Welcome

Prelude

Call to Worship

“For Joy”

You can prepare,
but still
it will come to you by surprise,
crossing through your doorway,
calling your name in greeting,
turning like a child
who quickens suddenly within you.

It will astonish you
how wide your heart
will open in welcome
for the joy that finds you
so ready,
and still so unprepared.

*Gathering Song

“With Joy Draw Water” vv. 1, 2, 4 & 5

*Gathering Prayer

Ah Holy One,
in this season of Advent,
we wait for you to break into our worlds, unexpectedly.

Help us stay awake, be aware, hope against hope.
We pray for you to show us
how we might simply be instruments of your peace,
and how what we do makes a difference toward joy.

We pray for the peace you bring between nations and communities.
We pray for the peace you bring within families.
We pray for the peace you bring within ourselves.
We pray for your peace to come for those who are ill,
those who are grieving,  
those who are struggling,  
those who are suffering,  
those who are lonely and feeling unloved.

And on this morning, we ask that you hear the names of those in need right now...

Surprise us with the possibilities  
of how your vision of our world might take root,  
and how, through it, heartfelt joy may reign.

Even so, O Jesus, Come. Amen.

Lighting the Candle of Joy  Simon Baltz-Schomaker and Anna Rodriguez

Invitation to the Offering  "Blessing to Summon Rejoicing"  Jacob Rodriguez

When the storm has been long  
as the night and the season of your sorrowing.  
When you have seemed an exile from your life,  
lost in a far country,  
a long way from where your comfort lies.  
When empty.  
When lonely.  
When too much of what depletes you  
and not enough of what restores and rests you.

Then let there be rejoicing.  
Then let there be dreaming.  
Let there be laughter in your mouth  
and on your tongue shouts of joy.  
Let the seeds stacked by tears turn to grain,  
to bread,  
to feasting.  
Let there be coming home.

Offertory
*Doxology

“Make Us One”
(sung twice)

*Prayer of Dedication

In gratitude and joy we pray,
Lord, make us instruments of your peace:
where there is hatred, let us sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that we may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

Scripture Reading

Psalm 30:1-5, 11-12

All praise to You, O Beloved, for You have raised me up,
and have not let my fears overwhelm me.
O compassionate One, I cried for help, and You comforted me.
You, O Love, helped me release my soul from despair;
You gave me strength to face my fears;
now love is awakening in me.

Sing praises to the Beloved, all you saints,
giving thanks to Love’s holy Name.
Love withdraws when we close our hearts,
yet ever awaits an open door.
In the evening we may weep, yet joy comes with the morning.

You turned my mourning into dancing;
You set me free and clothed me with gladness.
My soul rejoices and is glad in You;
songs of gratitude fill My soul
rising up to You, O Beloved.
And we sing, Amen.
And we sing, Amen.

Song for Reflection

“There’s Still My Joy”

Vocalists:
Madalyn Tomkins, Kat Rubush, Jay McKeehan, Damarius Levi
KUCC’s Section Leaders from Webster University

Special Presentation

“The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey”
adapted from a book by Susan Wojciechowski and P. J. Lynch

directed by Barb Harris and Evie Appel

*Sending Forth Song

“Go My Children, With My Blessing”

Sources:
Call to Worship is written by Jan Richardson, in Circle of Grace, 2015.
Scripture Reading is from Psalms for Praying: An Invitation to Holiness, by Nan C. Merrill, 2008.
Song for Reflection “There’s Still My Joy” by Melissa Manchester, Matt Rollings and Beth Chapman. Arranged by Audrey Snyder.
Invitation to the Offering is an excerpt from “Blessing to Summon Rejoicing,” by Jan Richardson in Circle of Grace, 2015.
Prayer of Dedication is attributed to St. Francis of Assisi, although he is not the verified author.
Cast Members
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Narrator Two--Anna Rodriguez
Jonathan Toomey--Gabe Mershon
Thomas McDowell--Robbie Ridenhour
Amy McDowell--Colette Giezentanner
Sunday School Class:
  Luke Bauer
  Nate Bauer
  Milton Bradley
  Regina Bradley
  Alex Genthe
  Lydia Genthe
  Alice Hall
  Serena Hughes
  Melanie Hughes
  Greyson Kosmiski
  Catie Mershon
  Lucy Struble

Jingle Bells
Jingle bells, jingle bells
Jingle all the way
Oh, what fun it is to ride
In a one-horse open sleigh, hey
Jingle bells, jingle bells
Jingle all the way
Oh, what fun it is to ride
In a one-horse open sleigh

Away in a Manager
Away in a manager no crib for a bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay, the little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

Joy to the World
Joy to the world! The Lord is come; let earth its praises bring; Let every heart prepare Christ room,
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Silent Night, Holy Night
Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child. Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.