

Trinity United Church of Christ Worship Bulletin

Letting God's light shine since 1901

We worship God and seek to share His Word with everyone through faith in Jesus Christ

December 14, 2025

Third Sunday of Advent

www.trinityuccwestville.org

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here at Trinity!

Gathering and Preparing to Worship

**Denotes to please stand in body or in spirit*

Thoughts Before Worship

By Nancy C. Townley

Our lives can get so noisy. In this moment, take the time to calm your spirit, rest your body.
Listen for the voice of the Good Shepherd who desires the best for you.

Checking in on social media

You are invited to take the time to check in on social media and let people know where you are.
First, it helps get the word out on Trinity United Church of Christ in Westville
Second, it can give you a good alibi, just in case you need one.

Sounding of the Bells

Throughout the centuries, bells have rung to call people to worship or bring them news.
We use the chiming of the bell to joyously call us to worship, and prepare ourselves.

Welcoming

One: Welcome to worship today at Trinity United Church of Christ in Westville Illinois. If you are worshipping with us on line, you can download a bulletin from our church's website
www.trinityuccwestville.org.
They are located in the events section under today's date,
Let us now pause for prayer to calm ourselves down and prepare our hearts to worship our living and loving God.

Opening with Prayer

By Maria Mankin

One: Let us pray...

Many: Gracious God, we come now seeking to recognize moments of delight when we feel connected to you. We bring our fragmented hearts filled with good cheer, gentle reverence, and utter amazement; we share our secret hopes, dependable comforts, and cozy moments of advent peace. Rise up within us as we cherish the divinity of all that is good. Amen.

Lighting the Third Candle of Advent. The Candle of Joy.

One: Jesus says: I am coming soon.

Many: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus

One: We light this candle of JOY as a sign of the coming light of Christ. The Lord has promised,
The wilderness and the dry land will sing joyously. The desert will celebrate and flower.

Many: Like the crocus in spring, bursting into blossom, a symphony of song and color

The first candle, the candle of hope is lit. The second candle, the candle of peace is lit. The third candle, the candle of joy is lit.

One: Let us walk in the light of the Lord.

Many: Amen.

Announcements

Call to Worship

By Maria Mankin

One: Joy is the gift God gives us upon waking in the morning to see beams of sun dance in dusty corners
or hear much needed rain, even on a leaky roof.

Many: Joy is in the delight of tiny precious things.

One: Joy is the magnificence of the Redeemer when the tests come back clear,
or when a school test is finally passed, or when the spirit is tested and chooses faith over fear.

Many: Joy is in the hands that hold our own while we sit silently and wait.

One: Joy is the patience of Emmanuel when petty disagreement turns into great injustice
and change is slow to bend towards what is right and good.

Many: Joy is in the small actions we take each day to help righteousness and peace abound.

***Carol of Gathering**

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

1 It came upon the midnight clear
That glorious song of old
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold
Peace on the earth, good will to all
Come swiftly on the wing
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing

2 Still through the cloven skies they come
With peaceful wings unfurled
And still their heavenly music floats
Over all the weary world
From heaven's all-gracious King
They bend on hovering wing
And ever over its babel-sounds
The blessed angels sing

3 And you, beneath life's crushing load
Whose forms are bending low
Who toil along the climbing way
With painful steps and slow
Look now, for glad and golden hours
Above its sad and lowly plains
O rest beside the weary road
And hear the angels sing

4 For lo, the days are hastening on
By prophets seen of old
When with the ever-circling years
Shall come the time foretold
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendors fling
And the whole world give back the song
Which now the angels sing

Call to Confession

By Rev. Thom Shuman

One: 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,

Prayer of Confession and Letting Go

By Rev. Thom Shuman

One: Let us pray...

All: 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 joy and justice to those who have none.

Please take a few moments of silence for personal reflection, and release back to God those things
you need to be forgiven for, in your life

One: Let us continue...

All: Be patient with us, God, as we struggle to speak for the voiceless, to walk with those who have lost their way, to let go of our certainty of what really happened to 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 can to us that night in Bethlehem, in the birth of Jesus, our Brother, and our Savior. Amen.

Words of Forgiveness and Assurance

By Rev. Thom Shuman

One: 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.

Many: 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.

***Gloria Patri**

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
World without end, Amen, Amen.*

***Sharing of Christ's Peace**

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

Many: And also with you.

Please type in, post and share the peace of Christ with those gathered.
Please make sure your comments are appropriate. You can use words such as
"The peace of Christ be with you,"

Listening for God's Still Speaking Voice

Prayer for Illumination

One: Let us pray...

