

Memorial Presbyterian Church

**HEAVEN & NATURE SING:
300 YEARS OF "JOY TO THE WORLD"**

MAKE THE BLESSINGS KNOWN:

Unabashed Joy

3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT | DECEMBER 15, 2019

PHOTO BY VINCENT FORET ON UNSPLASH

EXPANSION OF OUR HEARTS

We gather together to worship the One Who Is Joy and as we come together, our hearts are expanded. We remember that the heavens declare God's praise as the sun rises and light multiplies. And we witness that all of nature (including us) yearns to reach and expand toward the Light so that all might know joy.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

Pastorale

Lois R. Hill

BRINGING THE LIGHT

FOCUSING ON UNABASHED JOY

Heaven and Nature Sing

**Sing a new song to the Lord
Lift your hearts with gratitude
Sing a new song to the Lord
Lift your hearts with gratitude
and Joy,
Unabashed Joy!**

**Your steadfast love and faithfulness
Is ever present in our lives
Your steadfast love and faithfulness
Is ever present in our lives
with Joy,
Unabashed Joy!**

**We sing
We sing
Joy to the World
Heaven and nature sing
Joy to the World
Heaven and nature sing
With joy
Unabashed Joy**

THE WREATH

*SONG OF JOY

For Everyone Born

Hymnal, No. 769

*CONFESSION AND PARDON

**Advent God,
you enter into our weary world
to lift up the lowly and fill the hungry,
to establish equity throughout the earth.
Yet, like perplexed prophets and doubting disciples,
we scarcely believe that you can right the world.
We see suffering and sorrow and sin
and wonder if creation is beyond repair.
But you hold out healing, wholeness, and hope.
You promise to drive out despair
and free us from debilitating fear.**

**Broaden our imaginations,
that we might conceive of communities where all people thrive
and embody your vision of *shalom*.
Expand our hearts,
that we might see the extraordinary in our midst
and embrace the everlasting joy you bring.
Make us prophets of the world you are bringing to birth,
that we might prepare a way before you
and welcome you with gladness!**
(Time of silent reflection)

Rejoice, for in Jesus Christ we are forgiven!
Thanks be to God.

***THE PEACE**

Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another.
The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.
And also with you.

***SONG OF RESPONSE**

Gloria
Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Hymnal, No. 113

RECEPTION OF GOD'S WORD

As we open to receive the Word and interpret its meaning for our lives, we connect to the depths of our being where the River of Joy is always flowing. We have only to dip into it for, we have the "joy, joy, joy, joy, down in our hearts."

TIME WITH YOUNG DISCIPLES

MOMENT FOR MISSION

Melissa Gill

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

Jessica Farris

SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 35:1-10

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Page No. 558

ANTHEM

African Noel

Dave and Jean Perry

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 1:46b-55

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Page No. 784

MESSAGE

Make the Blessings Known: Unabashed Joy

Tracy L. Evans

***SONG OF FAITH**

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

Hymnal, No. 129

TRANSFORMATION OF OUR LIVES

Connecting with our deepest selves, we are able to accept that all of life resides within joy's possibilities—not only the happy moments, but also the sorrows and difficulties of life. Like the work of our hearts, all that flows in can be given new life and pumped back out with renewed oxygen, giving us strength and courage for all circumstances.

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

The Lord's Prayer

Hymnal, p. 35

THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY

Heavenly Father, Hear Our Prayer

David Cherwien

*DOXOLOGY

Thankful Hearts and Voices Raise

Hymnal, No. 648

**Thankful hearts and voices raise;
tell everyone what God has done.
Let everyone who seeks the Lord
rejoice and bear the name of Christ.
Send us with your promises
and lead your people forth in joy
with shouts of thanksgiving.
Alleluia, alleluia.**

*DEDICATION PRAYER

COMPASSION FOR THE WORLD

Connecting to Joy can compel us to want this connection for all beings. We leave this place "with passion" (com-passion) for adding our love, peace, hope, and joy to the world.

