

December 17, 2023, 11 AM
Third Sunday in Advent
Olean First Presbyterian Church

Prelude ~ *Communion* ~ Pietro Yon

Good Morning Saints

Announcements

*Please sign the friendship pads and include your contact info, email, phone, and text.
We want to make sure we can communicate better with you.*

Choral Introit

God is Good

Everyday

And Everyday

God is Good

Call to Worship

Our God can part the sea.

**God can bring water from a rock,
and provide bread in the desert.**

Our God can walk on water.

**He can heal the sick,
and turn water into wine.**

Our God sets the stars in the sky.

**God hears our voice when we cry,
and is closer than our own breath.**

There is nothing our God cannot do.

Let us stand in awe. Let us worship God with wonder!

Opening Prayer

We thank you, O God, for all those in Scripture who have pointed to Christ:
for your prophets Elijah and Isaiah, for other prophets, 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, imprisoned, brokenhearted, or beaten down,
and we will give our testimony, too: how Christ releases and sets free;

how he turns ashes into garlands; how he repairs and builds up what was ruined. We, too,
will point others to Jesus, the Light of the world. **Amen.**

Lighting the Third Advent Candle ~ Matt Isenberg and Marlene Lang

A: How does a weary world practice joy?

B: By dancing, and throwing birthday parties. By hanging Christmas lights, and holding sleepy babies. By singing loudly, and looking for good news. By telling the story of Jesus, and showing up for our community.

A: There are a million ways to practice joy. So today we light the candle of joy as a reminder and a charge. With God's help, may we bring joy into a weary world. Amen

Advent Song ~ *Light One Candle* ~ Natalie Sleeth

Light one candle for hope, one bright candle for hope.
He brings hope to every heart. He comes! He Comes!

Light one candle for peace, one bright candle for peace.
He brings peace to ev'ry heart. He comes! He comes!

Light one candle for joy, one bright candle for joy.
Ev'ry nation will find salvation in Bethl'em's baby boy.

Children's Time

Hymn ~ *O Come, All Ye Faithful* ~ No. 133

O come, all ye faithful,
joyful and triumphant;
O come ye; O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come, and behold him,
born the King of angels!

Refrain:

O come, let us adore him;
O come, let us adore him;
O come, let us adore him,
Christ, the Lord!

True God from true God,
Light from light eternal,
born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
very God, begotten, not created! (*Refrain*)

Sing, choirs of angels;
sing in exultation;
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all
glory in the highest! (*Refrain*)

Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing! (*Refrain*)

Prayers of the People

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Presentation of the Offering

If you prefer, you can go to our website Oleanfirstpresbyterian.com and click on the donate button.

*Doxology ~ No. 606

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. Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Anthem ~ *There Shall a Star* ~ F. Mendelssohn

The Passing of the Peace

Prayer for Illumination ~ No. 455

Listen to the word that God has spoken;
listen to the One who is close at hand;
listen to the voice that began creation;
listen even if you don't understand.

Readings ~

Isaiah 61:1-11

¹The 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; ²to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³to 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.

⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. ⁵Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, foreigners shall till your land and dress your vines; ⁶but you shall be called priests of the Lord, you shall be named ministers of our God; you shall enjoy the wealth of the nations, and in their riches you shall glory. ⁷Because their shame was double, and dishonor was proclaimed as their lot, therefore they shall possess a double portion; everlasting joy shall be theirs. ⁸For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.

¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

John 1:6-28

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him.

¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

¹⁵(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") ¹⁶From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came

through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ²²Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said. ²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

The Word of God
The Word of Life

Message

Music for Meditation

Closing Hymn ~ *Joy to the World* ~ No. 134

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her king;
let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

Choral Benediction

Postlude ~ *Hark the Herald Angels* ~ Lani Smith

(Music permission by One License: 734848-A)

Today's Greeters are Dale and Cindy Dutton. Today's Ushers are Gary Gruver and Dave Shults.

Join us Christmas Eve

11am Worship - Children's
Christmas Program

7:30pm Candlelight Service



Please note:

- Pastor Bruce will be out of the office from Monday, December 25th until Friday, January 5th.
- Andrea will be out of the office from Monday, December 25th until Tuesday, January 2nd.
- Messages will be checked during this time.

Prayer List

Margaret Quigley	Emily Kennedy	Matt Isenberg
Judy Sanchez	Martin Hatch	Craig Polson
Joe Gullo	Colt Matz	Chase Ewoldt
Dale Isenberg	Diane Trippany	Avrie Sinesiou
Joseph Kwiatkowski	Alyssa Daly and Family	Renee Ensell
Ken Stebbins	Punkie & Craig Sinesiou	Kim Whitney
Judi Blair	Judi Mitchell	

***Please let the office know who can be removed and who needs to be added.
Thank you for your help! ***

Happy Birthday to:

17 ~ Cindy Shaver

18 ~ Rick Snyder

21 ~ Brenda Snyder

CHURCH CALENDAR WEEK OF 12/17/23

Sunday – Dec. 17	9:30am Bible Study 11am Worship
Tuesday - Dec. 19	10am Brunch at La Dolce Vita 6:30pm Scouts
Thursday - Dec. 21	5:30pm Bring Your Own Dinner 6:30pm Vespers 6:45pm Scouts 7pm Bible Study 7pm Choir
Friday - Dec. 22	10am Coffee and Conversation at N. Union Tim Hortons
Saturday - Dec. 23	11am Choraliers
Sunday – Dec. 24	11am Worship 7:30pm Candle Light Service

If you wish to speak with Pastor Bruce, please call 716-378-6773.