The Joy Candle

Leader: We light the second candle of Advent for peace and to celebrate John the Baptist and his vision for a future of Christ's peace in the world, a peace that surpasses all understanding. Now we light the third candle of Advent for joy and to celebrate the young girl, Mary, joyfully bearing the glory of God to a waiting world.

All: We light the third candle of Advent for all God-bearers, saying 'yes' to God's challenge, accepting the pain and joy of an unknown future.

Leader: We light the third candle of Advent for ourselves, for we, too, are given the task to joyfully bear the light of Christ in to dark places.

All: God, as we wait for Your promise, give light, give hope, give peace, and give joy.

*Opening Hymn

#117 (verses 1-4), "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks"

Winchester Old
Call to Worship

Narrator: One day, an angel appeared to a young woman named Mary.

Angel: Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you. Do not be afraid, for you have found favor with God. You will conceive and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and called the Son of the Most High!

Mary: How can this be?

Angel and Congregation: God will send the Holy Spirit to give you this baby and therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. God has also done another miracle. After many years of waiting, God will give your relatives Elizabeth and Zechariah a son. For nothing is impossible with God!

Narrator: I am God's humble servant. Let it be according to your word.

*Prayer of Confession

Narrator: When Joseph found out that Mary was pregnant before they were to be married, he planned to dismiss her quietly because he was a righteous man and was unwilling to expose her to public disgrace. He was a righteous man and was unwilling to expose her to public disgrace.

Congregation: We confess that we are not open to your miracles, O God. We do not open our eyes to possibilities in our lives. We exclude and judge those who do not adhere to the norms of our society and struggle to find God's grace and favor may be made known to all the world, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.

*Response

Narrator: In exhaustion and concern, Joseph fell asleep. That night, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream.

*Prayer of Dedication

Narrator: O Mighty One, You have done and are doing great things for us, and holy is Your name. Bless all we offer You – ourselves, our time, our possessions – that through us Your grace and favor may be made known to all the world, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.

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 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.

*Passing of the Peace

*Recessional and Sending Hymn

#134, "Joy to the World"

Antioch