



"A Community Of Many Faithing Communities Where All Belong!"

Living Waters Contemplative Life Center | Divine Intervention Ministry to the Homeless  
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Arts and Science Literacy Camps for Children

# Welcome To Worship

December 11, 2022

9:30 a.m.

*3rd Sunday of Advent*

***"From Generation to Generation:  
We Can Choose a Better Way"***

Rev. Trish Eckert



*Welcome to this time of being with God and each other.*

## ✧Prelude

## ✧Welcome and community news

- Please **remain with us after worship today for our Special Called Meeting**, in which Session will present our 2023 Budget. You're invited to take a few minutes visiting with one another, and then bring into our circle a drink or snack from Tippe Café and settle in for the review of our upcoming budget.
- **This coming Wednesday, December 14<sup>th</sup>**, Tippe is participating in a “Blue Christmas” service along with the Southeast Clergy Association at Bay View United Methodist Church (2772 S Kinnickinnic Ave) at 7 pm. All are invited. *Blue Christmas service provides a quiet and contemplative worship service as an alternative to more traditional gatherings. This is in honor of those who are experiencing grief and struggling with loss.*
- **Our Christmas Eve service** begins at 5 pm with carols and cookies, and the worship will begin at 5:30 pm
- A reminder that since Christmas Day and New Year's Day both fall on a Sunday, **we will not gather for worship on Sunday morning, December 25<sup>th</sup> or January 1<sup>st</sup>**. Grace Presbyterian has reached out to let us know that they will be holding a worship service on New Year's Day and welcome the Tippe community to join them. Their Sunday services begin at 10 am.



## ✧Readying Ourselves for Worship ~ SING:

***Surely God is in this place, Holy Ground!***  
***Surely God is in this place, Holy Ground!***

✧ **Reading**      *Instructions for a Hard Choice* – by Rev. Sarah Speed

First, you must take a deep breath.

Let oxygen dance through your lungs.

Exhale it slowly. Allow the hurt, the shame,

the anger to rise up in you. Let your mind run wild,

like a million loose horses. Let the narratives unfold, unroll,

a river of choppy water. Ask yourself how you got here. Look

down at your feet. Roll your shoulders back. Remember who you

are. Take another deep breath. Then, walk it back to the beginning.

Instead of looking at your feet, look at hers. Imagine where she stands. Imagine what

he needs. Dry the river of false stories in your mind. Turn rushing water into a dry

creek bed, certainly not clean enough to drink. Call the horses. Bring them home.

Watch as they shake off the dust of the day. Name what

you're feeling. Inhale again. Now you are ready

to choose a better

way.

✧ **Becoming Present to God and Each Other...Our Check-in:**

*How Are You as You Arrive...how is it with your spirit?*

✧ **Candle Lighting ~ Joy**

*(Four readers are invited to the front for our candle lighting liturgy)*

Pastor: Over a hundred people, from the ages of two to eighty years old, were asked the question, "What brings you joy?" From the voices of different generations, hear their answers:

One: A clean kitchen.

Two: Sand between my toes.

Three: Being outside.

Four: Sleeping in my own bed after a night away.

One: Having a camera in my hands.

Two: My partner's laugh.

Three: Mountain air.

Four: When my parents pick me up.

One: The end of my to-do list.

Two: Hugs from my niece and nephew.

Three: Baby giggles.

Four: My cat.

One: Putting my hands in the garden.

Two: A chord resolved.

Three: Stargazing.

Four: Bedtime books.

One: A warm cup of coffee with friends.

Two: My new granddaughter.

Three: Lingered at the table after dinner.

Four: Time with family.

One: Today we light the candle of joy. May its light remind us of all the good news this season brings. May its light remind us of the many sources of joy in our lives, and may that joy not only draw us closer to one another, but closer to God.

Two: Family of faith, what brings you joy? Amen.

~ The Joy of Passing the Peace ~

✧ **And the Children Will Lead the Way: Kid's Time**



✧ **Gathering as God's People:**

**Our Advent Series ~ *From Generation to Generation***

On this third Sunday of Advent, the Sunday of “Joy,” we continue with our series, “From Generation to Generation,” and focus on a theme each week. This week we’ll reflect on the theme: “We Can Choose a Better Way.” We are all faced with joys and challenges everyday – when we look back, are there times we wish we had taken the time to absorb the joy unfolding in front of us or been able to handle a difficult situation differently? What might it look like to “choose a better way?”

