

Welcome to Worship at
Joyful Harvest Lutheran Church

Growing Together for Christ

Rev. Ken Gibson, Interim Pastor

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www.joyfulharvest.org



December 14th, 2025

Third Sunday of Advent

We worship in-person and on-line at 9:00 am. There is a link on our website to join the on-line Worship Service through Zoom!

Stay safe and God bless!

Gathering

Welcome/Greeting/Announcements

Call to Worship

P: Be patient!

The time is coming when we will celebrate the birth of Jesus,

C: when we will sing and rejoice, dancing with everlasting joy.

P: But for now, be patient, as we wait in this time called Advent,

**C: when God speaks through dreams and visions,
dancing the holy way into the kingdom.**

P: For this is Advent, as we prepare to join the world
in celebrating the Creator of goodness and hope,

**C: when those who limp will teach new dance steps,
when the voiceless sing, 'Joy to the World.'**

Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy

A: No matter what troubles overwhelm us today, Isaiah reminds us that in all of our preparation and passionate pursuit of God's coming kin-dom, we must not forget that God's salvation has come and is coming. "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation" (Isaiah 12:3). With joy you will remember that God's salvation is already present among us.

C: Faced with the troubles and the suffering of the world, we choose to live in joyful presence to God and one another. We will not turn away from the pain and the hurt in our world, and we will not stop rejoicing in God, whose salvation fills us to overflowing that God's love might flow through us and flood our troubled world with hope, peace, and joy.

A: We light this candle of joy as a sign of our commitment to be present to ourselves, our friends, our families, the earth, and our neighbors that in sharing our vulnerable lives we might share in the glorious joy of God's salvation together.

Gathering Songs: Hymn of Joy
(Please join us in "Sharing the Peace")
The Heart of Worship

Prayer of the Day

Word

FIRST READING: Isaiah 35:1-10

¹ The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus ² it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and shouting. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. ³ Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees. ⁴ Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you." ⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the

deaf shall be opened; ⁶ then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert; ⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp; the grass shall become reeds and rushes. ⁸ A highway shall be.....

PSALM: Psalm 146:5-10

⁵ Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help, whose hope is in the LORD their God;

⁶ **who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them; who keeps promises forever;**

⁷ who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger. The LORD sets the captive free.

⁸ **The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous.**

⁹ The LORD cares for the stranger; the LORD sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked.

¹⁰ **The LORD shall reign forever, your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!**

SECOND READING: James 7:5-10

⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹ Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

GOSPEL: Matthew 11:2-11

P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

C: Glory to you, O Lord!

P: ² When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word..

P: This is the gospel of the Lord!

C: Praise to you, O Christ!

Children's Message

Tessa Ancona

Sermon

Pastor Carol Soderholm

Hymn of the Day: In the Midst of Winter's Darkness

Prayers of Intercession

A: "God of grace",C: "Hear our prayer"

Offering: Friends, an offering is an act of Worship, given freely to share God's love through this congregation. Please place your offering in the basket as it is passed around, you may come forward to put your gift in the offering plate, or send your gifts to the church at: 5050 N. Johnsburg Rd., Johnsburg, IL 60051 or give online at www.joyfulharvest.org

Offering Prayer

Meal

Confession & Forgiveness

P: There is no need to wait in long lines. God is always willing to listen – to our hearts as well as our voices, as we admit how we have not cared as we could, have not shared as we should. Let us join, as we pray, saying,

C: This season is supposed to be so holy, God of Christmas, yet the din of sales pitches turns us into cynical grumps. As we drive down the streets, the decorations on all the houses keep us from seeing the loneliness of the widower, the strained faces of those who fear the future. We are so determined to find just the right gift or card which speaks of joy, we forget that you came so long ago to offer justice to those who have none.

Be patient with us, God of our hearts, as we struggle to speak for the voiceless, to walk with those who have lost their way, to let go of our uncertainty of what really happened so long ago, and listen to the songs of children which speak of that peace which really can bring reconciliation, of that grace which really can offer hope, of that love which really came to us that night in Bethlehem, in the birth of Jesus, our Brother, our Savior. Amen.

(Silence is kept)

P: Do not be afraid, but believe. Our God is here, opening our eyes to see that salvation which is ours approaching us in this season of Advent.

C: We join our voices in rejoicing in God who is our Savior. The One who calls us blessed, is the God who forgives us. Amen.

Lord's Supper

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Words of Institution

Lord's Prayer

P: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus has taught us:

C: 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 and ever. Amen.

Invitation to Communion: *Christ is truly present with us today, especially in the gifts of bread and wine. God's table is open; we invite you to join us at the Lord's Table! After the choir is served, come up the center aisle, from front to back. If you are unable to come forward, please let the pastor or another worship leader know, and we will bring communion to you. If you do not receive communion, you are welcome to come forward for a blessing, simply keep your hands folded. The dark colored liquid is wine, and the light-colored liquid is juice. Please let the pastor know if you need a gluten free wafer. All are welcome!*

Communion Song: Make Room

Prayer After Communion

Sending

Sending Song: Blessed Be Your Name

Sending and Benediction

P: Let us journey into the world with our God,

C: to rebuild shattered hearts with hope.

