



*Third Sunday of Advent*

*Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church  
Third Sunday of Advent, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024*

**Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church**  
**Community Worship Service**  
**Third Sunday of Advent, December 15th**

**10:00 A.M. Livestream is available on the LTUMC YouTube channel:**  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgtuJe20i8DN7S\\_Cfg1sWCq](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgtuJe20i8DN7S_Cfg1sWCq)

**RINGING OF THE BELL – *Please observe silence as we prepare for the service.***

**PRELUDE**

Come, O Come, Emanuel

**CALL TO WORSHIP (*Please stand as you are able*)**

*L: Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say Rejoice!*

***P: Our joy is in the Lord who blesses us.***

*L: Shout for joy, for the Lord is near!*

***P: Our praises ascend to God for the mighty things God has done.***

*L: Let your praise dance and swirl in tribute to God!*

***P: Surely God blesses and saves us. Hallelujah! Praise be to God. AMEN.***

**HYMN #211**

O Come, O Come, Emanuel

Located in the back of the bulletin - (Printed w/ permission)

**LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH**

***Reader One:*** *It's a reunion, every time we go home, every time we embrace those we love, no matter how long it has been. It feels like sunrise, like the clouds are parting and the rain has ended. It is joy, nothing less than pure joy to grab hold of those who are home for us, who make home for us. Whether we wake up to them every day, or travel many miles to see them again, it is joy to go home.*

***Reader Two:*** *The prophet Zephaniah tells us to rejoice at the thought of going home. The prophet tells us to imagine being set free, being unburdened, being released to live, to fully live in the grace and wonder of life itself, surrounded by those who love us like no one else. And then to live like that was our truth even now, even here. It is joy to go home.*

***Reader One:*** *John the Baptist reminds us, however, that it takes choices to live in this joy. It doesn't just happen; we choose to make life a joy by how we love others, by how we serve and give and care for others, by how we do the job we do and how we impact the world around us. We build joy as we build a home in this world and the next.*

*(Light the three candles on the Advent wreath. Today's candle is a distinct color, pink for Joy.)*

**OPENING PRAYER** *(Please be seated)*

***Eternal Creator, with you each moment of life is full of wonder and surprise. We pray you to make us watchful as we await the coming of Christ. Grant that we may not be found sleeping in sin, but awake and rejoicing in your newness of life. Through the same Jesus Christ our Savior, Amen.***

**SCRIPTURE READINGS**

**Zephaniah 3:14-20 - Rejoice in God**

- 3:14 Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!
- 3:15 The LORD has taken away the judgments against you; he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more.
- 3:16 On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak.
- 3:17 The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing
- 3:18 as on a day of festival." I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it.
- 3:19 I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.
- 3:20 At that time, I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the LORD.

**Isaiah 12:2-6 - In your midst is the Holy One of Israel (Psalter Lesson)**

*(Please read the bold text)*

- 12:2 Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and will not be afraid, for the LORD is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation."
- 12:3 With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.
- 12:4 And you will say on that day: "Give thanks to the LORD; call on his name; make known his deeds among the nations; proclaim that his name is exalted.**
- 12:5 Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be known in all the earth.
- 12:6 Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel."**

**Philippians 4:4-7 - Rejoice, the Lord is near (Epistle Reading)**

4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

4:5 Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.

4:6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

4:7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**Luke 3:7-18 - One more powerful is coming (Gospel)**

*(Please stand as you are able)*

3:7 John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?"

3:8 Therefore, bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.

3:9 Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore, every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

3:10 And the crowds asked him, "What, then, should we do?"

3:11 In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none, and whoever has food must do likewise."

3:12 Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?"

3:13 He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you."

3:14 Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

3:15 As the people were filled with expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah,

3:16 John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

3:17 His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

3:18 So, with many other exhortations he proclaimed the good news to the people.

*L: This is the word of the Lord for the people of Christ.*

***P: Thanks be to God.***

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION** *(Please be seated)*

*Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.  
(Let us offer our silent confessions.)*

***Creator of the universe, we stand amazed at your power and glory.***

***We are eager to worship you and offer our praise, but we are often reluctant to answer when we hear you calling our name.***

***We sing our songs of tribute in the sanctuary, but shy away from the river, lest we be baptized with the fire of the Holy Spirit.***

***Forgive us when we forget your promise to be with us always, O God.***

***Renew us with the power of your ever-present love, and strengthen us to proclaim your justice throughout the world. Amen.***

## **WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

*The messenger has been sent to you, proclaiming that there is One who is Coming who will heal and lead you. Know that this is a great gift from God, who has always and will always love you.*

***In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God! Amen!***

## **HOMILY**

### **STATEMENT OF FAITH #880** *(The Nicene Creed – Please stand as you are able)*

***We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is seen and unseen.***

***We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God, begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father.***

***Through him all things were made.***

***For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven:***

***by the power of the Holy Spirit, he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,  
and was made man.***

***For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.***

***On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.***

***We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.***

***With the Father and the Son, he is worshiped and glorified.  
He has spoken through the Prophets.***

***We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.***

***We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.***

***We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.***

**GLORIA PATRI** (UMH #70)

***Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.***

**HYMN #160**

Rejoice Ye Pure in Heart  
Located in the back of the bulletin - (Printed w/ permission)

**OFFERING**

<https://www.wnccumc.org/online-donations-to-churches>

**OFFERTORY**

Still, Still, Still

**DOXOLOGY #95** *(Please stand as you are able)*

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow  
Praise Him, all creatures here below  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost***

