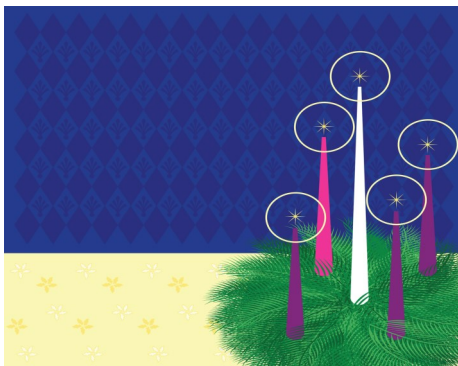


THE  
**United Church**  
OF THE **San Juans**



**THIRD SUNDAY  
OF ADVENT**

**DECEMBER 17, 2023**

**JOY**

**MEDITATION**

*Joy is prayer; joy is strength; joy is love; joy is a net of love by which you can catch souls.*

– Mother Teresa, now Saint Teresa of Calcutta

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

REV. MELINDA VEATCH

**PRELUDE** *O Little Town of Bethlehem* (Phillips Brooks, words; Lewis H. Redner, music) VINCE SNOWBARGER, SOLOIST

**CALL TO WORSHIP** *Adapted from* LUKE 1:46-66

JOAN MOYER

Leader: God's mercy flows in wave after wave on those who are in awe before him.

**People: He bared his arm and showed his strength, scattered the bluffing braggarts. He knocked tyrants off their high horses, pulled victims out of the mud.**

Leader: The starving poor sat down to a banquet; the callous rich were left out in the cold.

**People: He embraced his chosen child, Israel; he remembered and piled them high.**

Leader: It's exactly what he promised, beginning with Abraham and right up to now. Brothers and sisters in Christ, let us worship God!

**WELCOMING SONG\*** *Of the Father's Love Begotten* (Marcus Aurelius C. Prudentius, 4th c.; Plainsong, 13th c.)

**HYMN NO. 181**     **Verses 1-3**

**LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE**

KRISTOFFERSEN FAMILY

**Reader:** "Why do we light these three candles?"

**Reader:** "We light the first candle of Advent, the Candle of **Hope**, to remind us of the hope that the people of Israel had for the coming of the Messiah."

"We light the second candle of Advent, the candle of **Peace**, to remind us of the peace that enters our lives when we experience the presence of Jesus Christ."

"We light the third candle of Advent, the candle of **Joy**, to remind us of the joy the angels proclaimed when Jesus was born."

**\*Indicates we stand - if it is comfortable**

## SCRIPTURE READING LUKE 1:26-38

ANGELA TODD

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

<sup>29</sup> Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

<sup>34</sup> "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

<sup>35</sup> The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. <sup>37</sup> For no word from God will ever fail."

<sup>38</sup> "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

Leader: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God, Amen.

ANTHEM *Jesus Christ the Apple Tree*

UCSJ CHOIR; CINDI MYERS, SOLOIST

(Words from *Divine Hymns or Spiritual Songs*, 1784; Elizabeth Poston)

*The tree of life my soul hath seen, Laden with fruit and always green;  
The trees of nature fruitless be,  
Compared with Christ the Apple Tree.*

*His beauty doth all things excel,  
By faith I know but ne'er can tell The glory which I now can see,  
In Jesus Christ the Appletree.*

*For happiness I long have sought,  
And pleasure dearly I have bought;  
I missed of all but now I see 'Tis found in Christ the Appletree.*

*I'm weary with my former toil - Here I will sit and rest awhile,  
Under the shadow I will be,  
Of Jesus Christ the Appletree.*

*This fruit doth make my soul to thrive,  
It keeps my dying faith alive;  
Which makes my soul in haste to be With Jesus Christ the Appletree.*

**SCRIPTURE READING JOHN 1:1-14**

REV. MELINDA VEATCH

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup>Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. <sup>4</sup>In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

<sup>9</sup>The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup>He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— <sup>13</sup>children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

<sup>14</sup>The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Leader: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God, Amen.

**SERMON*****Joy Makes a Way***

REV. MELINDA VEATCH

**RESPONDING TO GOD'S GRACE WITH OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS**

*Thank you for your continued support of the church and our mission.*

**DOXOLOGY\***

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Christ, all people here below;  
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;  
Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen**

**CONGREGATIONAL PRAYERS AND THE LORD'S PRAYER**

JOAN MOYER AND REV. MELINDA VEATCH

**CLOSING SONG\* *Oh, How Joyfully* (Brian Wren, words; Sicilian melody)**

CONGREGATION

SEE INSERT All Verses!

**CLOSING PRAYER**

JOAN MOYER

**Holy God, in a world infused with anger, despair, hopelessness, and fear, we seek joy in your Spirit. The eyes of our hearts are focused on the darkness, adjust them to see your light that cannot be overcome. Help us to follow your light, to live in your light, that we might bring your light and your joy into the darkness of a hurting world. We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ, the Light of the World. Amen.**

**CHARGE & BLESSING**

REV. MELINDA VEATCH

**SENDING SONG\* *Prepare the Way from Hymn No 152***

***Prepare the way, O Zion, your Christ is drawing near!  
Let every hill and valley a level way appear.  
Greet One who comes in glory, foretold in sacred story.  
Oh, blest is Christ that came in God's most holy name.***

*(Songs and Music under One License #735313. Music is reprinted under copyright license CCLI11233542 )*

**\*Indicates we stand - if it is comfortable**

### OUR MISSION

- We are a loving and compassionate church family that *respects the dignity and integrity* of each individual.
- We find our joy and meaning through faith in God and Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.
- We seek to promote Christian unity and to encourage understanding and cooperation with those from different traditions.
- We seek to foster deeper relationships with God and each other through worship, fellowship, growth and service.



### **WE ARE AFFILIATED WITH**

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH USA ~ THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH ~ THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA



**Rev. Melinda A. Veatch**

**[ucsjpastor@gmail.com](mailto:ucsjpastor@gmail.com)**

Church Office hours: Tuesday & Wednesday -- 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.; Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

[www.ucsjridgway.org](http://www.ucsjridgway.org) . 970-626-5803 . P.O. Box 295 . 295 N. Lena Street . Ridgway CO 81432 . Facebook/UCSJRidgway

### **MUSIC**

Katy Kristoffersen, Director  
[ucsjmusic@gmail.com](mailto:ucsjmusic@gmail.com)

### **OFFICE**

Anita Posey, Admin. Assistant  
[ucsjoffice@gmail.com](mailto:ucsjoffice@gmail.com)