*SENDING SONG

Canticle of the Turning

Hymnal, No. 100

*TAKING LIGHT INTO THE WORLD

*BLESSING AND CHARGE

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

**We sing
We sing
Joy to the World
Heaven and nature sing
Joy to the World
Heaven and nature sing
With joy
Unabashed Joy**

*POSTLUDE

Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee

Lorie Line

*Please rise in body or spirit.

We invite anyone who wishes to consider membership in this church to contact the pastor or a member of the session. You may also indicate interest in membership by checking the appropriate column in the ritual of friendship booklet. Membership in this church is a step made by profession of faith, reaffirmation of faith or transfer of church letter.

Lectionary Readings for December 22: Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25.

The **Food and Shelter** item of the month for December is **soup and crackers** and cheese. Please place your donations in the box by the church information table.

Hearing-assistance devices and **large print hymnals** are available from the head usher.

Ushers for today's service are Paul & Erica Phelps

Christmas Potluck and Pageant today following worship.

This year we will be **providing Christmas gifts for the Women's Resource center**. Thank you to all who have picked up a list of desired items. Please bring all gifts (unwrapped) by Sunday, December 15.

Please Join us for the **Christmas Eve service at 7:00 pm** on Tuesday, December 24. It will be a JOYFUL celebration of lessons and carols and our traditional candlelight service.

Reminder there is **no Kid's Club** on December 18 through January 8 for Christmas Break.

SUNDAY

December 15

- 9:30 A.M. – Sunday School
- 10:30 A.M. – Fellowship and Refreshments
- 10:55 A.M. – Worship Service
- 12:00 P.M. – Christmas Pageant and potluck
- 5:30 P.M. – Stewardship Committee

WEDNESDAY

December 18

- 6:30 P.M. – Chancel Choir

SUNDAY

December 22

- 9:30 A.M. – Sunday School
- 10:30 A.M. – Fellowship and Refreshments
- 10:55 A.M. – Worship Service

KNOWN JOYS & CONCERNS

Those who seek healing

Lola Carroll
Sandy Clarke
Jan Cunningham
Laura Eckel
Doug Forsyth
Blair Lanning
Judd Lanning
Jayelle Martin
Gary Thrailkill
Jona Thiessen
Devyn Upton
Karen Upton
Janann Yeager
Darrell Hinson (Karen Upton's father)
Paul Gallagher (Karen Upton's biological father)
Carole Jo Evans (Tracy Evans' mother)
Jim Leseney (Vince Leseney's father)

Those who Experienced Recent Loss

Samuel McCann whose grand mother died December 11.
Mike and Joan Cole whose brother Jim Cole died November 12.
Linda Eckel and family whose husband Jim Eckel died October 31.

Lisa Upton whose father Nolan Spaugy died on October 30.

Seminary Graduate

Samuel McCann, Pittsburgh Theo. Seminary

We lift up in prayer the country of Cameroon and pray for the unrest our brothers and sisters are experiencing there.

Birthdays

December 15– Kenny Martin

December 20– Esau Jangha

December 22– Jim Burns

Everett Forthman

Anniversaries

December 20– Judd & Alice Lanning

As part of the **ecumenical prayer cycle**, we ask you to pray for a particular region of the world each week: China, **Hong Kong, Macau**

We give **thanks** for:

- the long and complex history of China, with its many artefacts, cultures and traditions that have developed over millennia
- those who established missions and churches in the past, and the determination of Chinese Christians to contextualize the church here and now
- those who boldly live out their faith, challenging injustices even when they fear persecution
- the economic growth and development that have lifted many out of poverty
- the steps China is taking to counter huge environmental challenges.

We **pray** for:

- those left behind and further marginalized by rising economic growth, especially women and peasants in rural areas
- the political and social tensions between the mainland of China and Hong Kong and the rest of the world
- a growth in prophetic witness of the Chinese church in society
- spiritual meaning and freedom from captivity to economic growth and consumerism.