

Order of Worship
The United Church of Phelps

Announcements/Joys/Concerns (Barb)

Opening Prayer (Barb)

Lord, we have come to this place from a world of demands and schedules. We have sought hope and peace and have found them here. Now we seek the inner joy that only your presence can bring to our lives. Open our hearts and our spirits to your love. For we ask this in Jesus' Name. AMEN.

Third Sunday in Advent: Joy (Motzer family)

READER ONE: Every year we light candles as we prepare for the coming of Christ. More and more candles, more and more light, as we watch and wait for Jesus, the Light of the World.

ALL: God of Promise, come into our darkness. Renew your hope and peace and joy in us, for you alone bring life out of death.

READER TWO: Receive God's promise of joy from Psalm 28: Praise be to the LORD For he has heard my cry for mercy The LORD is my strength and my shield

ALL: My heart trusts in him, and I am helped My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song.

Light the candles of hope, peace and joy

ALL SINGING:

Light the Advent candle three: Think of heavenly harmony; angels singing "Peace on Earth" at the blessed Savior's birth.

Refrain:

Candle, candle, burning bright, shining in the cold winter night; candle, candle, burning bright, fill our hearts with Christmas light.

Centering Music Good Christian Friends, Rejoice! Arr. Robert W. Thygerson TUNE: IN DULCI JUBILO trad. German carol, 14th C

Call to Worship (Barb)

Leader: God's Spirit has led us here.

People: And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is PEACE.

Leader: God's Spirit has led us here.

People: And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is HOPE.

Leader: God's Spirit has led us here.

People: And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is JOY.

Leader: God's Spirit has led us here.

People: And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is LOVE.

Leader: There's a sweet, sweet Spirit in the place,

ALL: And we know that it's the Spirit of the Lord

Hymn Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice; give ye heed to what we say:
News, news! Jesus Christ is born today! Ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger
now. Christ is born today; Christ is born today!

Good Christians friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice; now ye hear of endless bliss:
News, news! Jesus Christ was born for this! He hath opened heaven's door, and ye are blest for
ever-more. Christ was born for this; Christ was born for this!

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice; now ye need not fear the grave:
News, news! Jesus Christ was born to save! Calls you one and calls you all to gain his
everlasting hall. Christ was born to save; Christ was born to save!

Prayer of Confession/Silent Prayer (Barb)

It is getting more and more difficult, Lord, for us to keep our attention on the holy things. Our lives are caught up in the planning, parties, gifts, and other such things. We get side-tracked too easily and exhausted, we fall into restless sleep. The cries of those in need abound and we are overwhelmed by the need. Too often we turn a deaf ear because we feel we just can't meet all the needs that are presented to us. Heal our hearts and spirits, Lord. Help us understand that you do not ask us to heal everything but rather to find a simple way in which we might lighten someone else's burden, as you have lightened our lives. You have brought hope and peace to us. Now cause us to rejoice in the wondrous things that you have done. Teach us to use our gifts for the common good, and that in helping, we find great and abundant joy. In Jesus' Name, we pray. AMEN.

Words of Assurance (Barb)

The messenger has been sent to you, proclaiming that there is One who is Coming who will heal and lead you. Know that this is a great gift from God, who has always and will always love you. AMEN.

Blessing Offering (S.S.)

Let's pray together: God of grace, it is our delight and our devotion to give these gifts to you. All we are and all we have are yours alone. Accept this joyful offering as a token of our abiding love: use it to bring peace, justice, and comfort to all the world. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC (Diane and Earl): Go Tell It on the Mountain

Message/Scripture (UCP Children): LUKE 2:1-20, Celebrating Jesus

Reader 1: Luke 2:1-7

Song: Away in a Manger hymn 217 (all)

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head. The stars in the sky looked down where he lay, the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes; I love thee Lord Jesus, look down from the sky and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay close by me forever, and love me, I pray; bless all the dear children in thy tender care, and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.

Reader 2: Luke 2:8-14

Song: Hark the Herald Angels Sing hymn 240 (all)

Hark the herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King; peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled, Joyful all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies; with the angelic host proclaim, Christ is born in Bethlehem!

Refrain: **Hark!~ the herald angels sing, Glory to the new born King!**

Christ, y highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord; late in time behold him come, off-spring of a virgins womb. Veiled in flesh the God-head see; hail incarnate Deity, born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.

Refrain: **Hark! the herald angels sing, Glory to the new-born king!**

Reader 3: Luke 2:15-20

Celebrating Jesus (6 Readers)

Reader 7: What gifts can we give to Jesus and the world?

Video and Presentation: Little Drummer Boy

Presentation on Small Group studies and video

Pastoral Prayer (S.S.)

"It's the most wonderful time of the year" - the music swirls toward our ears from countless speakers in stores, on the radio, on TV. But we aren't so sure about that. We have been so wrapped up in preparation for the "wonderful season" we can't seem to find the joy. So many people are in need. We have friends and family members who are suffering from illnesses, loss, alienation. We want them to be happy, but we can't make that happen. We bring the names to you, Lord, for your healing mercy and rest in the assurance of your loving presence with them. That is a comfort to us. But we also stand in need of your healing restoration. We are feeling depleted, discouraged, and exhausted. Slow us down, Lord. Help us to feel the joy of your love from the "inside out" and in every direction! Remind us that your gift of love is freely given to us so that we may be healed and be a blessing to someone else. Touch our hearts and spirits, so that your joy may spring from our lips and our lives. For we ask it in Jesus' Name. **AMEN.**

LORD'S PRAYER

HYMN #246 JOY TO THE WORLD

Joy to the world, the Lord has come! Let earth receive her King; let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the world, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ; while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground; he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove, the glories of his righteousness, and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.

Departing Music

Christians, Be Joyful! J.S. Bach