**St.Paul’s United Church of Christ**

**Sunday, January 1, 2023**

**9:30 a.m.**

**Craig Hink**

Organ Prelude

Ringing of the Church Bell

**\*Call to Worship**

**Leader:** This is the day that the Lord has made.

**People: We will be glad and rejoice in it.**

**Leader:** This is the year that the Lord has begun.

**People: We will rejoice and be glad in it.**

**Leader:** Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.

**People: They are new every morning.**

**Leader:** The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to those who seek him.

**All: Great is your faithfulness, O Lord.**

**\*Opening Hymn** Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers #87

**\*Prayer of Invocation (In Unison)**

Jesus, we have just celebrated your birth surrounded by family and friends. We come once again into the church to celebrate your birth as a community of faith. We pray this hour that you move your Spirit in a powerful way among us. Lord, we open our hearts to you, just as in the past we have opened presents — with joy and with a true sense of expectation. Amen.

**\*Silent Confession**

**\*Words of Assurance**

**\*Gloria Patri** Glory be to the Father

And to the Son and to the Holy Ghost

As it was in the beginning,

Is now and ever shall be,

World without end. Amen.

\***Sign of Peace and Words of Welcome**

*Please extend a word of welcome, warmth and friendship to those seated near you.*

**Scripture Reading Matthew 3: 1 - 12**

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,”

Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

“I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful that I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable file.”

**Sermon** ”Making Way”

**Hymn** Come, Thou Long-expected Jesus#79

**Prayers of the People**

**Pastoral Prayer – Silent Prayer – Lord’s Prayer – Cares Chorus Response**

**Offering**

Invitation & Gathering of Tithes and Offerings

**\*Doxology**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Praise Him all creatures here below.

Praise Him above ye heavenly host.

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

**\*Prayer of Dedication (unison)**

God of unending grace, although there are times in our lives when we question why, and when we wander from our faith, we still are grateful for this gift of life. We now pray that what we give will make this world better.

**\*Closing Hymn**  “Rejoice Ye Pure in Heart” #156

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