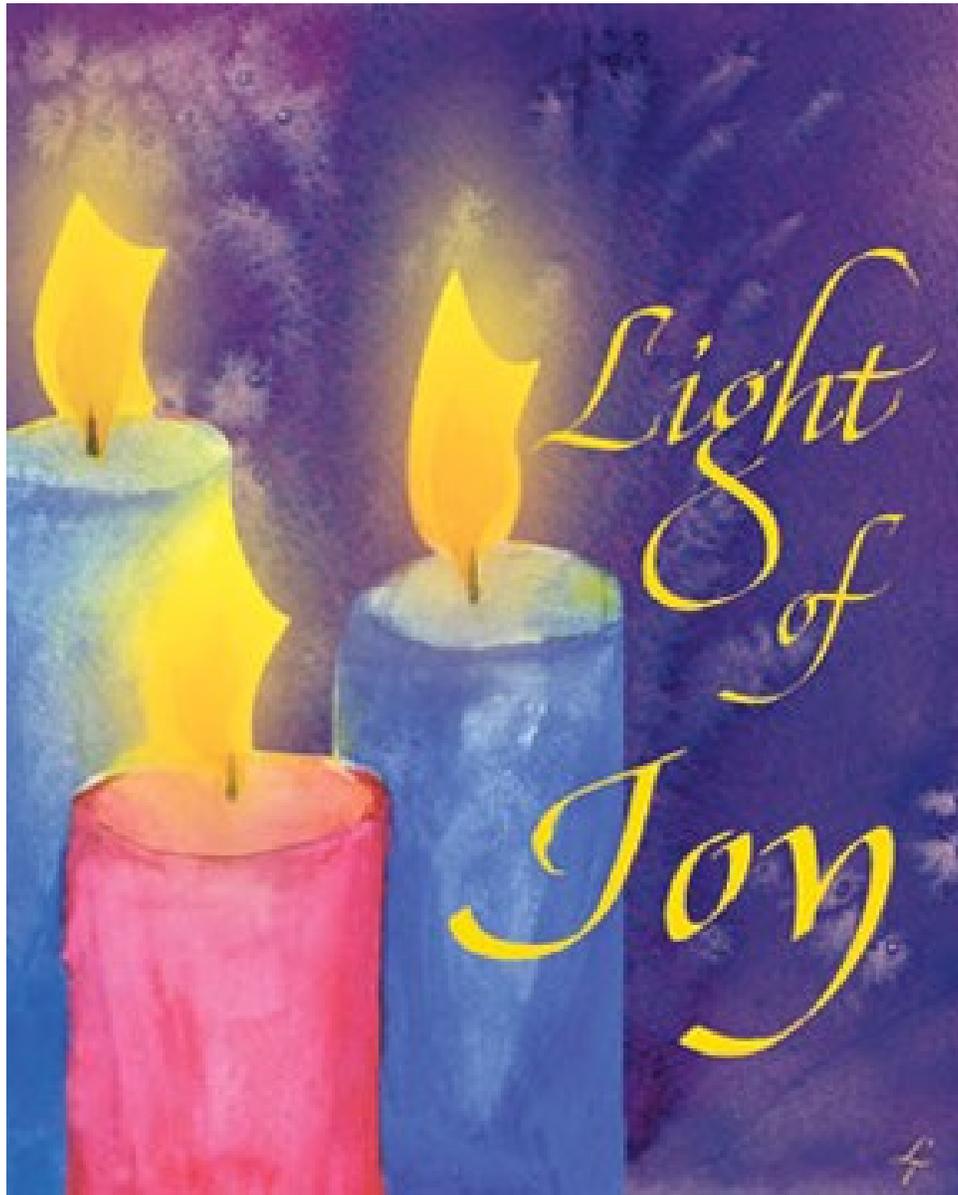


Sebastopol United Methodist Church

.....



Sunday, December 13, 2020  
THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sebastopol United Methodist Church

Sunday, December 13, 2020

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

.....  
Order of Worship, including Scripture

### **Lighting the third Candle of Advent**

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the oppressed: he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, to grant to those who mourn in Zion -- to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning-spirit that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.” -- Isaiah 61:1-3*

We light the third candle of Advent, the candle of **JOY**.

Let us pray:

Gracious God, we seek you everywhere with expectant eyes that invite us to see Joy in the world Today. Amen.

*Seasonal Theme:*

Advent is a time of expectation, anticipation, and preparation for the coming again of Jesus in Bethlehem and into our hearts.

*Theme for the day:*

Hope, Peace, and Joy are the way home for those who feel far away in exile. Paul's advice on being a true Christian and a faithful and joyful Christian congregation.

*Call to worship:*

*(please read the **BOLD** text, aloud or silently as you prefer)*

Pastor: The Promised One of God brings good news to the oppressed...

People: ... **and binds up the brokenhearted.**

Pastor: We are witnesses to the light of Christ! The Promised One of God proclaims liberty to captives...

People: ... **and release to prisoners.**

Pastor: We are witnesses to the light of Christ!

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

*Centering & Prayer of Illumination:*

*(please read along with Pastor, aloud or silently as you prefer)*

Spirit of God, we thank you for drawing near, for touching the world in the Savior's birth. Help us to draw nearer to you, as we prepare our hearts and our world for the justice and peace you bring. Give us the eyes to see you today among those who are oppressed, imprisoned, brokenhearted, or beaten down and we will give testimony, too. Then we will point them with others to Jesus, the Light of the World. As your Word is proclaimed, illumine our hearts and minds through the Power of the Holy Spirit, so that our lives may reflect God's glory. Amen.

*Readings from Scripture:*     **Isaiah 61:1-4**           **1 Thessalonians 5:6-24**

**John 1:6-11; 19-28**

*[texts of Scripture follow the service, beginning on page 4]*

*Message:*     **TAKE THE LIGHT AND PASS IT ON!**

*Pastoral Prayer*

*With thanksgiving for God's gifts to us, let us offer ourselves and the fruits of our labor for God's work in the world. Thank you for continuing to send your offerings and pledges by mail.*

*Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication:*

*(please read along with Pastor, aloud or silently as you prefer)*

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 and soul and body -- we rejoice in you, through Jesus's way in which we pray. Amen.

*Blessing and Benediction:*

Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. Be happy, and bear witness to the light of Christ so that others might believe in Him as well.

.....

*SCRIPTURE READINGS for December 13, 2020*

*first reading – ISAIAH 61:1-4*

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion— to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

*second reading* – **1 THESSALONIANS 5:6-24**

So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him.

Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing. But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labor among you, and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you; esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, beloved, to admonish the idlers, encourage the faint hearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.

May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

*third reading* – **JOHN 1:6-11; 19-28**

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came

into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

.....

Sebastopol United Methodist Church  
500 North Main Street, Sebastopol CA 95472  
sebumc@sonic.net sebumc.org YouTube channel: Sebastopol UMC

*Thank you for worshipping with us today.*