This season, through different Gospel readings from Matthew and Luke, alongside the Book of Isaiah, we are piecing together a chronological storyline that leads up to Christ’s birth, providing a fuller sense of the Christmas story. Today we will hear the familiar story of Joseph, as he takes in the news that Mary is with child. Ultimately, we witness him choose a better way...but it takes some pretty powerful intervention to make it so.

Like a tapestry woven throughout time, the Christmas story weaves us in – to remember how God has shown up in the past, to continue the work of collective liberation, to behold the presence of God in flesh and bone.

As we take in these stories, let’s pay attention to the framework of Advent. The word, Advent, comes from the Latin, “adventus,” which means, “coming” or “arrival.” It is a time for preparation and reflection, an opportunity to slow down from the frenetic pace that often accompanies the Christmas season, a time of waiting and watching, of keeping awake! Let us remain alert and pay attention to the ways we are transformed and invited into further transformation.

The work of God is always unfolding—in and through us. This Advent, may we each remember that we belong—to a story etched into the wrinkles of time, to generations that have come before and will come after, to a love that won’t let go.

## ✧Gathering Hymn #92 “While We are Waiting”

### ✧Opening Ourselves to God’s Grace

A series of experiments by Princeton psychologists, Janine Willis and Alexander Todorov, taught the world that it only takes a tenth of a second for us to form an impression of a stranger. In other words, it only takes a tenth of a second for us to look at someone’s face and determine a stereotype about who they are.

With decisions happening *that* quickly, it is not hard to imagine why we might need this moment of confession.

The prayer of confession is an opportunity to slow down. We take that tenth of a second and give it room to breathe. We reflect on the decisions that we’ve made this past week and we ask for God’s mercy to be in all of them.

And without fail, God wiggles God’s self into the cracks of our lives, and we are made better for it. So with that confidence, let us go to God in prayer:

### ✧Sharing Our Innermost Lives with God

**ALL: God of mercy,  
a million times a day we have the opportunity to be gracious,  
to assume the best in others,  
to give the benefit of the doubt.  
A million times a day we could choose the better way,  
but so often we don’t.  
Fear and greed kick in.  
Assumptions and insecurities take the wheel.  
Comparison and critique lead the charge.  
Forgive us for forgetting that we are descendants of Joseph.  
Forgive us for forgetting that grace and mercy are in our blood.  
Forgive us for forgetting that all belong to you.  
Give us the courage to love even bigger than before,  
and the wisdom to choose a better way.  
Amen.**

Pastor: Family of Faith, hear this good news:

We who have chosen wrong, are given a second chance.

We who have lost our way, are welcomed into community.

We who feel alone, are seen, held, and known.

This is the good news of the gospel.

No matter how many times we choose wrong or lose our way,

God continues to be a God of second chances, community, and love.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

✧ **Special Music** *Therefore the Redeemed of the Lord Shall Return*  
Music by Rosie Rain

✧ **Prayer for Illumination**

Holy One,  
scripture tells us that you came to Joseph through an angel—  
loud and clear, impossible to miss.

Scripture also tells us that Joseph listened.  
He rearranged his life to follow your invitation.

God, we long for that—  
*all of that.*

We long to hear your voice—loud and clear, impossible to miss.  
We long for invitations to something more, something deeper.  
And we long to be like Joseph and find the courage to follow.

So clean out our ears. Brush the dust off our hearts.  
Trace us back to our roots—back to Joseph—who heard and followed.  
With gratitude we listen. Amen.

✧ **Bible Wisdom Teachings**

**Matthew 1:18-25**

*The Birth of Jesus the Messiah*

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’ All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

‘Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall name him Emmanuel’,

which means, ‘God is with us.’ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

**Isaiah 35:1-10**

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;  
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,  
and rejoice with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,  
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.  
They shall see the glory of the Lord,  
the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands,  
and make firm the feeble knees.  
Say to those who are of a fearful heart,  
'Be strong, do not fear!  
Here is your God.  
He will come with vengeance,  
with terrible recompense.  
He will come and save you.'

