

Zephaniah 3:14-20 (NRSV)

A Song of Joy

- 14 Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;
shout, O Israel!
Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem!
- 15 The LORD has taken away the judgments against you,
he has turned away your enemies.
The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;
you shall fear disaster no more.
- 16 On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
Do not fear, O Zion;
do not let your hands grow weak.
- 17 The LORD, your God, is in your midst,
a warrior who gives victory;
he will rejoice over you with gladness,
he will renew you in his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing
- 18 as on a day of festival.
I will remove disaster from you,
so that you will not bear reproach for it.
- 19 I will deal with all your oppressors
at that time.
And I will save the lame
and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise
and renown in all the earth.
- 20 At that time I will bring you home,
at the time when I gather you;
for I will make you renowned and praised
among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes
before your eyes, says the LORD.

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FIRST MENNONITE CHURCH

In Christ -
Making Disciples through
Loving Relationships.

Worship 10:30 a.m.

Third Sunday of Advent – December 12, 2021 Dare to imagine God's song!

Singing together causes great joy and jubilation. But, even more, our hearts exult and swell as we imagine God singing over us.

GATHERING

Gathering Music	Jenny Epp
Welcome, Announcements, Greeting	Holly Swartzendruber
Prelude to Worship	Jenny Epp
*Call to Worship	Holly Swartzendruber

Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say: Rejoice!

Shout for joy, rejoice with all your heart!

God sings over you. Fear not, for God is in your midst.

Shout for joy, rejoice with all your heart!

Sing praises to God—shout aloud and sing for joy.

God is in our midst.

We listen.

We strain to grasp the sound of God's song.

Hymn	Oh, How Shall I Receive Thee	VT 215
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Candle Litany

We light a candle of joy. And we imagine:

Jubilation! Rejoicing! Do not fear!

We light the candle and join in God's song, singing loudly, singing fiercely, singing together.

Imagine that . . . we are God's wonders, blessed wonders.

Hymn	Hope Is a Candle (vs.1, 2, 3, 5)	VT 211
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Confession and Assurance

Even our wildest imaginations cannot grasp the immense beauty of God. This is a true confession. We are small, God is bigger. We will never fully know, but we are fully known. We catch glimpses of God’s magnificence, and we accept that it is only that, a glimpse. God invites us to accept our smallness—while we join the awesome song of God’s joy.

Today, instead of the usual words of confession, we invite the church to be immersed and “covered” in song.

Over our heads there is music. As we await the birth of Jesus, we do well to joyfully give ourselves to the One who imagines the divine in the form of a child. Dare to imagine!

Time for God’s Children

Tammy Wintermote

SHARING

Sharing and Prayer

Pastor Tom

Hymn

Savior of the Nations, Come!

VT 214

LISTENING

Scripture

Message

God’s Song of Joy

Pastor Tom

RESPONDING

Hymn

Joy to the World

VT 240

Benediction

Pastor Tom

Postlude

Jenny Epp

Our musicians this morning are: Holly Swartzendruber (song leader), Jenny Epp (piano), Greg Zielke (French Horn), and Tom Harder (5-string violin and guitar).

Please stay after the service for a farewell meal for Hank and Erin Unruh.

Today’s special offering will go to the local budget. Please write in your memo if you would like to otherwise designate your offering.

Poinsettias: You are invited to share poinsettias for Advent! Please place plants in the Fellowship Hall south window area. Plants can be taken home after the December 24 Christmas Eve Service. Thank you!

'TIS THE SEASON FOR ANNUAL REPORTS! The deadline is **THIS WEDNESDAY, December 15** this year for your annual reports to be submitted to the church office. Thank you for your hard work throughout the year, committee and council members!

The McPherson Community Brass Choir under the direction of Jerry Toews will give their Christmas Brass Concert tonight at 7:30 p.m. in the Goessel HS gym. This event is sponsored by the Goessel Ministerial Alliance. Note the location change accommodating for social distancing. Come and enjoy a festive brass Christmas concert!

Camp Mennoscah Christmas Gathering is Dec. 18 at 2:30 p.m.! Join us in the Dining Hall at Camp Mennoscah for afternoon fun—bring games to play indoors or out. Camp will provide popcorn and generic pop. (Masks recommended and encouraged for inside activities.)

Immerse yourself in the Christmas message with music and song Sunday, Dec. 19 at 4 p.m. Hopeful Blues is honored to host Doxology Ensemble, a 12-voice male ensemble from the Anabaptist community near Hutchinson. Jointly, they will present a concert of sacred music, joining two unique ensembles for an afternoon of Christmas music. Hopeful Blues, an eclectic instrumental group based in Hope Mennonite Church in Wichita performs a variety of sacred instrumental music from old world to contemporary. Doxology Ensemble sings Acapella choral arrangements, both classic and modern. The concert will be held at Hope Mennonite church, 868 N Maize Road, Wichita KS. Admission is free, and donations are welcomed.

The MCC Comforter Blitz Committee is looking for additional committee members! Would you be interested in assisting the making of comforters for Mennonite Central Committee, and helping to plan the annual three-day comforter making event in Yoder, Kansas? If so, we would love your skills and your voice! If interested, please reach out to Committee Chair, Kara Klingenberg at k.klingenberg@hotmail.com or call her at 620-983-9003 for more information. We are currently looking for a treasurer, advertising help, and anyone else who is interested in helping.