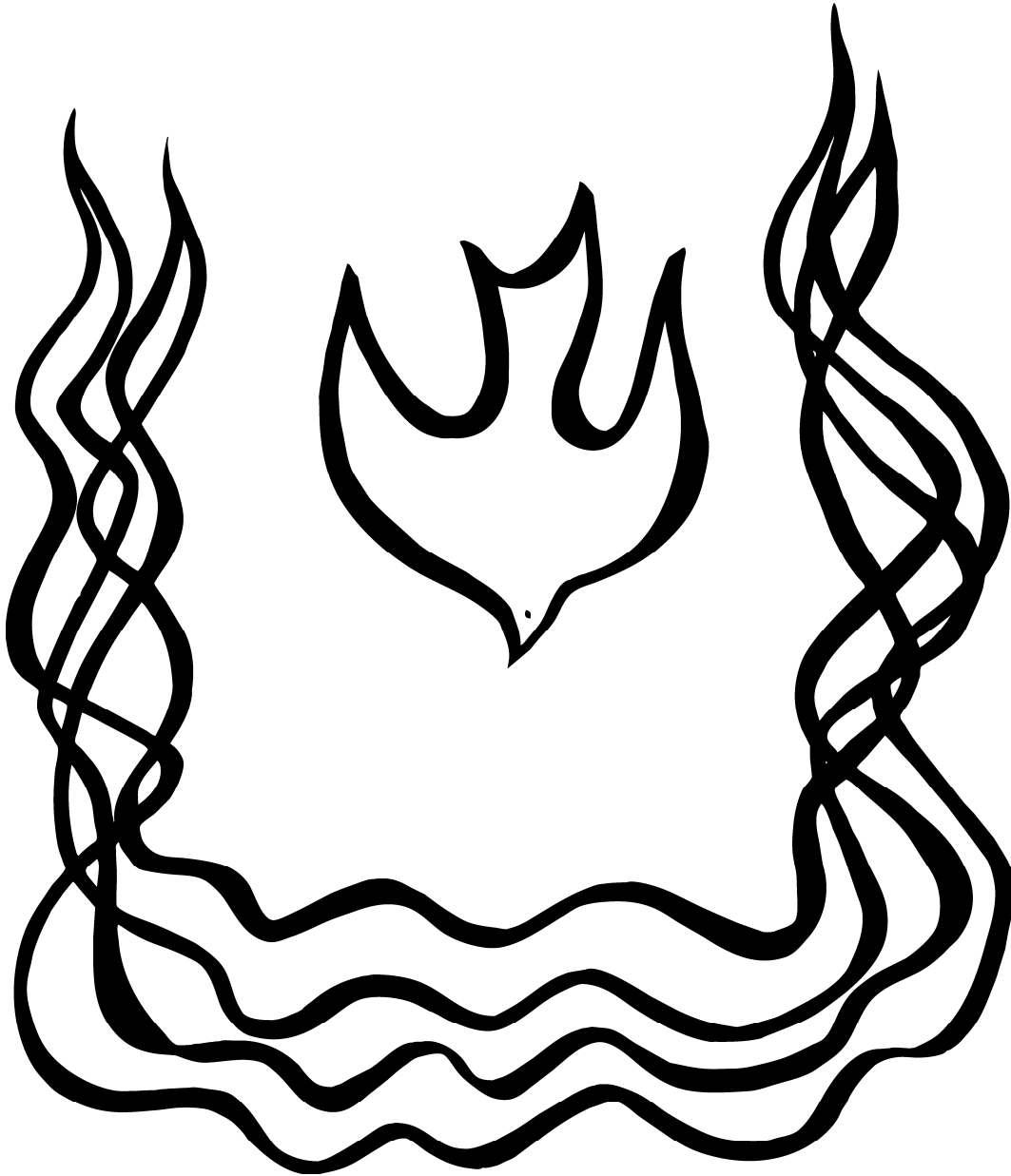


***Sunday, December 15, 2024***  
***Third Sunday of Advent***



***Immanuel United Church of Christ***

*118 Oak Street, Neenah, Wisconsin 54956*

**E-mail: [iuccneenah@sbcglobal.net](mailto:iuccneenah@sbcglobal.net) Phone: 920.722.0381**

**Worship Leader: Dr. Rev. Tom Fritz**

Phone: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday – 920.722.0381

e-mail: [iuccneenah@sbcglobal.net](mailto:iuccneenah@sbcglobal.net)

website: [iuccneenah.org](http://iuccneenah.org)

## ***God Is Still Speaking***

### ***Welcome to Immanuel***

*Who ever you are, where ever you are on life's journey,  
You are welcome here.*

**Spencer Jones**

**Music Coordinator**

**Those serving us this Sunday, Dec 15, 2024**

**Greeters Don and Heather Hessler**

**Ushers: Don and Heather Hessler**

**Reader: Pastor**

**Those serving us this Sunday, Dec 22, 2024**

**Greeters: Gary and Judy Joosten**

**Ushers: Gary and Judy Joosten**

**Reader: Pastor**

### **Please pray for:**

***Beverly Wilfling***

**Chuck Wolf**

**Jean Vande Hey**

**Lois Hoppe**

**Tom Rihm**

**Ethan Ketter – Motorcycle accident victim**

**Jack Turner – Don's father**

Welcome and Announcements

† indicates congregation is invited to stand  
(Please sign the attendance sheet)

