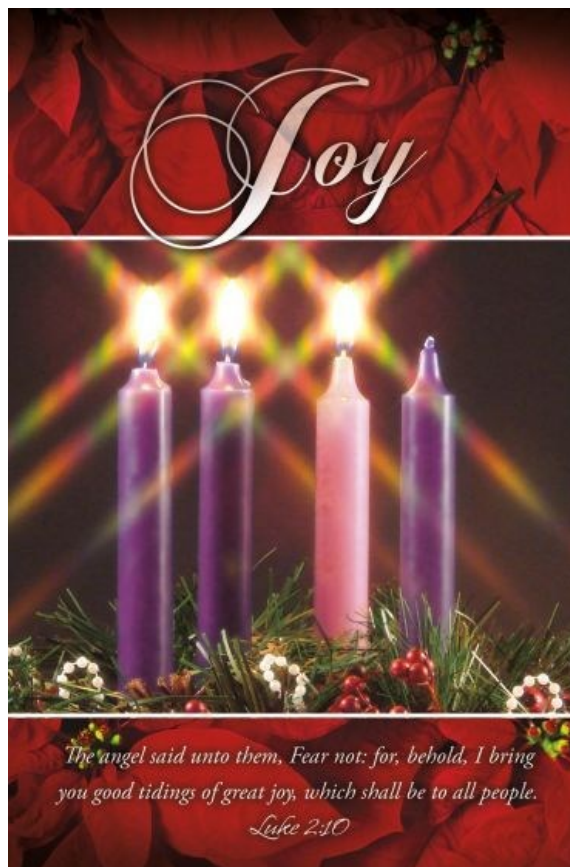


# *Emanuel United Church of Christ*



**Third Sunday of Advent**

**December 14, 2025**

*Pastor Joshua W. Rau*

## *A warm welcome to all today!*

May this time of worship strengthen your faith and desire to serve the Creator who loves us with everlasting love in Christ Jesus.

Children are welcome in this worship service, and encouraged to participate in any way they are able to. Teach the children sitting around you how to use their bulletins, and sing & speak loudly!

We value the noise made by our children! We have a nursery available in our education building with a video feed of our service.

**Visitors**, we are glad you are here! Please sign our Guest Register and feel free to fill out a “welcome slip” in the pews.

*Please come again!!*



Visitor Info



Ways to Give

## † **SERVING IN WORSHIP** †

Organist: *Christy Shinn*

Choir Director: *Kelly Crawford*

Reader: *Keagan Zschille*



Greeting You Today

*Joy Kessler  
Ann Fields*



Poinsettia Garden

*Donated by EUCC  
Members*

### **We Keep in Prayer**

*Please keep in your prayers those who are in need of healing and our shut-ins and home-bound members. May God's grace surround them with comfort and care.*

Mary Lou Abernathy, Pat Abernathy, LaDonia Beggs, June Borgfield, Larry Brockmire, Alice Koeppel, Robert Loos, Junior Peetz, Marvin Peetz, Helen Poston, Alice Quigley, Cindy Smith

**Pastor:** Cell: 715-294-0157 ~ **Email:** pastorjoshuarau@gmail.com

**Office:** 573-243-3323 ~ **Email:** office@euccjackson.org

**Office Hours:** Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 9am-3pm

**Website:** www.euccjackson.org

**Facebook:** www.facebook.com/euccjackson ~ **Instagram:** @euccjackson

# ORDER FOR WORSHIP

\*Indicates congregation please stand if able  
Congregational responses are printed in **BOLD** type

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## GATHERING

*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.*

### RINGING OF THE BELL ~ WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*All Hymns are in the Advent and Christmas Hymns booklet found in the pews.*

### PRELUDE

\***TRINITY CHIMES** *(at the sound of the chimes, please stand)*

\***INTROIT** “*Emmanuel*” #31

### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

The desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus.

**With joy we come to worship our God.**

The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

**With joy we come to follow Christ our King.**

Come with singing, come with gladness, for the Lord is near.

**We rejoice in God, our Savior.**

\***GATHERING HYMN** “*Angels From the Realms of Glory*” #1

### \*GREETING AND PRAYER OF THE DAY

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray,

**Lord Jesus, light of the world, you bring sight to the blind, healing to the lame, and good news to the poor. Awaken our hearts with joy in your presence, and send us as witnesses of your coming kingdom, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

### LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

*McCormack Family*

## TIME OF CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit we are called into the season of Advent to prepare the way of the Lord, to make straight the paths, and to open our hearts to God's coming. But we confess that we have wandered in the shadows of sin and fear. Let us return to the Lord, who is full of compassion and mercy.

