

WELCOME TO

The Presbyterian Church of

Saint David

December 11, 2016 Advent 3



Gathering: *May the joy of the Lord be your strength this and every day!*

Opening prayer: *Lord, in this holy season of prayer and song and laughter, we praise you for the great wonders you have sent us: for shining star and angel's song, for infant's cry in lowly manger. We praise you for the Word made flesh in a little Child. We behold his glory, and are bathed in its radiance.*

Be with us as we sing the ironies of Christmas, the incomprehensible comprehended, the poetry made hard fact, the helpless Babe who cracks the world asunder. We kneel before you - shepherds, innkeepers, magi. Help us to rise bigger than we are. Amen.

Hymn: Jump with Joy

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Psalm 146:5-10 *Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD their God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever; who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets the prisoners free; the LORD opens the eyes of the blind. The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous. The LORD watches over the strangers; he upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin. The LORD will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the LORD!*

Confession: **We come to you confessing what is on our hearts and minds. We do so trusting that you want to hear our petitions and that you have already forgiven what needs to be forgiven. We believe that our prayers will be answered in your time and in your almighty wisdom. Amen.**

Hymn: Joyful, joyful we adore you

(1-2)

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REFLECTION ON THE PASSAGES *During the third week of Advent the mood changes to more expectant delight. Joy is on its way. The reading from Isaiah and the Psalm speak to anticipated reversals of the world order. God is coming with a vengeance to save God's people. Things are going to be turned around. Advent is a spiritual journey for individuals and for congregations; a time for introspection that is part of preparation for the receiving the gift of God's Son. It is during Advent that we acknowledge that Christ has come, Christ is present and Christ will come again.*

Hymn: Joyful, joyful we adore you

(3-4)

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Isaiah 35:1-10 The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible

recompense. He will come and save you.” Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveller, not even fools, shall go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Creating a Conversation: "They will rejoice." This is the first word of Isaiah's vision in chapter 35, and it is the focus of the entire passage. The time of these opening verses is future, though exactly when is not specified. The place is named clearly and repeatedly: it is the wilderness. This detail is not incidental. It locates God's promise within every human lack, every loneliness, and every desolation. It locates God's promise within a complex history of slavery and redemption, failure and faith... If you open your eyes and look, you will see that right here is your God (35:4a). God is here. God will come. Isaiah offers assurance for present and for future. In the future, Isaiah asserts that God will act for the people to reverse oppression and deliver them. The prophet does not describe specific conditions of oppression, but speaks in general terms in a direct address to the audience: God "will come and save you" (35:4b)... Joy, we may discover, is not so much a steady-state emotion as a reaction to something beautiful, hopeful, life-giving or redemptive. Isaiah sees the creation reacting with joy to the coming of God's Glory, which John is encouraged to see in the life of Jesus, in the works of compassion, in the miracles among the nobodies.”

Hymn: Joy to the world (vs 2)

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Invitation: welcome... *to actions beyond words, to help without asking, to provision without measure, to hospitality without price, to risk without fear. God's beloved, you who are watching and waiting, come to the Table of grace. We will feast on the wonders of the God who loves us. All are invited and all are welcome. We come, for the meal is ready!*

Hymn: I come with joy (1-2)

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Prayer of Thanksgiving: *May God our joy and salvation be with you! And also with you! People of God, lift your hearts to the One who created you. We offer them to God, who writes words of hope upon our hearts. God's children, come to the Table of grace. We will feast on the wonders of the God who loves us.* (we continue in prayer) *Come to us, Spirit of our Lord of love, and let the bread and wine before us bear your life to our life, nourish us with his vision of hope, and unite us in one body of peace. Renew us by your Spirit, inspire us with your love, and unite us in the body of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord You are our life; You are our hope; You are our peace; And we praise you.*

Hymn: I come with joy (3)

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Communion

Following communion *Eternal, loving God, we thank you for this simple common meal that offers us the joy of the Lord as our strength. May our lives be inspired by your love, and may your love touch others through us.*

Hymn: I come with joy (4-5)

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Postlude