P: Let us spend each day with Jesus,

C: mending brokenness with peace.

P: Let us share our hearts with the Spirit,

C: so we may be with those who are waiting for joy.

Commissioning

P: At Joyful Harvest Church,

C: our mission is growing together for Christ.

P: As disciples of Jesus Christ, we value:

C: Family Worship, Relying on Prayer, Unity in Christ, Instruction in the Word, Telling Others, and Service to God's Community.

P: Go in peace. Keep awake.

C: Thanks be to God.

Announcements

If you are looking for a place to worship with your family, join us any Sunday at 9:00 am! Thank you for worshipping with us today.

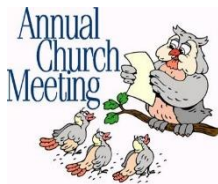


Poinsettias – Order Yours Now thru Dec 14th:

LAST SUNDAY TO ORDER: As we celebrate the birth of Christ, help us fill the Sanctuary with the beauty of Poinsettias. After Christmas, take it home or give it to a friend. Fill out the form to order yours today!

Annual Meeting Sun. Jan 11th @ 10:30 a.m.

Come and hear about all the exciting things happening at Joyful Harvest. Get updates on the call process, new budget, and upcoming events. Your attendance is very important as a quorum of voting members is required to conduct church business.



Joyful Readers Book Club: Do you like to read, are you looking for a way to connect with other women? Consider joining the ladies of Joyful Harvest as they embark in this fellowship opportunity. The next meeting will be Sat, Jan 24th at 9:00a.m. They're reading "*The Lonely Hearts Book Club*" by Lucy Gilmore. Contact Kim DuBois for more info!

Weekly Calendar

Tue. Dec 16	Breakfast Club at Midwest Breakfast	8:00 a.m.
Tue. Dec 16	Food Pantry Service Opportunity	3:00-6:00 p.m.
Thur. Dec 18	Food Pantry Service Opportunity	3:00-6:00 p.m.
Sun. Dec 21	Sunday Worship	9:00 a.m.
Sun. Dec 21	Faith Formation Class	10:30 a.m.

Upcoming Events

Wed. Dec 24 **Christmas Eve Service** 6:00 p.m.

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Advent is a season of joy.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Matthew 11:2-11	Jesus and John the Baptist
Monday	Isaiah 35:1-10	The return to Zion
Tuesday	James 5:7-10	Patience in suffering
Wednesday	1 Thessalonians 5:12-23	A final greeting
Thursday	Nehemiah 8:9-12	Ezra reads God’s Law
Friday	Philippians 4:4-9	Paul encourages the people
Saturday	Psalms 146:5-10	Praise for God’s help
Sunday	Matthew 1:18-25	God is with us

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.
Isaiah 35:5-6 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Lord God, you who bring healing, hope, and joy to the world, give us the faith to trust your never-ending care through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, you who made heaven and earth, we thank you for this food, a sign of your never-failing love. Amen. (Psalm 146:6)

A Blessing to Give:

May you receive joy and gladness through Jesus Christ.



WEEKLY MILESTONES



Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS



Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- When is a time you have been filled with joy?
- In what ways does God's love for us bring joy?

DEVOTIONS



Read: Isaiah 35:1-10.

The people of Israel were exiled far from home, imprisoned in Babylon, a foreign land. The people were wondering if there was a future for them. Did the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob abandon them? We can ask similar questions. Will our children have faith? Has our Lord abandoned us? To all such concerns and questions Isaiah responds with unbelievable images of God doing amazing things: the blind will see; the deaf will hear; the lame will walk; and those who can't talk will sing for joy. God makes the impossible, possible. Advent reminds us of God's power and promise that is like no other. Advent is a time for joy and being patient for God to do what only God can do, that is, save God's people.

Discuss: How does God's promise of care for our daily needs bring you joy?

Pray: **Come, Lord Jesus, help us to trust your amazing healing power for our lives and our world. Amen.**

SERVICE



Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings and theme for this week, how can you help supply daily needs to those in your community who are dealing with hardships?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



This week light three candles on the Advent wreath: The Candle of Hope, the Candle of Peace, and the Candle of Joy. The Candle of Joy reflects the joyful return of God's people to Zion.

Leader: **This is the third week of Advent. Advent means *coming*. We are waiting for the coming of Christ. Let us light the Candles of Hope, Peace, and Joy.** [Light three candles]

All: ***Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.*** (Isaiah 35:5-6)

Leader: Let us walk in the light of Christ that gives us joy.

Pray: **Lord Jesus Christ, we await your coming with hope, peace, and joy. May we see with the eyes of faith the work of your kingdom in our lives and world. Amen.**



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