

# Worship on the Third Sunday of Advent December 15, 2023

The Rev. Dr. Rosanna Anderson, Designated Term Pastor  
Diane Dawson Dexter, Organist

**Prelude** "Silent Night" Franz Gruber

**Welcome and Announcements** Dr. Anderson

## Call to Worship

Today we bear witness to the light of Christ shining in our midst. With Isaiah and Jeremiah, prophets of Israel, we await the promised return of Jesus Christ, our risen Lord.

**We look for the coming of the One who will bring lasting peace, justice and righteousness to the earth.**

With John the Baptist, calling from the wilderness, we cry:

**"Prepare the way of the Lord! Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."**

With Mary, the mother of Jesus, we rejoice in God our Savior, **the Mighty One has done great things for us; holy is his name.** With the writers of the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, we tell the good news of Jesus Christ: **he is a child of Bethlehem who came to save the world, and he will return to rule in glory.**

The Word became flesh and lived among us **and we have seen his glory. Hallelujah!**

## Prayer of the Day\*

**God of life, we rejoice in your love which has filled creation from the beginning and which calls all life into being. We praise you for Jesus Christ who reveals most fully your loving purpose for all people. We bless you for your Spirit who draws all humanity into the circle of your tender love. Gracious God, bless us with your presence so that our worship and our lives may be a true celebration of your love in Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.**

Hymn 196 "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"

## Prayer of Confession\*

**God of mercy, you have called us to be thankful for your good gifts to us, but too often we have taken them for granted as if we deserved them. You have called us to be hopeful through the gospel of Jesus Christ, but too often despair has come upon us, and the cares of the world have weighed us down. You have called us to be joyful in the wonder of your presence among us, but too often we become mired in the mundane and lose the gift of reverence. By your saving power, O God, enable us to celebrate your love for us with joy and thanksgiving. Amen.**

## Assurance of Forgiveness

## Prayer for Illumination

**Old Testament** Zephaniah 3:14-20

**New Testament** Philippians 4:4-7

**Sermon** "Rejoicing Instead of Worrying" Dr. Anderson

**Offertory** "What Child Is This?"

**Hymn 238** Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains, and the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains: *Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!*

## Prayer of Dedication

**Generous God, thank you for bringing us to this season of faith, hope, and love. As we look at our lives, we see evidence of the countless ways that you have provided for our needs. Let gratitude well up in our hearts and overflow in generosity to others. Draw us outward to see ways that we can joyfully share what you have given us. Let our acts of kindness as a church bear good fruit in the world. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## Sharing Joys and Concerns and The Lord's Prayer

**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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; 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.**

**Hymn 224** “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”

**Benediction**

Dr. Anderson

**Postlude**

“The Prayer” Carole Sager and David Foster

\* Prayers from The Presbyterian Church in Canada’s *Book of Common Worship* Online <https://presbyterian.ca/worship/book-of-common-worship/>

### **Church Calendar**

Sunday, Dec. 15 **Worship and Fellowship** 10:00 a.m.

All are welcome to join us onsite or via live stream on our website.

**Cookie Exchange + Christmas Movies** 5:30 -7:30 p.m.

Amy Harris and Mere Doyen have teamed up to create this fun event for adults and families. Please bring 2 or 3 dozen cookies to exchange. Kids are welcome to wear PJs. We’ll have popcorn and snacks for all.

Wednesday, Dec. 18 **Bible Study** 9:00–10:00 a.m.

Join our hybrid study of *Season’s Greetings* chapters 6, 7 and 8.

Thursday, Dec. 19 **Tots Time** 10:00–11:00 a.m.

Parents and toddlers are welcome to enjoy play time and conversation in this casual gathering with tea and cookies.

Sunday, Dec. 22 **Worship and Fellowship** 10:00 a.m.

All are welcome to join us onsite or via live stream on our website.

Tuesday, Dec. 24 **Christmas Eve Worship** 5:00 p.m.

Join us onsite or online for a traditional Christmas Eve worship service, concluding with candlelight as we sing “Silent Night.”

### **Union Chapel (United Church of Christ)**

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**The Rev. Dr. Rosanna Anderson, Designated Term Pastor**

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