" POSTLUDE

by Steven Scott

**OUR WORSHIP HAS ENDED** 

**NOW OUR SERVICE BEGINS** 

**UMH #246** 

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