

Worship for 13 December 2020
Gregory Memorial Presbyterian Church

One: There will be signs in the heavens and distress among the nations.

ALL: When Christ returns in power and glory people will faint with fear.

One: But when you see these things, lift up your heads:

ALL: Our redemption is drawing near!

One: We light this candle as a symbol of God's love for us and our love for one another.

ALL: Come, Lord Jesus, come!

Hymn of Invitation – “Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates”

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates; behold the King of glory waits; the King of kings is drawing near; the Savior of the world is here.

Fling wide the portals of your heart; make it a temple, set apart from earthly use for heaven's employ, adorned with prayer and love and joy.

Prayer of Confession

The Lord is near. In your presence, Holy God, we confess that we need repentance. We have broken your commands against idolatry. We do not live in peace with your creation or your people. We have not trusted your word, and we are afraid. Forgive us, restore us, and turn our shame into praise, for the sake of the One who proclaims the good news and for the sake of all the world. Amen.

Scripture – Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; John 1:6-8, 19-28 (see reverse)

Reflection – “*Life of Relationship*”

Prayers of the People & 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 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.

Hymn of Thanksgiving – “On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry”

On Jordan’s bank the Baptist’s cry announces that they Lord is nigh; awake and hearken, for he brings glad tidings of the King of kings!

Then cleansed be every life from sin; make straight the way for God within, and let us all our hearts prepare for Christ to come and enter there.

Announcements & Blessing

-“*Anatomy of a Revived Church*” brown-bag lunch discussion, today (12/13) following worship;

-*Darkest Night* service – pre-recorded and will be posted to Facebook page 12/21, 7:00pm;

-Christmas Eve Service (pre-registration requested), 12/24, 7:00pm;

-Christmas Eve late service, Facebook Live video, 12/24, 11:00pm;

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion – to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory. They shall build up ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an

everlasting covenant with them. Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed. I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

John 1:6-8, 19-28

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

What does a life, overflowing with abundant joy, look like to you? What steps would you need to take to realize, more fully, such a life in this day and age?

