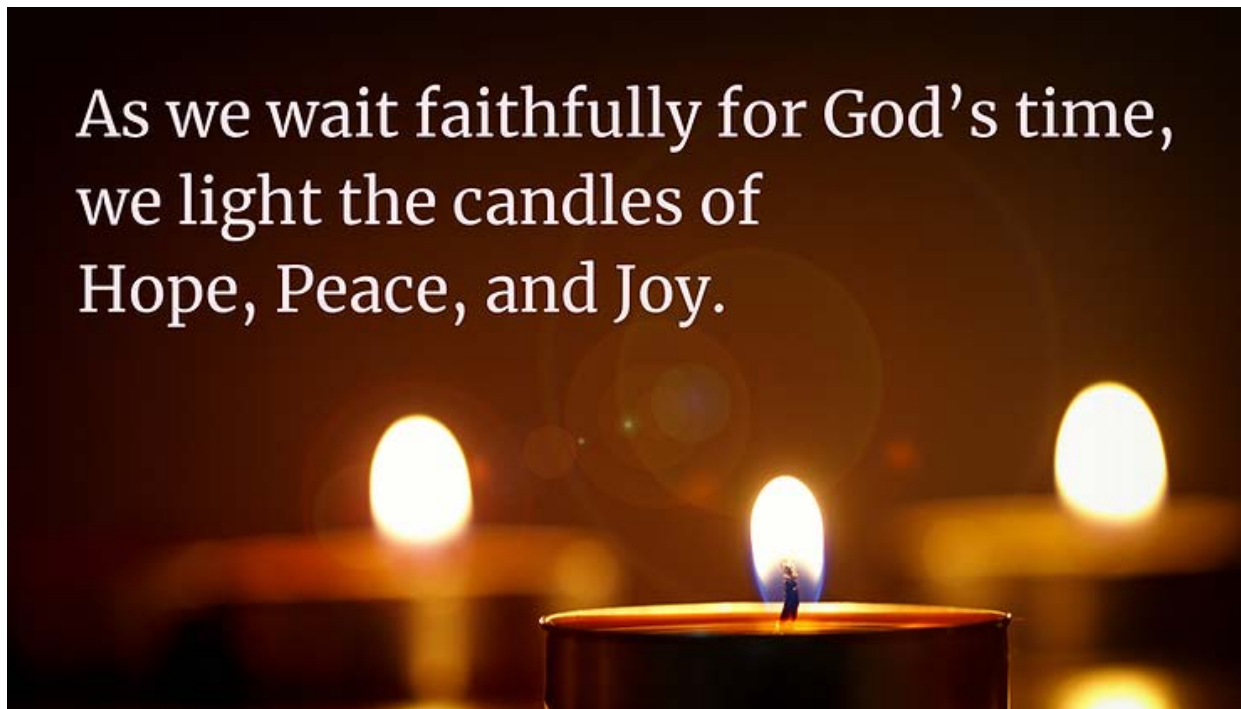


As we wait faithfully for God's time,
we light the candles of
Hope, Peace, and Joy.



First Presbyterian Church

149 Broad Street
Tonawanda, New York 14150 ~ 2111
Church: (716) 692-1319
Rev. Dr. Rebecca Chaffee

Come, Worship the Lord, Our God
3rd Sunday of Advent

CCLI License # 2839486

December 11, 2022

10:30 am

PRELUDE *Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

My soul magnifies the Lord;
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.
The Mighty One has done great things.
Holy is God's name!

GATHERING PRAYER

Holy God, your prophets have long spoken
of the one who would come to save us.
Now the promise is fulfilled;
now your kingdom has come near.
Send us as messengers of your way,
to go and tell all the world
of the wonders we have seen
and the good news we have heard;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

HYMN: *Prepare the Way, O Zion #106

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING: Jessica and Sue Schurr's Sunday School Class

The prophet Isaiah shared a word with the grieving world, a vision of vibrant renewal. All of creation will be glad. Even the earth itself will praise God!

All: Dry places like deserts will be full of blooming life.

Joy will grow like new crocuses poking up through the ground and spreading out in the front yard.

All: The whole earth will sing praises to God, and so will we!

One: As we wait faithfully for God's time, we light the candles of Hope, Peace, and Joy.

All: In God's time of joy, all sorrow and sighing will leave us.

HYMN: "Now It's Time to Light the Candle." vs 3

CALL TO CONFESSION

Let the desert rejoice,
and let the dry land be glad,
for God has come to save us.
Let us confess our sin.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**God of majesty and glory,
we are thirsty for your grace.**

**You made a way for us in the wilderness,
and still, in our foolishness, we go astray.
We hide our eyes from your presence.
We do not listen to your word.
We are lifeless when we ought to dance
and speechless when we ought to sing.
Forgive us, O Lord.
Speak peace to our fearful hearts,
strengthen our weak hands,
and make firm our feeble knees
as we seek to follow in your holy way. Amen.**

Time for Silent Confession

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

Now return to the Lord with joy and gladness.
Sing a song of redemption!
Let sorrow and sighing be no more.
In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.
Thanks be to God.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Lord God, in this dry and dusty place,
pour out the power of your Spirit
so that your Word may blossom in our lives;
through Jesus Christ, our way in the wilderness. Amen.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS:

Isaiah 35:1-10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus ² 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.

³ Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴ 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.'

⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

⁶then 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;

⁷the 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.

⁸A 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 traveller, not even fools, shall go astray.

⁹No 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.

¹⁰And 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.

Matthew 11:2-11

²When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³and said to him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?' ⁴Jesus answered them, 'Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶And blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me.'

⁷As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you." ¹¹Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

SERMON: "Everlasting Joy"

Rev. Dr. Rebecca Chaffee

PASTORAL PRAYER

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 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. Amen.

CALL TO THE OFFERING

God is our rock and our fortress. Let us celebrate our salvation by fearlessly giving a portion of what has already been given to us, either by placing it in the basket or by mailing it in.

THE OFFERTORY *To a Maid Whose Name Was Mary*

DOXOLOGY *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow #607*

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**Thanks be to you, O God, maker of heaven and earth
giver of justice, lover of righteousness,
hope of the afflicted, and friend of the poor.**

Your faithfulness never fails.

**Take and use these gifts we offer
to further your purpose in the world
and to fulfill the promise of the world to come;
through Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.**

***HYMN:** *While We are Waiting, Come #92*

CHARGE

Be patient, beloved ones,
and let your hearts be strong,
for the coming of the Lord is near.

BENEDICTION

Bless the Lord with all your soul,
and may the blessing of God be with you.

We would like to thank Rev. Dr. Rebecca Chaffee for sharing her gifts with us today.

Hymns

“Now It’s Time to Light the Candle”

1. Now it’s time to light the candle, soon God’s promise will be here.
Young and old we wait together for the Savior drawing near.
Light will overcome the darkness: See the hope the Christ Child brings.
2. Now it’s time to light the candle, messengers prepare the way.
Wolf and lamb lie down together; righteousness marks God’s new day.
Light will overcome the darkness: Live the peace the Christ Child brings.
3. Now it’s time to light the candle, in God’s name we will rejoice.
Bells and organ play together, we will shout in one loud voice!
Light will overcome the darkness: Sing the joy the Christ Child brings.
4. Now it’s time to light the candle, shining love in Jesus’ name.
When all people join together earth will never be the same.
Light will overcome the darkness: Be the love the Christ Child brings.