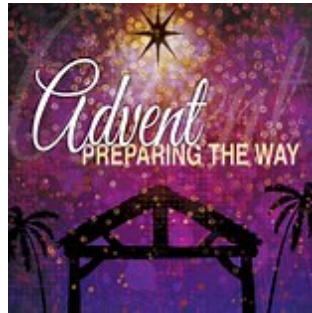




[Link to zoom worship at 9:00 on Sunday](#)

[Click Here For Onsite Bulletin](#)



## **December 17, 2023 + Third Sunday of Advent + JOY**

### **Welcome**

**Prelude:** Hovey Corbin

### **Call to Worship**

Have you noticed? Are you paying attention?  
God is doing a new thing.

**We watch and wait in the joy of the coming Messiah.**

You know the captives? God is bringing freedom.

You know the brokenhearted? God is bringing healing.

**We watch and wait in the joy of the coming Messiah.**

Beloved, listen. God is calling *you*.

To be freed and to free your neighbors.

To be healed and to heal your community.

To testify to the Light among us.

**We watch and wait in the joy of the coming Messiah.**

So, let us join our voices and our hearts

as we proclaim the story of the one whose coming we anticipate  
and yet is already as close as our own breath.

**We come to watch, to wait, and to worship  
in the joy of Jesus Christ, the coming Messiah. Amen.**

**Opening Prayer**

Holy God of Joy,  
We rejoice in the reality of who you are.  
We live within the joy of your love for us.  
Our contentment comes and goes.  
Our happiness ebbs and flows.  
Our feelings depend upon our circumstances,  
our physical health, our brain chemistry.  
But our joy is deeply rooted  
in our identity as your beloved children.  
And we give you thanks. **Amen.**

**Advent Candle Lighting**

Reader 1:

When God's people were surrounded by hardship, suffering, and grief, Isaiah proclaimed,  
"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."

Reader 2:

We come today as people who are also surrounded by suffering and grief. And yet, the Spirit hovers among us, tending and anointing, inspiring freedom where there is captivity, declaring blessing in places the world has cursed, and igniting joy where mourning and heartache prevail.

**Congregation:**

**We wait as people who experience hardship and pain,  
yet we are called to witness to the persistent joy  
that sustains our life as God's people.**

Reader 1:

We light these candles as signs of our hope, peace, and joy. May our lives shine with the tenacious joy of the Light who lives in our hearts as we wait and work for the coming of God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

**Congregation:**

**We light this candle of Joy  
as a sign that we will be present with Joy in the world.**

**Prayer of Presence:**

**Holy Living Light of God,  
you are our Joyful Presence.  
Let Joy grow in our lives each day,  
so we can be a present of Joy to others.**

**Open our hearts.  
May it be so.  
Amen.**

**Song of Faith:**

**Affirmation of Faith UMH 889**

Leader:

There is one God  
and there is one mediator, Christ Jesus,  
who came as a ransom for all,  
to whom we testify.

People:

**This saying is sure  
and worthy of full acceptance:  
That Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners,  
and was manifested in the flesh,  
vindicated in the spirit,  
seen by angels,  
proclaimed among the nations,  
believed in throughout the world,  
taken up in glory.  
Great indeed is the mystery of the gospel. Amen.**

**Scripture:** Psalm 126

**Message: Joy**

Rev. Blaine Wimberly

**Song of Faith:**

**Generosity Moment: McFredericks**

**Offertory Prayer:**

God of hope and compassion: Just as John the Baptist came long ago in Judea to witness to your light, we remember that the light he heralds is the savior of hope. Sometimes it seems our world is determined to extinguish hope and light. We admit that there are times when we feel the darkness is too prevalent, too strong; and hope is just wishful thinking. May we witness through our giving not scarcity and despair but joy, hope, and compassion. May we also witness through what we say and what we do. In Christ's name, we pray. **Amen.**

**Musical Response**

O come, you Dayspring, come and cheer  
our spirits by your presence here.  
And dawn in every broken soul  
as vision that can see the whole.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come within as Light to dwell.

**Announcements**

**Joys and Concerns****Prayer Song:** *Believe with a Joyful Heart***Prayers of the People**  
**Lord's Prayer****Song of Faith:****Benediction****Fellowship Time****Mountainside United Methodist Church****Mission:** To make disciples of Jesus Christ  
for the transformation of our community and the world.**Vision:** To be a thriving Christ-led people in the East Mountains,  
inviting all generations to a transforming experience of God's Grace.

WORSHIP + CONNECT + GROW + SERVE

**Announcements and Calendar**

*We are glad you are online with us today!*  
*Please register your attendance and your joys and concerns in the*  
*chat box.*

**Church Events****Monday, December 18**9:30 Line Dancing in the gym with Linda  
3:00 Teatime online**Tuesday, December 19**

9:00 Holy Yoga in the sanctuary with Connie

**Wednesday, December 20**1:30 Line Dancing in the gym with Linda  
5:30 Messy Church  
Wednesday, December 20 5:30 pm Messy Church**Thursday, December 21**3:00 Teatime Online  
**6:00 Blue Christmas service**

**Sunday, December 24; Fourth Sunday of Advent, Christmas Eve**

9:00 Sunday Morning Live  
9:00 The Breakfast Club adult Sunday School  
10:30 Worship in the Sanctuary  
11:45 Choir practice in the Round Room  
**6:00 pm Christmas Eve service**

**Looking Ahead:**

**Sunday, December 31 New Year's at Noon in the MAC**  
**Sunday, December 31 11:00pm Watch Night service on Zoom**

**Community Events**

**Acton Academy**

on break

**Twelve Step Groups**

AA meets in the Fellowship Hall M, W, F noon; and T, Th 4:30 pm;  
men's group on Wednesdays at 7:00 pm  
Al-Anon meets in the Fellowship Hall Friday 10:00 am

**Fitness**

Dance Aerobics in the gym Wednesday 9:00 am  
Dance Fitness in the gym Friday 9:00 am

**Upward**

Evaluation, Registration, and Training ongoing  
practice sessions have Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays  
games begin in January



**Mountainside**  
United Methodist Church  
Connecting People with Jesus

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