

## BENEDICTION

Pastor: The Creator who wove joy throughout the whole cosmos  
weaves joy within your own heart.  
The Christ who experienced all our human joys and sorrows  
travels right beside you.  
The Spirit who whispers joy to our hearts  
is present within you.  
You are blessed  
in the name of God: The Holy Three in One.

*All people: We will practice joy  
that looks forward with hope.  
Amen.*

## POSTLUDE

February 25, 2024  
Expectant Joy – Second Sunday in Lent

## PREWORSHIP MUSIC

## GREETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

## PRELUDE

**Mr. Kevin Crone**  
Acolyte

## CANDLELIGHTING

*(Please stand in body and/or spirit)*

## CALL TO WORSHIP –

Pastor: People of God, we gather for worship to practice joy:  
not because our lives are perfect,  
but because joy is resilient.  
Joy is God's gift for every season  
and a wellspring at the heart of our faith.  
When our sins feel heavy,

**Congregation: we practice joy.**

Pastor: When floods rise and fall,

**Congregation: we practice joy.**

Pastor: When hope surprises us,

**Congregation: we practice joy.**

Pastor: When God sets people free,

**Congregation: we practice joy.**

Pastor: When Jesus heals us,

**Congregation: we practice joy.**

Pastor: When we are called

**Congregation: we practice joy.**

Pastor: When we endure,

**Congregation: we practice joy.**

Pastor: We practice joy together,

*All people: and God is with us.*

## PRAYER OF INVOCATION

*All people: Timeless God, you promise a joy-filled future against all reason. Reach us  
with that expectant joy, even here and now. As we follow Jesus to the cross  
through an unsettled present, help us rejoice that someday, we will rejoice.  
Amen.*

## HYMN

*How Firm a Foundation*

**Blue Chalice Hymnal, #618**

## CALL TO CONFESSION

Pastor: People of God, the Merciful One already knows everything we confess. By naming our sins and hearing words of forgiveness, we are drawn deeper into relationship with God and one another. Let's bring before God what we have done wrong and what we've failed to do, trusting that we will receive the joy of being forgiven...(Moment of silence for personal, private confession to God)

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Pastor: God of abundant goodness,

*All people: we have hurt those we love, those far from us, ourselves, and your creation by what we do and by what we neglect. We cling to disappointments, judgments, and failures and refuse to enjoy what you give. We are too content when injustice, violence, and hardship plague our neighbors. We ignore the gift of your presence in times both tragic and triumphant. Forgive us for what we have done and for what we have failed to do. Pour out on us the joy of your presence and heal what we have harmed. Amen.*

## ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Pastor: Friends, receive these joyful words: You are entirely and completely forgiven for all of your sins. You are entirely and completely welcomed as God's beloved child. You are released to live out God's love in a world that needs joy.

*All people: Amen.*

## PRAISE HYMN

*Gloria Patri*

**Blue Chalice Hymnal, #35**

*(The congregation may be seated, as the children & youth come forward)*

**JESUS SAID, "LET THE CHILDREN COME"**

## HYMN

*Healer of our Every Ill*

**Blue Chalice Hymnal, #506**

## HEBREW READING

**Genesis 17:1-7**

## EPISTLE READING

**Romans 4:13-25**

## GOSPEL READING

**Mark 8:31-38**

## SERMON

**Rev. Laura Baker**

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Pastor: God of unending joy,

*All people: answer us.*

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

*All people: 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 sins, as we forgive those who sin 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. Amen.*

## ANTHEM

*Day by Day* (Althouse)

**Chancel Choir**

## OFFERING INVITATION

Liturgist: God has given us all that is good and right and true. What a joy to share these gifts in the life of this community and far beyond our own reach. With a prayer of gratitude and joyful eagerness, let us return to God an offering and a re-commitment of our time, talent, and money.

*(Please stand in body and/or spirit)*

## OFFERING RESPONSE

*Accept, O God, the Gifts*

**Blue Chalice Hymnal, #379**

(Tune: Ellacombe)

*Accept, O God, the gifts we bring of spirit and of clay.*

*Transform them into blessings on those we serve today.*

*Rekindle deep within us all passion to fulfill*

*The ministry disciples have, empowered to do your will.*

*(An Offering Collection Box is located on the table in the back of sanctuary, by the exit door)*

## PRAYER OF DEDICATION

*All people: God of mercy and grace, you give us so much: our days, our loved ones, our passions and talents, the food we eat, the homes we know, a place to worship. We thank you for raising up leaders who are willing to lead support groups such as Grief Share and outreach ministries such as Servants Workcamp and the Northeastern Food Pantry – to those who have "hope against hope;" who long to feel peace and experience joy again after the death of loved ones and challenges to one's home and food security. Bless those who come to this sacred place in search of unconditional love, a word of hope, and a longing for peace. Bless them and bless us through these very special ministries. May our words surrounding these ministries, be a sweet, sweet sound to your ears, and may our time and talent given towards them, be offerings, with which you are well-pleased. Receive the many other gifts we offer back to you today. Bless them and bless us, that we will give generously, love boldly, and share widely, our offering reflecting your joyful gifts through Christ. Amen.*

## HYMN

*Lift High the Cross*

**Blue Chalice Hymnal, #108**