**First Free Methodist Church of Saginaw**

**Third Sunday of Advent**

**December 12, 2021**



*“John answered all of them by saying, ‘I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.’ " (Luke 3:16)*

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**Third Sunday of Advent**

**December 12, 2021**

**Prelude**

**\*\*Greeting/Announcements**

**\*Call to Worship** (*spoken responsively*)

L: In the beginning, God created heaven and earth

**P: In the beginning, everything was good**

L: We seek the return to the joy of our salvation

**P: Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest**

L: Surely our salvation is coming

**P: We will show gentleness to everyone, the Lord is near**

L: What then shall we do?

**P: I will serve God in joy by doing good works**

**\*Opening Hymn:** “Come Ye Thankful People Come” #765 (vv.1-4)

**Come, ye thankful people, come**

**Raise the song of harvest home**

**All is safely gathered in**

**Ere the winter storms begin**

**God our Maker doth provide**

**For our wants to be supplied**

**Come to God's own temple, come**

**Raise the song of harvest home**

**All the world is God's own field**

**Fruit unto His praise to yield**

**Wheat and tares together sown**

**Unto joy or sorrow grown**

**First the blade and then the ear**

**Then the full corn shall appear**

**Lord of harvest, grant that we**

**Wholesome grain and pure may be**

**For the Lord our God shall come**

**And shall take His harvest home**

**From His field shall in that day**

**All offenses purge away**

**Give his angels charge at last**

**In the fire the tares to cast**

**But the fruitful ears to store**

**In his garner evermore**

**Even so, Lord, quickly come**

**To Thy final harvest home**

**Gather Thou Thy people in**

**Free from sorrow, free from sin**

**There, forever purified**

**In Thy presence to abide**

**Come, with all thine angels, come**

**Raise the glorious harvest home**

**Advent Reading**

**Advent 3**

The Gospel of Jesus Christ—the message He proclaimed, the life He lived, and the ministry He modeled—set into motion a redemptive movement destined to fill the whole earth. His aim was not merely the transmission of information, but the transformation of lives by empowering those who followed Him to do what He had been doing. His mission is now our mission. The Free Methodist Way is to see God’s kingdom expand exponentially as ordinary people are equipped by God’s power to do extraordinary things.

**Introducing the Passages:**

In the lectionary passages today, we see the joy that comes through God’s mission to renew and transform hearts, lives, and communities. This joy is contagious and spreads throughout all the earth! In Zephaniah, the Lord has acted not only to renew and restore His children, but to gather all who are hurting and outcast, transforming all shame into rejoicing. The prophet Isaiah describes how God’s salvation and wonderful deeds are so glorious, we can’t help but sing the Lord’s praises to all the earth. Paul exhorts the believers in Philippi to let their joy in the Lord’s peace and presence be made known to everyone. Even as John the Baptist commands repentance in Luke, we see that his message is good news that transforms the hearts and lives of all people, from tax collectors and soldiers to the children of Abraham.

On this third Sunday in Advent, we light this candle and remember with joy the ways that God has worked to save, to renew, and to transform His people and all of creation. We rejoice that by the power of God, we take part in this mission, sharing the Good News with all.

Come, Lord Jesus, Come.

**\*Invocation and Lord’s Prayer**

L: Stir up thy power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sin, let thy bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us. Plant in every heart, love for you and our neighbor, as we seek to share good news with everyone. May we model the love of Christ, as we pray the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples…

**P: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come; your will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

**\*Gloria Patri**

**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.​**

**First Scripture Lesson:** Isaiah 12:2-6

Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid, for the LORD GOD is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation. With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And you will say in that day: Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known his deeds among the nations; proclaim that his name is exalted.

Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be known in all the earth. Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

**Prayer of Confession**

L: In this world we seek joy and gladness, for ourselves, our loved ones, and also for neighbors and enemies. Bear good fruit, in accordance with the gospel, so our spirits may grow calm, our vision be clear, and our purpose be unified…

**P: Be kind to us, dear Lord, and may we be kind to all we meet. Be a gentle teacher to us in our weakness, and may we also be gentle to one another. Give us strength and discernment to do what you direct us towards, so to grow in your likeness. May we live in the peace that comes from you, not in false peace of this world. Night and day may we give you praise and thanks, because you have shown us that all things belong to you, and all blessings are a gift from your righteous hand. To you alone, the essence of wisdom, the foundation of truth, be glory forevermore. Amen.**

**Affirmation of Faith:** Apostle’s Creed

**P: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord. Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and was buried. He descended into hades, the third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Church universal, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

**Hymn of Affirmation:** “Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus” #560 (vv.1,3-4)

**‘Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus**

**Just to take Him at His Word**

**Just to rest upon His promise**

**Just to know, “Thus saith the Lord!”**

**Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him**

**How I’ve proved Him o’er and o’er**

**Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus**

**Oh, for grace to trust Him more**

**Yes ‘tis sweet to trust in Jesus**

**Just from sin and self to cease**

**Just from Jesus simply taking**

**Life and rest, and joy and peace**

**Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him**

**How I’ve proved Him o’er and o’er**

**Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus**

**Oh, for grace to trust Him more**

**I’m so glad I learned to trust Thee**

**Precious Jesus, Savior, Friend**

**And I know that He is with me**

**Will be with me to the end**

**Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him**

**How I’ve proved Him o’er and o’er**

**Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus**

**Oh, for grace to trust Him more**

**Second Scripture Lesson****:** Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.

Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**Special Music:** Micki Martin

**Children’s Sermon**

**Passing of the Peace**

**Prayers of the People**

L: Lord in Your Mercy…

**P: Hear our prayer.**

**Gospel Lesson****:** Luke 3:7-18

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?”

In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.”

Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?”

He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.”

Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

**Sermon:** “”

**Prayer of Response**

**Hymn of Response:** “Rejoice, the Lord Is King” #276 (vv.1-4)

**Rejoice, the Lord is King**

**Your Lord and King adore**

**Rejoice, give thanks and sing**

**And triumph evermore**

**Lift up your heart**

**Lift up your voice, Rejoice**

**Again I say, rejoice**

**Jesus, the Savior, reigns**

**The God of truth and love**

**When He had purged our stains**

**He took his seat above**

**Lift up your heart**

**Lift up your voice, Rejoice**

**Again I say, rejoice**

**His kingdom cannot fail**

**He rules o'er earth and heav'n**

**The keys of death and hell**

**Are to our Jesus giv’n**

**Lift up your heart**

**Lift up your voice, Rejoice**

**Again I say, rejoice**

**Rejoice in glorious hope**

**Our Lord, the Judge, shall come**

**And take His servants up**

**To their eternal home**

**Lift up your heart**

**Lift up your voice, Rejoice**

**Again I say, rejoice**

**Invitation of Offering**

L:Rejoice! The Lord is King. And our heavenly Father knows all our needs. Do not fret, but give to the heavenly Kingdom. Seek the kingdom of God, and this righteousness, as we collect this morning’s tithes and offerings.

**\*Doxology**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow Praise Him, all creatures here below

Praise Him above, ye heavenly host

Praise Father Son, and Holy Ghost.

Amen.

**\*Prayer**

**\*Closing Hymn:** “Soon and Very Soon” #289 (vv.1-4)

**Soon and very soon**

**We are going to see the King**

**Soon and very soon**

**We are going to see the King**

**Soon and very soon**

**We are going to see the King**

**Hallelujah, hallelujah**

**We are going to see the King**

**No more crying there**

**We are going to see the King**

**No more crying there**

**We are going to see the King**

**No more crying there**

**We are going to see the King**

**Hallelujah, Hallelujah**

**We are going to see the King**

**No more dying there**

**We are going to see the King**

**No more dying there**

**We are going to see the King**

**No more dying there**

**We are going to see the King**

**Hallelujah, Hallelujah**

**We are going to see the King**

**Soon and very soon**

**We are going to see the King**

**Soon and very soon**

**We are going to see the King**

**Soon and very soon**

**We are going to see the King**

**Hallelujah, hallelujah**

**We are going to see the King**

**\*Benediction**

L: May God come to us quickly. May Christ give you everlasting joy and gladness. May the Holy Spirit strengthen your hearts and lead you on the way. Go in peace to love and serve. Amen.