Many: Open our hearts and minds to the reading of Your word today God. May it speak to us and influence us in our daily lives. Amen.

Scripture Readings for Today

Isaiah 35: 1 – 10

Joy of the Redeemed

35 The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.

Like the crocus, ²it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.

The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon;
they will see the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God.

³Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way;

⁴say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, do not fear; your God will come,
he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution, he will come to save you."

⁵Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

⁶Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy.

Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.

⁷The burning sand will become a pool, the thirsty ground bubbling springs.

In the haunts where jackals once lay, grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.

⁸And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness;

it will be for those who walk on that Way.

The unclean will not journey on it; wicked fools will not go about on it.

⁹No lion will be there, nor any ravenous beast; they will not be found there.

But only the redeemed will walk there, ¹⁰and those the LORD has rescued will return.

They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads.
Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

James 5:7-10

Patience in Suffering

⁷ Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. ⁸ You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. ⁹ Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

¹⁰ Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

A Refection on the Word

*** Hymn of Response**

The Servant Song

1. Brother, sister let me serve you, let me be as Christ to you?

Pray that I might have the grace to let you be my servant, too.

2. We are pilgrims on a journey, we are trav'lers on the road.

We are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load.

3. I will hold the Christ-light for you in the night time of your fear.

I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.

4. I will weep when you are weeping, when you laugh I'll laugh with you.

I will share your joy and sorrow till we've seen this journey through.

5. When we sing to God in heaven, we shall find such harmony,

born of all we've known together of Christ's love and agony.

6. Brother, sister let me serve you, let me be as Christ to you?

Pray that I might have the grace to let you be my servant, too.

Offering of Our Gifts and Our Lives

One: There is a simple joy to be found in sharing what we have. Regardless of how much or how little that may be, a portion belongs to God. What God desires is not an altar of sacrifices, but an outstretched hand.

Give what you can, and delight in the joy your gift will bring.

You may drop your offering for today in the offering plates as they are brought forward.

Your gifts are used in service to others through the ministries and mission of Trinity UCC.

We graciously thank all who are able to support Trinity UCC during this time.

To mail your offering or pledge, please send it to

Trinity United Church of Christ, 311 E. Moses Ave. Westville, IL. 61883

Our morning Offering will now be received

***Doxology**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him all creatures here below;

Praise Him above, ye heavenly hosts! Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*** Blessing What We Can Give Back to God**

By Maria Mankin

One: Let us pray...

Many: Precious God, take these gifts in the spirit they were given, with joy and love for our siblings around the world. Let us remember that we all have times of trouble. We will each stand before you, hands clasped in prayer, begging for relief. Use what we have here to bring that relief where it is needed most. Amen

Prayers of the People

Please drop off any prayer requests in the basket located in the narthex, or in the offering plate.

Please only first names, and keep your prayers appropriate to our worship.

If you are worshipping via Facebook Livestream

Please type in and post in the comments section and share any prayer requests.

We will try and get to every prayer posted during worship.

If we don't get to your request, we will lift up your requests after worship.

After Pastor David reads the petition, he will say "Lord in Your mercy,"

and the congregation will respond with **"Hear our prayer..."**

The Lord's Prayer (debts/debtors)

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

*** Our Hymn of Departure O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing**

1 O for a thousand tongues to sing
my great Redeemer's praise,
the glories of my God and King,
the triumphs of his grace!

2 My gracious Master and my God,
assist me to proclaim,
to spread thro' all the earth abroad
the honors of your name.

3 Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
that bids our sorrows cease,
'tis music in the sinner's ears,
'tis life and health and peace.

4 He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
he sets the prisoner free;
his blood can make the foulest clean;
his blood availed for me.

*** Charge and Benediction**

By Rev. Thom Shuman

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

Many: to rebuild shattered hearts with hope.

One: Let us spend each day with Jesus,
Many: mending brokenness with love.

One: Let us share our hearts with the Spirit,
Many: so we may be with those who are waiting for peace.

One: Let us go out into the world in peace. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, and all your strength; and love your neighbor as yourself.

Many: We go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

One: Go forth, knowing that the God who created you, the Christ who redeems you and the Spirit who empowers you is with you today and for ever more. Knowing this, may laughter and joy go with you every step of your journey.

Many: Amen!

***Congregational Response**

Sing "Amen!"

***Thank you for worshipping with us today! Remember, no matter who you are,
or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here at Trinity UCC***

