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Amen!**  \* Hymn In the Bleak Midwinter – GtG#144  Prayer of Confession O Great Writer, with a sky full of stars and a world full of flowers, there should be no end to my joy. And yet, instead of decorating my very being with joy, I let it slip away like loose change. Instead of singing like Mary, or dancing like David, I pass by remarkable beauty and love most days, unfazed. Forgive me. Teach me the ways of children, who laugh and dance and sing as if joy is the very thing that keeps them alive. Maybe they have joy figured out, help us to learn joy again. Amen   Silent Prayers of Confession   Words of Assurance (responsive) Leader: With joy in our hearts, we celebrate the forgiveness we find in Jesus Christ! **People: We are a forgiven people Thanks be to God!**  The Peace Leader: The peace of Christ be with you! **People: And also with you!** (You may greet those around you)   The Proclamation of the Word   Prayer of Illumination   Creator God, we know that to dream is to hope, and to hope is to imagine, and to imagine is to wonder, and to wonder is to believe, and to believe is to live and breathe for your promised day. So give us the strength to listen as we dream, O God. For deep down, we know your words are the very thing we need. Amen.  Scripture Lesson   Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 The Good News of Deliverance  **61**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; **2**to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; **3**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. **4**They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.  **8**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. **9**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. **10**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. **11**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.  Sermon Sow Joy   The Response to the Word   \* Hymn     My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout – GtG100  Pastoral Prayer and the Lord’s Prayer  “For this I pray to God” / “For this I give thanks to God.” Congregational Response: “**Hear our prayer, O God.”** And now, in confidence and in gratitude, we say the prayer together that Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, taught us to pray…  **Our Father,** **who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven and 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, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**  Offertory Prayer   Hymn   You Shall Go Out with Joy – GtG80  Charge & Benediction Leader: May you go from this place, **People: Redefining joy in this world.** Leader: May you go from this place, **People: Seeking joy in new ways.** Leader: May you go from this place, **People: Sowing seeds of joy wherever we go.** | |  | | | | |