

WELCOME to Worship at Grove Church
December 3, 2023
2nd Week of Advent



How does a weary world rejoice?

We find joy in connection

Assisting in Worship Today

Advent Candle Lighting –
The Morley Family

Liturgist – Cindy George

Greeters –
Joan Cross and Penny Arndt

Ushers –
Brad Hanford and Jim Schmidt

Coffee Stewards –
Chuck and Penny Coggins

Communion Stewards –
Cindy George, Carol and Bob
Moore, The Paul Family

Lessons in Connection

It's been a long day, long enough to complain,
long enough to wine and dine my disappointment,
to give weariness keys to the house.
But then you get the giggles
dancing with the dog in the kitchen.
Paws-sliding, tail-wagging, side-cramping giggles.
I can hear it from across the house.
Your joy burrows its way
through the cracks in my armor
and then we are both laughing,
gulping for joyous, electric air.
And that's when I know—
if you grab my hand, if you ask me to dance,
if our weary human souls
can make room for connection,
then we will survive.
Joy will take root.
Love will keep her keys to the house

Poem by Rev. Sarah Speed
A Sanctified Art LLC sanctifiedart.org

GATHERING

PRELUDE	<i>Advent Paeon on an Old English Carol</i>	George Oldroyd
PASTORAL GREETING & WELCOME		Pastor Stacy
ORGAN VOLUNTARY	<i>From Heaven Above to Earth I Come</i>	arr. Wilbur Held

ENTRANCE

CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY		The Morley Family
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***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Pastor: Welcome to worship.

All: Welcome to worship.

Liturgist: I am glad you're here.

All: I am glad you're here.

Pastor: Surely God is in this space.

All: Surely God is in this space.

Liturgist: I see God in your face.

All: I see God in your face.

Pastor: Let us worship together.

All: Let us worship together.

*OPENING HYMN	<i>Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus</i>	UMH No. 196
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PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

ANTHEM	<i>"Come to Us, O Promised One"</i> Tabernacle Choir	Lloyd Larson
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PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

SCRIPTURE READING: Isaiah 40: 1-11

Liturgist: This is the Word of the Lord!

People: **Thanks be to God.**

A MESSAGE FOR ALL OF GOD'S CHILDREN		Pastor Eva
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SCRIPTURE READING: Luke 1: 24-45

Deacon: This is the Word of the Lord!

People: **Thanks be to God.**

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe that joy is a sacred gift, existing on a plane deeper than happiness, stemming from the truth that we belong to God.

We believe that joy is not meant for isolation, Joy is meant to be shared, weaving us together in laughter and in hope.

And when joy feels impossibly out of reach, we believe that part of being sacred community is leaning on one another.

So together we say:

I will share my joy when yours runs out.

You will share your joy when mine runs out.

And in doing so, we will both see God. Amen.

MORNING PRAYER with THE LORD'S PRAYER**OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE & FELLOWSHIP****OFFERING**

OFFERTORY *Of the Father's Love Begotten* arr. Wilbur Held

***DOXOLOGY** *Be Present at our Table Lord* UMH No. 621

THANKSGIVING AND COMMUNION**THE CONGREGATION'S PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

God of Laughter, God of open front doors and family reunions, we confess that we often doubt good news. We move through this world waiting for the other shoe to drop, waiting for life to fall apart, waiting for humanity to get the best of us. Instead of leaning into joy, we lean into scarcity. We lean into fear. We lean into isolation. Forgive us for forgetting that joy is amplified when shared. Heal the wounds we have from past hurts, and teach us how to throw open our doors like Elizabeth. Show us how to find joy in connection. Amen

A TIME OF SILENCE FOR PERSONAL CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Leader to People:

I imagine that when we come before God with the truth of our lives, God meets us like Elizabeth meets Mary in our scripture today. The door is thrown open. There is laughter. There is joy. There is embracing – and it is holy.

So trust this; believe this:

You are claimed. You are loved. You are forgiven.
And you are sent to serve. Find joy in that. Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

*GIVING THE BREAD & CUP –

Please join in singing #632 Draw us in the Spirit's Tether & #620 One Bread, One Body.

SENDING FORTH

*BLESSING & DEACON'S CHARGE

*HYMN *I Can Celebrate You (to the tune of In the Bleak Midwinter UMH 221)*

I can celebrate you, I can hold your joy
when the load is crushing and you've lost your voice.
I can celebrate the promise your life holds
when the weariness bears heavy on your soul.

I can recognize good fruit that you will bear
when your own self-doubt hides gifts you have to share.
I can recognize your Christ-light deep within
every gift that God has sown waiting to begin.

We can hold each other in our joy and fear
knowing that the Spirit moves when we are near.
We can hold each other, lift each other up
filling one another from the Spirit's cup.

POSTLUDE

Rejoice, Rejoice Believers

James Manfield

*-please stand in body or spirit