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;  
then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.  
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,  
and streams in the desert;  
the burning sand shall become a pool,  
and the thirsty ground springs of water;  
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,  
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

A highway shall be there,  
and it shall be called the Holy Way;  
the unclean shall not travel on it,  
but it shall be for God's people;  
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.  
No lion shall be there,  
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;  
they shall not be found there,  
but the redeemed shall walk there.  
And the ransomed of the Lord shall return,  
and come to Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;  
they shall obtain joy and gladness,  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

One: May we hear anew the origin stories of our faith and draw from the roots of our tradition.

**All: Thanks be to our God.**



## ✧Message: “Seeking Joy in Hard Choices” Rev. Trish Eckert

### ✧Reflection Questions

- ◇ What choices—made by former generations—have you inherited?
- ◇ When have our ancestors chosen the better way, and when have they not? How do we experience the consequences of those actions?
- ◇ In Isaiah 35, note all the images of transformation occurring in this prophetic vision. The prophet envisions a Holy Way where everything becomes more alert, more joyful, and more vibrant. What choices can we make each day to bring forth God’s Holy Way?

### ✧Short period of Silent Reflection



### ✧Sharing Our Wisdom

#### ✧Affirmation of Faith

**ALL: We believe in a God who offers second chances and does not hold grudges.**

**We believe in a God who opens the door to new life and leaves the porch light on for us when we get lost.**

**We believe in a God who believes in us—believes that we can make a difference, that we can choose grace over comparison, love over hate, peace over war.**

**And so we strive to live our lives in love.**

**We strive to listen as Joseph listened, and to be the people that God calls us to be.**

**It’s all that easy, and it’s all that hard.**

**This we believe. Amen.**



## ✧ Hymn #83 “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

### ✧ Community Prayers, Pastoral Prayer and the Lord’s Prayer

Prayers from the Community

Pastoral Prayer:

God of step-fathers and adopted parents,  
God of angel messengers and newborn kings,  
we bow our heads today with praise on our lips.

For who else but you  
would pick two ordinary folks to be God’s parents?  
And who else but you  
would be patient enough to lead Mary and Joseph back to one another? And who else  
but you  
would assume the best of fragile human hearts?

The answer is no one, for you alone are our God,  
and in your grace and in your devotion,  
you open the door for us to see a new day.

So today we pray: help us to be like Joseph, who reminds us that grace is within  
reach.

In a world full of competition, help us choose celebration.  
In a world full of scarcity, help us choose abundance.  
In a world of war and violence, help us choose peace and grace.  
In a world of divided lines, help us choose connection and relationship.  
In a world of quick assumptions and stereotypes, help us choose curiosity and  
compassion.

And in our striving to choose a better way, God, may we be transformed.  
May this story of Joseph rattle something loose in us.  
May this story of Joseph help us drop the need to be right,  
or to be the best, or to have it all figured out,  
and instead may it draw us closer to authenticity and you.

May this story of imperfection sew grace into our bones.  
May we catch glimpses of your love in our world.  
May we shake off the dust of our old selves and live into something new.  
And may we be a little more like Joseph, but mainly, may we be a little more like you.

With hope in our hearts we pray,  
(The Lord’s Prayer)

**ALL: Indwelling God,  
infused throughout all existence,  
we honor you with many names.**

**Your realm is within the human heart.  
We accept life for all that it can be,  
on earth as throughout all creation.**

**May we continue to draw sustenance from this earth,  
and may we receive forgiveness equal to our own.**

**May we ever move from separation toward union,  
to live in grace, with joy and love in our hearts,  
forever and ever. Amen.**

✧ **Benediction - Becoming a Living Blessing**

As you leave this place, may you go knowing that from generation to generation,  
we have been claimed and loved.

From generation to generation,  
God has been by our side.

From generation to generation,  
we are not alone.

The God of yesterday and the God of tomorrow knows you by name, loves you, and  
calls you forth, saying, “Go be the person you are called to be, love wildly, do justice,  
and come back soon.”

May it be so. Amen.

*Now that the worship has ended, may the service truly begin.*

✧ **Our Response:**

***Holy One, now we your servants go in peace. Your Word lives on in us.***

✧ **Postlude**

*Hear this service presented on TippeTalk  
podcast, link on our website & Facebook.*

<http://www.tippechurch.org>

*All prayers, worship words, and candle  
lighting liturgy written by Rev. Sarah  
(Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC |  
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