FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
DECEMBER 20, 2020

WE GATHER IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Preparing for Worship – William T. Ellis wrote, "It is Christmas in the heart that puts Christmas in the air." Joy is the gift of God in our hearts when we open ourselves to the deep-rooted feelings of good cheer, friendship, and vibrant happiness. Joy is a choice to embrace happy and sing despite sorrow, to laugh and love despite personal injuries, to accept contentment in the face of calamity. How will we share the spirit of Christmas in our hearts today?

Prelude **"Joyful Tidings"** **arr. J. Moffatt**
Kay Wildman, Church Organist

Welcome and Announcements

***Opening #179** **"Joy to the World" (Stz. 1, 2, 3)** *ANTIOCH*

Call to Worship** ***Philippians 4:4-6

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!
Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.
Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.
And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Song #182 **"O Come, All Ye Faithful"** *Adeste Fideles*

***Advent Candle Lighting JOY:** As we anticipate the return of Jesus Christ, we light candles of HOPE, PEACE, and LOVE as reminders of the promise that Emmanuel is our "God with us" and that God graciously gives us these gifts even if they sometimes come in ways that are mysterious to us. On this fourth Sunday of Advent, we light the candle of JOY. We fix our eyes on Jesus Christ, the author and perfecter of our faith. For the joy set before him, he came down to earth and took on our humanity, endured the cross with all its shame and sat down at the right hand of God in heaven. The day is coming when there will be everlasting joy to the world, for our Lord will come! Let all the earth receive her king! We light this candle of joy in anticipation of that day. [Light fourth candle.]

***Invocational Prayer**

Songs of Faith #208 **"Oh, How Joyfully!"** *SICILIAN MARINERS*

WE HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD

A Reading from the Old Testament **2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16**

A Reading from the Psalter **Psalm 89:1-4, 19-24, 28**

I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.
I declare that your steadfast love is established forever; your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.
You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to my servant David:
'I will establish your descendants forever, and build your throne for all generations.'"
Then you spoke in a vision to your faithful one, and said:
"I have set the crown on one who is mighty, I have exalted one chosen from the people.
I have found my servant David; with my holy oil I have anointed him;
My hand shall always remain with him; my arm also shall strengthen him.
The enemy shall not outwit him, the wicked shall not humble him.
I will crush his foes before him and strike down those who hate him.
My faithfulness and steadfast love shall be with him; and in my name his horn shall be exalted.
Forever I will keep my steadfast love for him, and my covenant with him will stand firm.

A Reading from the Apostles **Romans 16:25-27**

***A Reading from the Holy Gospel** **Luke 1:26-38**

Responsorial #200 **"While By the Sheep"** *JUNGST*

Children's Message (Children dismissed to Junior Church)

Invitation to the Offering, Prayer of Dedication, and Offertory
"In the Bleak Midwinter"
Kay Wildman, Church Organist

The Message **"A Covenant of Everlasting Love"**
The Reverend Doctor Ivan E. Greuter, Senior Minister

RESPONDING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT IN FAITH & SERVICE

***Altar Call of Invitation to Faith and Fellowship –** If the Spirit of God is moving you to receive God's forgiving love in Jesus, calling you to follow Christ in the waters of baptism, or encouraging you to join this Christian Church, please come forward during this song.

Song #179 **"Joy to the World" (Stz. 1 & 4)** *ANTIOCH*

***Benediction**

***Postlude** **"Joy to the World"** **W. Held**
Kay Wildman, Church Organist

*Please stand if able

"Christmas split history. Foretastes of the future abound. Drink deeply on what he achieved for us. And be filled with hope for all that is coming."
— John Piper
In "The Dawning of Indestructible Joy"

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