

**John Calvin Presbyterian Church**  
*Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023 | Third Sunday in Advent*

**WELCOME AND COMMUNITY SHARING**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Liturgist

One: The Promised One of God brings good news to the oppressed and binds up the brokenhearted.

**All: We are witnesses to the light of Christ!**

One: The promised One of God proclaims liberty to captives and release to prisoners.

**All: We are witnesses to the light of Christ!**

One: The promised One of God comforts all who mourn and gives a mantle of peace instead of a faint spirit.

**All: Rejoicing always, praying without ceasing, holding fast to what is good, we are witnesses to the light of Christ!**

**LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE**

One: The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;

**All: like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly  
and rejoice with joy and singing.**

**OPENING HYMN** #124: "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus"

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Liturgist

We thank you, O God, for those in Scripture who have pointed to Christ:

for your prophets Elijah and Isaiah, and for John.

We thank you, too, for those in our lives who have pointed us to Christ:

pastors and teachers, strangers, and friends.

Give us eyes to see him today among those who are  
oppressed or beaten down,  
and we will give our testimony, too,  
and point to Jesus, the Light of the World. **Amen.**

## **CALL TO CONFESSION**

Rev. Robert Jensen

Old habits and new wrongs wear ruts through our lives  
and relationships,  
but God is able to restore us.  
Like water coursing through a desert,  
the Spirit of God of God flows through us,  
reminding us that we belong to God and are raised to  
new life.  
Let us confess our sin.

## **UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Merciful God, you love justice;  
why, then, do we persist in wrongdoing and every form  
of evil?  
You have given us the gift of your Spirit;  
why, then, do we quench the Spirit among us?  
You have sent the light into the world;  
why, then, have we loved darkness rather than light?  
Forgive us. Restore us. Till and tend us as your garden  
until righteousness and praise spring up,  
for the sake of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray.  
Amen.**

## **ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Rev. Robert Jensen

In Jesus Christ, God has done great things for us!  
Even if we have gone out in tears,  
God brings us home shouting for joy.  
Thanks be to God:  
We are forgiven!

## **RESPONSE**

#112: "Jesus, Name Above All Names"

**PASSING OF THE PEACE OF CHRIST**      Rev. Robert Jensen

One:    The peace of Christ be with you.

All:    **And also with you!**

**ANTHEM**      JCPD Adult Choir  
"A Christmas Hallelujah"

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**      Rev. Robert Jensen

**SCRIPTURE READINGS**      Rev. Robert Jensen

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Philippians 4:4-9

**SERMON**      Rev. Robert Jensen  
"Re - JOY - ce!"

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**      Rev. Robert Jensen

**THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**MINUTE FOR CHURCH LIFE**

*Stewardship: Paul Doty or Kim Van Buren*

*URS Update: Amy Brixey*

**CALL FOR THE OFFERING**      Rev. Robert Jensen

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Rev. Robert Jensen

Gracious God, teach us to give thanks in all circumstances, for you are always with us. Thank you for the privilege of sharing what we have with others, of giving ourselves away in love, and of receiving the gifts that others share with us. With our whole being – spirit, soul, and body – we rejoice in you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**CLOSING HYMN**

#125: "Joy to the World"

**CHARGE AND BLESSING**

Rev. Robert Jensen