



Venice United Church of Christ

December 14, 2025

Third Sunday of Advent

Rev. Barbara Dickason, BCC

“The Gift of Joy”

United in Christ’s love,

A just world for all



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Third Sunday of Advent

December 14, 2025

Singing Prelude

One Candle Is Lit

Parrott/Kirkpatrick

TUNE: *Away in a Manger*

**Come, festively sing while awaiting the birth;
join angels in dancing from heaven to earth.
Wave banners of good news, lift high thankful praise.
One candle is lit for the joy of these days.**

Welcome and Announcements

We Approach God's Presence

Meditation/Bringing in the Light of Christ

Coventry Carol

English Melody, 1591

***Responsive Call to Worship**

Maria Groody

Come and rejoice in God!

**Our joy is in the Lord
who continually blesses our lives!**

In the midst of troubles and stress,

God is near, offering compassion, love, mercy, and justice.

Shout for joy, for the Lord is near!

Let your praise dance and swirl in honor to God!

Hallelujah! The Lord is near!

Come then, with joy in the light of Christ, and let us worship God.

***Prayer of Joy**

God of shining stars and wintry paths,

From the flurry of holiday busyness we come

actively Hoping for newness,

choosing to invest in Divine Love,

opting to fill our lives with lasting Joy.

From full calendars and hectic schedules,

We come to taste the Bread of Life,
Drink the cup of blessing,
and Sing songs of Advent Joy.
From the worry of our days we come to be set free.
Help us to build a home for Joy in our city,
that we may walk in your holy ways. Amen

***Hymn**

How Great Our Joy (inside back page)

Lighting the Candle of Joy

Star-giving

Mer Zovko and Paul Chebator

poem by Ann Weems from *Kneeling in Bethlehem*

Congregational Response *Joy, Joy, Joy* TUNE: *Still, Still, Still*

Bible

Joy, Joy, Joy – We praise you, Christ, with joy!
Our peace, our hope, our love and treasure,
Highest calling, deepest pleasure!
Joy, Joy, Joy – We praise you, Christ, with joy!

Prayer for Transformation and New Life

Dearest Lord,
Even in the darkest moments,
your light helps us to glimpse your face as you walk with us.
In your promise to never leave us,
we find joy even in the midst of the world's worst suffering.

We discover cracks in the pavement
where new life springs up
sends out runners

and uproots the wickedness
of those who seek to oppress us.

May the joy we find in you surround us and fill us,
and may it overflow into the world around us. Amen

***Words of Grace**

In faith, no anguish can take hold completely, no sorrow outweigh the possibility of joy.
In joy, our struggles are released.
In joy, we find relief and comfort,
a connection to friends and family and God.

We Rejoice in the Gift of God's Joy.

***Response**

Acts of Kindness - Joy

Quinn/Polish Folk Melody

TUNE: *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly*

**God, we seek through acts of kindness
to treat everyone on earth
with respect and great compassion
as we honor Jesus' birth.**

**Help us understand the yearnings
and the needs of all until
we're a source of joy for others
as we seek to do your will.**

We Encounter God in the Word

First Lesson

Isaiah 35:1-10

the Voice

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Anthem

There'll Be Joy on That Morning

Young

Second Lesson

Matthew 11:2-6

the Message

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

"The Gift of Joy"

Rev. Barbara Dickason, BCC

We Respond to God's Grace

Congregational Prayers

Silent Prayers

Prayers of the People and our 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 sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

Musical Response

Emmanuel

McGee

**Emmanuel, Emmanuel, his name is called Emmanuel,
God with us, revealed in us, his name is called Emmanuel.**

Mission Moment

The Christmas Fund

Hilda Dillman

Invitation to Generosity *(Offering plates are found by each doorway for your use.)*

***Song of Gratitude**

Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow, praise God all creatures here below,
Praise God above, ye heavenly host, Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

***Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication**

**Giver of all good things,
as we offer these gifts to you, open our eyes to see more clearly
all that we have been given and all that we have to give.
Stretch our capacity to build joy in this world, offering:
our love, our companionship, and our material resources,
wherever they are needed. Amen.**

We Go to Carry the Light

***Hymn**

Jesus, Jesus, O, What a Wonderful Child (back page)