# 290 As with Gladness Men of Old

*When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. Matthew 2:10*

1. As with glad - ness men of old Did the guid - ing  
2. As with joy - ful steps they sped To that low - ly  
3. As they of - fered gifts most rare At that man - ger  
4. Ho - ly Je - sus, ev - ery day Keep us in the

star be - hold; As with joy they hailed its light,  
man - ger bed; There to bend the knee be - fore  
rude and bare, So may we with ho - ly joy,  
nar - row way; And, when earth - ly things are past,

Lead - ing on - ward, beam - ing bright; So, most gra - cious  
Him whom heav'n and earth a - dore; So, may we with  
Pure and free from sin's al - loy, All our cost - liest  
Bring our ran - somed souls at last Where they need no

Lord, may we Ev - er - more be led to Thee.  
will - ing feet Ev - er seek the mer - cy seat.  
treas - ures bring, Christ, to Thee our heav'n - ly King.  
star to guide, Where no clouds Thy glo - ry hide.

## Sunday, December 15, 2024—Third Sunday of Advent

Prelude and Ringing of the Bell

Welcome and Announcements

Children's Story

Call to Worship (L=Leader; **P=People**)

L: In the darkness of the human experience, God's love is always shining.

**P: Let us praise God for the Light of that love which is the Messiah—as we await his coming with hope and expectation.**

Opening Hymn No. 290 "As With Gladness Men of Old" vss. 1 & 2

1. As with gladness men of old  
Did the guiding star behold;  
As with joy they hailed its light,  
Leading onward, beaming bright;  
So, most gracious Lord, may we  
Evermore be led to Thee.
2. As with joyful steps they sped  
To that lowly manger bed;  
There to bend the knee before  
Him whom heav'n and earth adore;  
So, may we with willing feet  
Ever seek the mercy seat.

Unison Prayer of Invocation

**Lord, we give you thanks and praise for the hope we feel in this Advent season. Walk with us as we seek the Christ-Child, and help us to open our hearts to him, that we may become heralds of his coming, and partners in his ministry of hope, love, and grace. Amen!**

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Responsive Scripture: Zephaniah 3:14-20 (W=Women, **M=Men**)

W: Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exalt with all your heart.

**M: The Lord has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies.**

W: The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more.

**M: On that day it shall be said: Do not fear, O Zion, do not let your hands grow weak.**

W: The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory;

**M: he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you with his love.**

W: God will remove disaster from you so that you do not bear reproach.

**M: God will save the lame and gather the outcast, and will change their shame into praise.**

W: At that time God will bring you home, gather you, and make you renown and praised among all the families of the earth.

**M: Then our fortunes will be restored before our eyes.**

First Reading:

Isaiah 12:2-6

Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid,  
for the Lord God is my strength and my might;  
he has become my salvation.

With joy you shall draw water from the wells of salvation.

And you will say in that day:

Give thanks to the Lord; call upon his name;  
make known his deeds among the nations;  
proclaim that his name is to be exalted.

Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously;  
let this be known in all the earth.

Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion,  
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Zion

Epistle Reading:

Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath that is to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" In reply he said to them, "Whoever had two coats must share with one who had none; and whoever has food must do likewise." Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

As people were filled with expectation, and were all questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.

So with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

Here ends this reading of the scripture

Solo: "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

Prayers of the People and the 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 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!**

Sermon: "Hope and Expectation: Preparing Us  
for All that God Intends to Do"

Offering

Unison Prayer of Dedication

**Good and gracious God, whose gift of hope is the inspiration for this season of giving, we joyfully bring our gifts and our lives to you. Bless our offerings, that they may bring hope to those in despair, and light to those in darkness—that the message of the Christ-Child may transform our world. Amen!**

Closing Hymn No. 290 “As With Gladness Men of Old” vss. 3 & 4

3. As they offered gifts most rare  
At that manger rude and bare,  
So may we with holy joy,  
Pure and free from sin’s alloy,  
All our costliest treasures bring,  
Christ, to Thee our heav’nly King.

4. Holy Jesus, every day  
Keep us in the narrow way;  
And, when earthly things are past,  
Bring our ransomed souls at last  
Where they need no star to guide,  
Where no clouds Thy glory hide.

Benediction

Postludes

# 290 As with Gladness Men of Old

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**Office Hours this Week**  
**Pastor's Hours: Tues, Thurs & Fri 10 - 2**  
**Heather's Hours: Tues, Wed, Thurs**

### **Looking Forward**

**We would like for everyone to please sign the Pew Pads again. This will allow us to know who is at services.**

**Dec 15 Council meeting after service**  
**Dec 22 Transformation service and brunch after service**  
**Dec 24 Christmas Eve service 4pm**  
**Dec 29 Final Worship service**

**Birthday Blessings**  
*Jody Hoppe Dec 16*

**EMERGENCY PASTORAL CARE: If you need emergency Pastoral care, call Rev. Tom Fritz at (920-268-5757) Please leave a detailed message. Talk slowly and leave: 1) your name & phone number; 2. which hospital and who the person is and room #; 3. anything else necessary to help him understand the situation. If you need to talk to the secretary, you can reach Heather at 920-734-7843. Any other church concerns, please contact Bob Vande Hey at 920-740-6177.**