

TULLY UNITED COMMUNITY CHURCH

December 17, 2023 9:30 AM

The Rev. Richard G. Reed, Pastor



THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT GAUDETE

—TOGETHER WE WORSHIP THE LIVING GOD—

STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Tully United Community Church would like to acknowledge with respect the Onondaga Nation, Fire-keepers of the Haudenosaunee, the indigenous peoples on whose ancestral lands our buildings now stand.

PRELUDE

“Little Baby, Jesus”

arr. Kellner

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

We welcome, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, all who have gathered to worship God together – those who are here in person, and those joining us on ZOOM. Are there any **BRIEF** announcements? Let us worship God.

CHORAL INTROIT

“A Prayer For Advent”
Laura Currie Chancel Choir

Williams/Nolan

GREETING

Celebrant: Today is God's day of joy – joy for us, joy for all humanity. Gaudete is Latin for “Rejoice.” In this difficult time when the focus of our anticipation is often on the negative and fearful, this celebration is a reminder that God who loves us is still in charge and that we await his coming not with fear, but with tremendous joy.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Liturgist: Advent is a time to celebrate the joy of living.

People: Lord of light, we thank you for the gift of life.

L: Advent is a time to celebrate the joy of relationships.

P: Lord of light, we thank you for our friends and family.

L: Advent is a time to celebrate the earth we all share.

P: Lord of light, we thank you for providing for our needs.

L: Advent is a time to celebrate eternal life.

P: Lord of light, we thank you for sending a Savior.

ADVENT CAROL

“Light These Lights”

Insert

ADVENT WREATH CANDLE LIGHTING

Liturgist: Friends and fellow-travelers in faith, let us listen for the voice of the one who calls out in the wilderness of our world and of our lives: “Prepare the way of the Lord; make God's paths straight.” As the Lord draws near, may we make room for him in our hearts, and be empowered to proclaim him with joy through every moment of our lives.

People: “You direct me on the path that leads to a beautiful life. As I walk with You, the pleasures are never-ending, and I know true joy and contentment.” -Psalm 16:11

(The Advent Candles of Hope, Peace, and Joy are lighted)

Liturgist: Today we light three candles – the candle of hope, of peace, and the candle of joy. This third candle reminds us that because of our Lord, we have reasons to be truly joyful. The world around us is filled with surprise and beauty. Our cups overflow with goodness and grace, and we rejoice in the promise of eternal life. Let us pray:

Lord, we have come to this place from a world of demands and schedules. We have sought hope and peace and have found them here. Now we seek the inner joy that only your presence can bring to our lives. Open our hearts and our spirits to your love. Prepare your way within us and fill us with joy, we pray, through the name of the Coming One, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

1. I want to walk as a child of the light.
I want to follow Jesus.
God sent the stars to give light to the world.
The star of my life is Jesus.

Refrain: In Him, there is no darkness at all.
The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God.
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.

2. I want to see the brightness of God.
I want to look at Jesus.
Clear sun of righteousness, shine on my path,
And show me the way to the Father. Refrain

3. I'm looking for the coming of Christ.
I want to be with Jesus.
When we have run with patience the race,
We shall know the joy of Jesus. Refrain

****PASSING THE PEACE**

Celebrant: The peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

Celebrant: Let us share signs of welcome and peace with our neighbors.

-WE REJOICE IN THE WORD OF GOD-

FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Liturgist: A reading from the prophet Isaiah, who shares a vision of hope, peace, and joy for the world.

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.

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.
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.

Here ends the reading.

PSALTER

Psalm 126

#847

R ♪For the night weeping may tarry; with the morning light comes joy. ♪

Liturgist: When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.

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

L: then they said among the nations,
"The LORD has done great things for them."

**P: The LORD has done great things for us;
and we are glad. R**

L: Restore our fortunes, LORD,
like the watercourses of the Negev.

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

L: Those who go forth weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,

**P: shall come home with shout of joy,
carrying their sheaves. R**

SECOND LESSON

First Thessalonians 5:16-24

Liturgist: A reading from the First Letter to the Thessalonians.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.

May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely, and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

Here ends the reading.

