

Sun., Dec. 25, 2011

The Rev. Jennifer Haddox '06, Associate Director of the World Mission Initiative

Scripture

Psalm 98

- ¹ O sing to the LORD a new song,
for he has done marvelous things.
His right hand and his holy arm
have gained him victory.
- ² The LORD has made known his victory;
he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations.
- ³ He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness
to the house of Israel.
All the ends of the earth have seen
the victory of our God.
- ⁴ Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song and sing praises.
- ⁵ Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre,
with the lyre and the sound of melody.
- ⁶ With trumpets and the sound of the horn
make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD.
- ⁷ Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
the world and those who live in it.
- ⁸ Let the floods clap their hands;
let the hills sing together for joy
- ⁹ at the presence of the LORD, for he is coming
to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with righteousness,
and the peoples with equity.

Devotional

As we gather for worship on this Christmas morning, many will sing, "Joy to the World!" This wonderful hymn based on Psalm 98 celebrates the joyful coming of Jesus into the world as King. There is no greater joy than the reality of *Immanuel*, God with us.

The wonderful thing about the joy of Jesus' coming is that it is a gift to us and to the whole world. The Incarnation is the joy of God's love made manifest. If you are feeling blue this day, or struggling with

heartache and loss, may you open your heart to receive the gift of joy. Prepare your heart, make room for the joy of Jesus.

*Joy to the world! The Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.*

Prayer

We give joyful thanks this day for the coming of Jesus into our world and into our lives. Thank you, O LORD, for the gift of your love given as a babe in a manger. As we celebrate this day, prepare our hearts to receive you once again. Help us to make room in our lives for your presence in all the days to come. Amen.