***Blessing and Benediction**

***Sending Blessing**

Christ, Be Our Light

Farrell

**Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts, shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.**

Postlude

Angels, from the Realms of Glory

arr. Auld

**Please remain seated in silence for the Postlude as the
Light of Christ is carried into the world.
The worship has ended; our service begins.**

Worship materials are taken from
Called the Holy Way: Service Prayers for the Third Sunday of Advent Year A
by Maria Mankin

Supporting Our Service Today

Acolytes: Allison Rowe and Bella Clapham

Liturgist: Maria Groody

Litany of the Advent Candle: Mer Zovko and Paul Chebator

Welcome Table: Dave Jack **Greeters:** Lynn and Rachel Weekes

Head Usher: Wendy Seeley **Usher Team:** John Brex, Nancy Brex, Sally Parkin,
Bonnie Thistle, Don Worthington, Judy Worthington

Technology Team

(Live Streaming, Camera, and Sound Technicians)

Gary Woodrum, Debra Mosely, Maria Groody,
David Jack, Linda Newton, Wally Davis, Patty Fjetland

The **Lord's Table** was decorated by Victoria Augustine

The **Sanctuary Flowers** are given by

Dick & Ellen Schleicher in Celebration of Their 56th Anniversary;

Rex & Ruth Ingerick in Celebration of Their 65th Anniversary

The **Church Sign** was changed by Faye Newton and Lisa Sclafani

Sunday Librarian: Nancy Brex

Fellowship Time: Dick & Ellen Schleicher; Rex & Ruth Ingerick

Senior Minister

Rev. Barbara Dickason

Music Staff

Barbara Quinn: *Music Director*

Lynda Weston: *Bella Handbell Director*

Other Staff

Gary Leidheiser: *Custodian*

Barb Quinn: *Office Assistant*

The church office is open M-Th, 9-1

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This Week at a Glance

Monday, December 15

12:00 PM SpiritFed! Noon Bible Study via Zoom (link below)

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83576594637?pwd=U2024sKmOPiy3CyMqV4OarYUtofaom.1>

Meeting ID: 835 7659 4637

Passcode: 913882

(The easiest way to connect is to use the link in the Connect.)

7:00 PM Venice Chorale Concert at VPAC for ticket holders

Tues., Dec. 16

9:00 AM—4:00 PM Leadership Council—Parlor

6:00 PM Girl Scouts

Wed., Dec. 17

9:00 AM-Noon Library open

10:00 AM Bible Study—CR

11:30 AM Finance Team—Parlor

1:00 PM Cut-Ups—CR

3:30 PM Youth Handbells

6:30 PM Choir Rehearsal

Thurs., Dec. 18

4:00 PM Baby Basics—Naar Hall

4:00 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal

6:00 PM Daisies

Fri., Dec. 19

8:30 AM Men's Coffee—Panera

9:00 AM Knit Wits—Parlor

2:00 PM On the Spot Board—CR

Sun., Dec. 21

9:00 AM Choir/Bell Rehearsal—Sanctuary

9:00 AM Library open

10:00 Worship in situ and virtual

11:00 AM Fellowship Time

11:00 –11:15 AM Library open

How Great Our Joy!

f = loud

p = soft

1. While by the sheep we watched at night, lo, there ap-peared an
 2. Born is the Child, in man-ger small, whom God has sent to
 3. Go you this night, and you shall find the Sav-ior born for
 4. Je - sus, the gift from heav'n a - bove fills all our hearts with

f (loud) *echo p* (soft)

an - gel bright:
 save us all. How great our joy! Great our joy!
 hu - man - kind.
 joy and love.

f *echo p* *f*

Joy, joy, joy! Joy, joy, joy! Glo - ry to God who

echo p

reigns on high! Glo - ry to God who reigns on high!

Jesus, Jesus, Oh, What a Wonderful Child

136

African-American traditional; alt.

Luke 1:30-35; 2:8-14

Je - sus, Je - sus, oh, what a won-der-ful child.

Je-sus, Je-sus, so ho-ly, meek, and mild; new

life. new hope peace joy the Child will bring. Lis-ten to the

an-gels sing, "Glo-ry, glo-ry, glo - ry," let the heav - ens ring!

This gospel song praising the newborn Child might be effectively used by repeating it several times. It could be sung softly as a background for dance, story, or drama. Finger-snaps on the off-beats might be used to fill the rests.

Tune: WONDERFUL CHILD 11.10.8.7.11
African-American traditional
Arr. Jeffrey Radford, 1992

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