****GLORIA PATRI**

#70

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen. Amen.**

****THE GOSPEL**

+ John 1:6-8, 19-28 +

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but he confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,
'Make straight the way of the Lord,' "
as the prophet Isaiah said.

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why, then, are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

Celebrant: This is the Word of God. All: Thanks be to God!

SERMON

The Rev. Richard G. Reed

CHORAL ANTHEM

**"Would I Miss A Miracle"
Laura Currie Chancel Choir**

Stewart/Nolan

- WE BOW BEFORE THE LORD IN PRAYER -

SHARING JOYS, AND CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER (using "sins")

#894

Bidding: Come, O Come, Emmanuel;

Response: Come save us and free us.

Celebrant: In the hushed anticipation of your coming, O Lord, kindle in us the desire to remain awake; that we might be ready for your coming, and eager to pray, *saying:* Come, O Come, Emmanuel; **Come save us and free us.**

Liturgist: How strong your voice, O God. How it thunders across the lands, calling forth blossoms from parched earth and turning back waters from flooded ground. You stand at the world's door and knock; who can withstand the sound of your voice?

Come, O Come, Emmanuel; **Come save us and free us.**

How soft your voice, O God. How it murmurs in the morning, calling life forth from its bed and hastening the night to its own. You come to us, walking in the garden in the cool of the day; who can hide from the sound of your voice?

Come, O Come, Emmanuel; **Come save us and free us.**

Tarry with us, O God. Let your word love our eyes into seeing all those around us. Let it love our ears into hearing the voices calling to us. Let it love our hands into healing with the gifts you have granted your children. Let our words be words of love and healing as we pray for those who are in greatest need, especially those whom we have named aloud and those we bring to you now in the silence.

Come, O Come, Emmanuel; **Come save us and free us.**

In these days of Advent, may our voices ring with joy, with peace and with hope. Wherever you send us, may we be diligent in following. For we are ever in search of your salvation, even as we continue to search for the child, the Christ, our Savior in whose name we sing for joy and offer our prayers.

Come, O Come, Emmanuel; **Come save us and free us.**

Celebrant: Come among us O God, and hear our prayers; so that at the coming of your Son Jesus, we might recognize his face and his voice, and come to adore him, who taught us to pray, saying:

**“Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever. Amen.”**

- WE OFFER OUR GIFTS TO GOD -

OFFERTORY INVITATION

Celebrant: God is at work in the world, renewing, remaking, resurrecting, bringing joy through the faith, the gifts, and the work of the church. We trust in God, and together we work for peace and justice through God's Spirit as we offer our tithes and gifts. Let us rejoice in our God-given opportunity to share in God's work.

****DOXOLOGY, PRESENTATION, AND OFFERTORY PRAYER**

#95

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow, Praise God, all creatures here below; Praise God, above, ye heavenly host; Creator, Word, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Celebrant: Thank you, God of hope, for peace, for joy, and for the promise of this season. We are grateful for the generosity aroused in us by Christ's coming into the world. May these gifts represent a new spirit of joyous sharing among us, for the sake of all your children everywhere. Amen.

- WE ARE SENT TO PROCLAIM GOOD NEWS -

****HYMN**

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

#196

**1. Come, Thou long expected Jesus Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us, Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear desire of every nation, Joy of every longing heart.**

**2. Born Thy people to deliver, Born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever, Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.
By Thine own eternal Spirit Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all sufficient merit, Raise us to Thy glorious throne.**

(Please be seated)

CHORAL BENEDICTION

“May The Light Of Christ”

Fettke

BENEDICTION

L: Go in peace to share the Joy of Christ with the world.
And the God of Joy, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be with us all, this season
and forever.

P: Amen. Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

“Fum, Fum, Fum”

arr. Mark Hayes

****Indicates to rise if you are able**

Thoughts to Ponder After Worship:

- *How is a safe and pleasant highway through the desert a symbol of salvation in the present age?*
- *Whose example of patient suffering gives you strength and hope?*
- *How do you proclaim God's deeds in our community?*
- *How is Mary's song from so long ago relevant to today's world? What does it mean to you personally?*