*Silence for reflection.*

Merciful God,

**we confess that we are not awake as we should be. We grow weary in waiting and distracted by many things. We have let hope slip away, we have closed our hearts to peace, we have failed to share joy, and we have withheld love. Forgive us, Lord. Shine your light into our darkness, and turn us again toward you, that we may be ready to welcome Christ when he comes. Amen.**

Hear the good news: The dawn from on high breaks upon us. In Christ, God has looked with favor upon you. Your sins are forgiven, your hope is restored, and your life is made new in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

**\*PASSING OF THE PEACE**

**\*GLORIA PATRI**

## WORD

*God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.*

## CHILDREN'S MESSAGE AND BLESSING OF GIFTS FOR BABY JESUS

**MESSAGE IN MUSIC** *"Comin' Is a Glorious Light!"*

## FIRST READING

Isaiah 35:1-10

*The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.*

<sup>1</sup> The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them,  
And the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose;

<sup>2</sup> It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice,  
 Even with joy and singing.  
 The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,  
 The excellence of Carmel and Sharon.  
 They shall see the glory of the Lord,  
 The excellency of our God.

<sup>3</sup> Strengthen the weak hands,  
 And make firm the feeble knees.

<sup>4</sup> Say to those who are fearful-hearted,  
 "Be strong, do not fear!  
 Behold, your God will come with vengeance,  
 With the recompense of God;  
 He will come and save you."

<sup>5</sup> Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
 And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

<sup>6</sup> Then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
 And the tongue of the dumb sing.  
 For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness,  
 And streams in the desert.

<sup>7</sup> The parched ground shall become a pool,  
 And the thirsty land springs of water;  
 In the habitation of jackals, where each lay,  
 There shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

<sup>8</sup> A highway shall be there, and a road,  
 And it shall be called the Highway of Holiness.  
 The unclean shall not pass over it,  
 But it shall be for others.  
 Whoever walks the road, although a fool,  
 Shall not go astray.

<sup>9</sup> No lion shall be there,  
 Nor shall any ravenous beast go up on it;  
 It shall not be found there.  
 But the redeemed shall walk there,

<sup>10</sup> And the ransomed of the Lord shall return,  
 And come to Zion with singing,  
 With everlasting joy on their heads.  
 They shall obtain joy and gladness,  
 And sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

## SECOND READING

James 5:7-10

*In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience rather than discontent.*

<sup>7</sup> Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. <sup>8</sup> You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

<sup>9</sup> Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door! <sup>10</sup> My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience.

## \*GOSPEL READING

Matthew 11:2-11

*John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.*

<sup>2</sup> And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples <sup>3</sup> and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"

<sup>4</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: <sup>5</sup> The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. <sup>6</sup> And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."

<sup>7</sup> As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>8</sup> But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. <sup>9</sup> But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. <sup>10</sup> For this is he of whom it is written:

'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face,  
Who will prepare Your way before You.'

<sup>11</sup> "Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

The word of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

## SERMON

*"The Joy God Brings in the Waiting"*

\*SERMON HYMN "The First Noel"

#4 vs. 1, 2, 4

## **\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

## **PASTORAL PRAYER AND 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.

## **THANKSGIVING**

*God's gifts move us to respond with grateful words and actions.*

### **OFFERING**

#### **\*DOXOLOGY**

#780

#### **\*OFFERTORY PRAYER**

## **SENDING**

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

**\*SENDING HYMN** "There's a Voice in the Wilderness!" words on next page

#### **\*BLESSING**

**\*CONGREGATIONAL BENEDICTION** "Awake, Awake" #19 verse 4

#### **\*POSTLUDE**

## **There's a Voice in the Wilderness**

**1** There's a voice in the wilderness crying,  
a call from the ways untrod:  
prepare in the desert a highway,  
a highway for our God!  
The valleys shall be exalted,  
the lofty hills brought low;  
make straight all the crooked places,  
where the God, our God, may go!

**2** O Zion, that bringest good tidings,  
get thee up to the heights and sing!  
Proclaim to a desolate people  
the coming of their King.  
Like the flowers of the field they perish,  
like grass our works decay,  
the power and pomp of nations  
shall pass like a dream away.

**3** But the word of our God endureth,  
the arm of the Lord is strong;  
God stands in the midst of nations,  
and soon will right the wrong.  
God shall feed the flock like a shepherd,  
the lambs so gently hold;  
to pastures of peace will lead them,  
and bring them safe to fold.