**Congregational Church**

**of Westminster West**

**A United Church of Christ**

December 15, 2024

*Third Sunday in Advent*

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude “People of God, Gather Together”

*P.B.Clark / D.N.Johnson*

Advent introit “Within Our Darkest Night” *Taizé*

*Within our darkest night,*

*you kindle the fire that never dies away,*

*never dies away*

*Within our darkest night,*

*you kindle the fire that never dies away,*

*never dies away.*

Advent Candle Litany *Janet Langdon and Jenny Holan*

Reader One: No matter what troubles overwhelm us today, Isaiah reminds us that in all of our preparation and passionate pursuit of God’s coming kin-dom, we must not forget that God’s salvation has come and is coming. “With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation” (Isaiah 12:3). With joy you will remember that God’s salvation is already present among us.

**Congregation: Faced with the troubles and the suffering of the world, we choose to live in joyful presence to God and one another. We will not turn away from the pain and the hurt in our world, and we will not stop rejoicing in God, whose salvation fills us to overflowing that God’s love might flow through us and flood our troubled world with hope, peace, and joy.**

Reader Two: We light this candle of joy as a sign of our commitment to be present to ourselves, our friends, our families, and our neighbors that in sharing our vulnerable lives we might share in the glorious joy of God’s salvation together.

*Light the third candle of the Advent wreath.*

\*Hymn No. 122 “Come, O Long-Expected Jesus”

*Come, O long expected Jesus, born to set all people free;*

*from our fears and sins release us; grant us your true liberty.*

*Israel’s strength and consolation, hope to all the earth impart;*

*dear desire of every nation, enter every longing heart.*

*Born all people to deliver, born a child, you came to reign!*

*born to rule on earth forever, come be known to us again.*

*By your own eternal Spirit, come to claim us as your own;*

*by your all-sufficient merit, let us share your cross and crown.*

Prayer of Confession *(seated)* ✧

**All: Creator of the universe,  
we stand amazed at your power and glory.  
We are eager to worship you and offer our praise,  
but we are often reluctant to answer  
when we hear you calling our name.  
We sing our songs of tribute in the sanctuary,  
but shy away from the river,  
lest we be baptized  
with the fire of the Holy Spirit.  
Forgive us when we forget your promise  
to be with us always, O God.  
Renew us with the power of your ever-present love,  
and strengthen us to proclaim your justice  
throughout the world. Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

One: One fact remains that does not change: God has loved you, loves you now, and will love you always. This is the good news that brings us new life.

**All: Thanks be to God! Amen.**

\*Gloria No. 756

*Gloria, gloria in excelsis deo.*

*Gloria, gloria! Alleluia, alleluia!*

Prayers of the People

L: May the Lord be with you.

**P: And also with you.**

L: Let us pray.

Joys and Concerns

Silence

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord’s Prayer

*Our Father/Mother/Creator, 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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And let us not fall into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.*

Scripture Lessons Zephaniah 3:14-20

Isaiah 12:2-6

Philippians 4:4-7

Luke 3:7-18

\*Hymn No. 117 “Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates”

*Lift up your heads, O mighty gates;*

*behold the glorious Ruler waits!*

*The Sovereign One is drawing near;*

*the Savior of the world is here.*

*Fling wide the portals of your heart;*

*make it a temple, set apart*

*from earthly use for heaven’s employ,*

*adorned with prayer and love and joy.*

*Redeemer,come! I open wide*

*my heart to you; here, Christ, abide!*

*Let me your inner presence feel;*

*your grace and love in me reveal.*

*So come, my Sovereign; enter in!*

*Let new and nobler life begin;*

*your Holy Spirit guide us on,*

*until the glorious crown be won.*

Reflection

Offertory “Largo” *Antonio Vivaldi*

\*Doxology *Praise God from whom all blessings flow!*

*Praise God, all creatures here below.*

*Praise God for all that Love has done.*

*Creator, Christ and Spirit, One.*

\*Prayer of Dedication

\*Hymn No. 55 “Rejoice, You Pure in Heart”

*Rejoice, you pure in heart; lift praises to the sky;*

*your festal banners wave with joy, the cross of Christ raise high!*

*Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice, give thanks and sing.*

*Bright youth and seasoned age, strong souls and spirits meek,*

*raise high your free, exulting song, God’s wondrous praises speak.*

*Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice, give thanks and sing.*

*With voice as full and strong as ocean’s surging praise,*

*send forth the hymns the saints have loved, the psalms of ancient days.*

*Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice, give thanks and sing.*

*Yes, on through life’s long path, still chanting as you go,*

*from youth to age, by night and day, in gladness and in woe:*

*Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice, give thanks and sing.*

*Praise God who rules all worlds, the risen Christ adore,*

*Praise God the Spirit, Holy Fire, one God forever more!*

*Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice, give thanks and sing.*

\*Commissioning and Benediction

Postlude “Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier” (BWV 731) *JS Bach*

*\*indicates that all who are able shall stand*

*Please join us for a time of fellowship and refreshments downstairs following the worship service.*

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Worship Participants:

Musician: Fred Gray Deacon: Karen Blanchard

Tech: Sue Venman Trustees: Guy Payne, chair

Advent Liturgists: Jenny Holan and Janet Langdon

Minister to the Congregation: Rev. Susie Webster-Toleno

Ministers to the World: The Congregation

Church and Community Notes

/Our pastor, Rev. Susie Webster-Toleno, welcomes visits and calls, and is also happy to visit YOU in your home, workplace, hospital room or wherever. She sets Thursday afternoons aside for church work for sure, spending that time either in the church office or visiting with parishioners; in addition, she is available at other times by appointment. *In the lead-up to early January, she will be setting aside extra time for pastoral care visits, so don’t hesitate to ask for an appointment!* Susie can be reached at the church at 802-387-1175 if it’s not an emergency, but the fastest ways to reach her are via cell (802-579-8356) or email (susiewt@gmail.com).

Upcoming Events:

**TODAY**: After worship, please stay for a congregational meeting in the fellowship hall. Meeting will include cookies and will end by 12 Noon.

Dec. 21: Winter Solstice Labyrinth walk (7-8 PM)

Dec. 22: *no 10 AM service* **5 PM Community Candlelight & Carols service for all ages** *cookies needed!*

Dec. 24: **11 PM** Christmas Eve Service

Dec. 29: post-Christmas Carol & Hymn Sing; Amy Cann, musician

Jan. 5: Epiphany / Service of Farewell, led by Susie & the Deacons, and Fred Gray. Following the regular 10 AM service, there will be a potluck meal in the fellowship room.

✧Attributions: Written by Lisa Hancock, published by Discipleship Ministries of the United Methodist Church (www.umcdiscipleship.org). Our Confession was written Written by Laura Jaquith Bartlett, posted on the Ministry Matters website http://www.ministrymatters.com/.

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