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING** *(Please continue standing)*

***God of Advent joy, we bring our offerings with hearts open to your transformative call. In this season of anticipation, may our gifts help mend what is broken and share the promise of redemption. Empower us to live fully present, giving generously and acting justly. Let these offerings be seeds of hope and joy that will draw us closer to your kingdom. Bless our giving, that it may reflect your love and bring light to our world. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.***

**ANNOUNCEMENTS** *(Please be seated)*

**PASTORAL PRAYER AND PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE WITH 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass 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.***

**CLOSING HYMN #246** *(Please stand as you are able)*

Joy to the World  
Located in the back of the bulletin - (printed w/permission)

**BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE** *(Please be seated)*

He is Born, the Divine Christ Child

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Flowers on the Altar**

*The flowers on the altar are given by Jay Buehler and Maria Hunter is in memory of Maria's parents Don and Pearl Hunter and Jay's son Josh Buehler.*

### **Christmas Eve Service 12-24-24**

*Our candlelight Communion service will be on Christmas Eve at 7:00 PM*

## **PRAYER CONCERNS OF THE COMMUNITY**

*Please pray for those who have long-term illness, health concerns and special intentions. Especially for Thomas Blackstock and his last treatment this month.*

*Please pray for those having or had a surgery and their recovery.*

*Our heartfelt prayers for all who have experienced the recent passing of a loved one. Especially for the Patterson family.*

*Please continue to pray for our student scholars taking finals and traveling home for Christmas, our local students, teachers and staff.*

## **STAFF & LAY VOLUNTEERS**

Pastor: Marcus Dodson: 828-553-0282, [marcus61dodson@gmail.com](mailto:marcus61dodson@gmail.com)

Pianist/Organist: Kathy Palmer

Church Administrator: Saunders Grommesh, 469-569-2314, [administrator@laketoxawayumc.org](mailto:administrator@laketoxawayumc.org)

Lay Leaders: Paula Markert: 828-553-9434 & Scott Walter: 314-374-2969

Audio/Visual for Livestream Chair: Joe Haraschak: 813-918-1916

Liturgist: Scott Walter

*Hymns are located on the next few pages and used with permission via One License #737113-A*

# 211 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

1. O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive  
 2. O come, thou Wis - dom from on high, and or - der all things  
 3. O come, O come, great Lord of might, who to thy tribes on  
 4. O come, thou Root of Jes - se's tree, an en - sign of thy

Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here  
 far and nigh; to us the path of knowl - edge show  
 Si - nai's height in an - cient times once gave the law  
 peo - ple be; be - fore thee ru - lers si - lent fall;

*Refrain*  
 un - til the Son of God ap - pear.  
 and cause us in her ways to go. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em -  
 in cloud and maj - es - ty and awe.  
 all peo - ples on thy mer - cy call.

man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

WORDS: 9th cent. Latin; trans. st. 1, 3, 5ab, 6cd, 7ab *The Hymnal*, 1940; st. 2, Henry Sloane Coffin, 1916; st. 4, 5cd, 6ab, 7cd, Laurence Hull Stookey, 1986  
 VENI EMMANUEL  
 MUSIC: 15th cent. French; arr. and harm. by Thomas Helmore, 1854  
 LM with Refrain

Sts. 1, 3, 5ab, 6cd, 7ab © 1940, 1943, renewed 1981 The Church Pension Fund; trans. sts. 4, 5cd, 6ab, 7cd © 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House; antiphons © 1962 Sisters of St. Benedict



## Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart

1. Re - joice, ye pure in heart; re - joice, give  
 2. Your clear ho - san - nas raise, and al - le -  
 3. Yes, on through life's long path, still chant - ing  
 4. At last the march shall end; the wea - ried  
 5. Praise God who reigns on high, the Lord whom

thanks, and sing; your glo - rious ban - ner  
 lu - ias loud; whilst an - swering ech - oes  
 as ye go; from youth to age, by  
 ones shall rest; the pil - grims find their  
 we a - dore, the Fa - ther, Son, and

wave on high, the cross of Christ your King.  
 up - ward float, like wreaths of in - cense cloud.  
 night and day, in glad - ness and in woe.  
 heaven - ly home, Je - ru - sa - lem the blest.  
 Ho - ly Ghost, one God for - ev - er - more.

*Refrain*

Re - joice, re - joice, re - joice, re - joice, give thanks and sing.  
 Re-joyce, re-joyce,

WORDS: Edward H. Plumptre, 1865 (Ps. 20:4; 147:1; Phil. 4:4)  
 MUSIC: Arthur H. Messiter, 1889

MARION  
 SM with Refrain

Joy to the World

1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
 2. Joy to the world, the Sav - ior reigns!  
 3. No more let sins and sor - rows grow,  
 4. He rules the world with truth and grace,

Let earth re - ceive her King; let  
 Let all their songs em - ploy; while  
 nor thorns in - fest the ground; he  
 and makes the na - tions prove the

ev - ery heart pre - pare him room,  
 fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
 comes to make his bless - ings flow  
 glo - ries of his righ - teous - ness,

WORDS: Issac Watts, 1719 (Ps. 98:4-9)  
 MUSIC: Arr. from G. F. Handel, 1741, by Lowell Mason, 1848

ANTIOCH  
 CM with Repeat