

***The First Church of Christ in Marblehead
Old North Church, United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming Congregation***

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

December 13, 2020

Third Sunday Of Advent

GATHERING

WELCOME

Rev. Dr. Dennis Calhoun

CALL TO WORSHIP

Rev. Lindsay Popperson

One: In Psalm 126, the Psalmist prays,
“May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy.
Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.”

In this season of Advent,
we prepare for the return of the light,
for the lengthening of days,
for the coming of God into our broken and hurting world.

Though we have gone out weeping this year,
let us come home to God with shouts of joy.
Let us worship the God who comes to us.

LIGHTING THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE OF JOY

The Tips Family

HYMN

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (verses 1, 3 and 4)

#114

Adapted from Plainsong Thomas Helmore (1811-1890)

Processional Carol, live recording of the Festival Chorus concert 2019 - choir and congregation

CENTERING

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Rev. Dr. Dennis Calhoun

One: Holy One,
Builder who delights
in making spaces of safety and beauty,
Matchmaker who rejoices
in presenting new spouses with a future of hope,
fill us today with the gifts we need
to join you in your life-sustaining, hope-giving work in the world;
let us share your joyful vision
of beauty and justice
in this world you have created and loved.
In the name of the One who is coming,
the One who taught us to pray...

LORD'S PRAYER (debts)

**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 debts as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us, not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory
forever and ever.
Amen.**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

One: We confess, O God, that we, so often and so easily,
have given in to the expectations of
people and circumstances around us.
We allowed the times of quiet
we promised for you to slip away.
Forgive us in our distractions
Help us renew our preparations for your coming.
We await the fulfillment of your promise to change things –
to bring life and strength and courage to us:
eyes to see, ears to hear, and tongues to speak your word.
Continue to be with us, O Lord
as we learn to wait with you.
Now hear us as we pray in the blessed quietness of this moment...

SILENT PRAYER

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

One: Holy one,
we give you thanks that you meet us in our struggles,
and call us into a future of hope and joy.
You have promised to be faithful.
You have promised to forgive.
We open our hearts to you with joy,
in the name of Jesus, the One you send to meet us
again and again.
Thanks be to God.
Amen.

LISTENING

A MOMENT WITH OUR CHILDREN

Karen Kilty

ANTHEM

Aria: *Bereite dich*, from *Weihnacht's—Oratorium* Johann Sebastian Bach

Christmas Oratorio -Part One

Stephanie Scarcella, *mezzo-soprano*

Live recording from the 2019 Festival Chorus Concert

HEBREW BIBLE READING

Isaiah 61:1-4, 10-11

Read by Melissa MacDonald

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 the words of prophets, 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.

NEW TESTAMENT READING 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 Read by Melissa MacDonald

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.
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.

SERMON

“Rejoice Always?”

Rev. Lindsay Popperson

PASTORAL PRAYER

RESPONDING

OFFERTORY MOMENT

Rev. Dr. Dennis Calhoun

DOXOLOGY (#45)

Praise God for love we all may share.

Praise God for beauty everywhere.

Praise God for hope of good to be.

Praise God for truth that makes us free. Amen.

SENDING

MUSICAL OFFERING *Magnificat*, from *Vesperae Solennes de Confessore*, K. 339 W.A. Mozart

Live recording from the 2013 Festival Chorus concerts;

Holly Cameron, *soprano*; chorus

BENEDICTION

Rev. Lindsay Popperson