



Sunday, December 15, 2024

Third Sunday of Advent

Introduction

Christ's presence in our midst in the wonder of the holy supper is cause for singing. The nearness of the God in prayer, in every circumstance, is cause for rejoicing. The coming of one "more powerful" than John, even with a winnowing fork in hand, is good news—and cause for exultation—for us who are being saved. Great joy is the tone for the third Sunday of Advent.

Prelude... "Song of Hope (Heaven Come Down)"

Gathering Hymn... "Awake! Awake and Greet the New Morn"



1 A - wake! A - wake, and greet the new morn, for
2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em -
4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night, though



an - gels her - ald its dawn - ing. Sing out your joy, for
man - u - el comes a - sing - ing, his hum - ble song is
dark the win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall



soon he is born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing.
qui - et and near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing;
crown you with light, be strong and lov - ing and fear - less.



Come as a ba - by weak and poor, to bring all hearts to -
mu - sic to heal the bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing -
Love be our song and love our prayer and love our end - less



geth - er, he o - pens wide the heav'n - ly door and
kind - ness, the thun - der of his an - thems roll to
sto - ry; may God fill ev - 'ry day we share and



lives now in - side us for - ev - er.
shat - ter all ha - tred and blind - ness.
bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, alive in the world, reviving creation, arriving soon.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of mercy,

we confess that we have sinned. We trust earthly powers and human authority alone. We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts. we confess that we have sinned. We have turned away from our neighbors. We have trusted false promises. We confess that we have sinned. We plead: come to us. Bring your mercy to birth in us.

A righteous branch springs forth: it is Christ the Lord, our Savior, in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy. By the power of the Holy Spirit, receive the grace and forgiveness of God through † Christ Jesus, whose day draws near.

Amen.

Prayer of the Day

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

We Prepare in Hope

A Candle Lighting Ceremony for Advent

Third Sunday of Advent

Responsive Litany—PREPARE

P: Advent is a time to prepare

C: Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the way for our God

P: During Advent we prepare our eyes to see the light of Christ.

C: Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the way for our God

P: During Advent we prepare our hearts to receive the Word of Christ.

C: Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the way for our God

P: During Advent we prepare to share the joy of Christ.

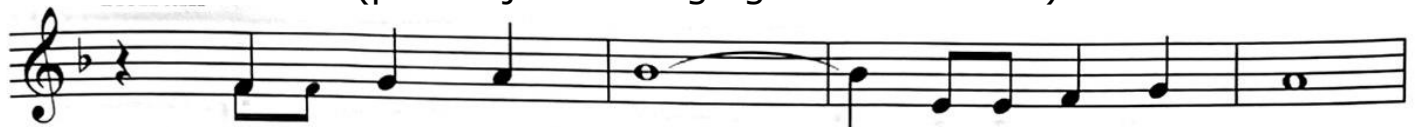
C: Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the way for our God

P: During Advent we prepare to embrace the promise of God.

C: Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the way for our God

Candle Lighting

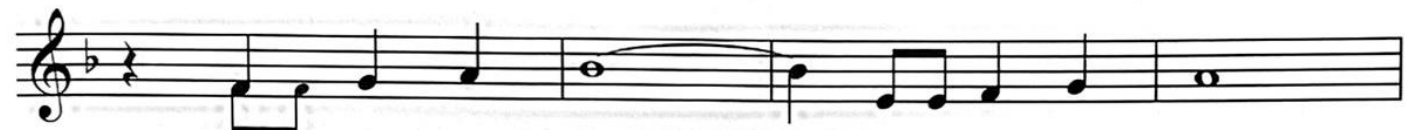
(please join in singing when directed)



(1st Sunday)	We	wait	in	}	hope_____	for the morn - ing	Light,
(2nd Sunday)	We	watch	in				
(3rd Sunday)	We	pre - pare	in				
(4th Sunday)	We	praise	with				
(Christmas Eve)	We	pro - claim	with				



for the love of Christ to il - lu - mi - nate___ the night. ___



We	wait	with	}	joy_____	for the Sav - ior's	birth;
We	watch	with				
We	pre - pare	with				
We	praise	with				
We	pro - claim	with				



we	wait	in	}	hope	for	peace	on	earth.
we	watch	in						
we	pre - pare	in						
we	praise	with						
we	pro - claim	with						

Isaiah 12:2-6



Cry out with joy and glad-ness; for a - mong you is the great and Ho-ly One of Is - ra - el.

- 2 God indeed is my savior; I am confident and unafraid.
- 3 My strength and my courage is the Lord, and he has been my savior with joy you will draw water at the fountain of salvation.
- 4 Give thanks to the Lord, acclaim his name; among the nations make known his deeds, proclaim how exalted is his name.
- 5 Sing praise to the Lord for his glorious achievement; let this be known throughout all the earth.
- 6 Shout with exultation, O city of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel!

First Reading: Zephaniah 3:14-20

The prophet Zephaniah's message is mostly one of judgment for sin. This reading, however, which comes from the conclusion of the book, prophesies joy for Judah and Jerusalem. Judgment has led to repentance, and God's salvation is at hand.

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! The LORD has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak.

The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival. I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it. I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the LORD.

HERE ENDS THE READING.

Second Reading: Philippians 4:4-7

Despite being in prison, Paul is remarkably upbeat as he writes this letter. Here, he urges his friends in Philippi to trust God with all their worries and concerns with the hope that they will experience God's joy and peace.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

HERE ENDS THE READING.

Gospel: Luke 3:7-18

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke

Glory to you, O Lord.

John the Baptist heralds the mighty one who is coming. John teaches that preparation for God's reign is not a matter of identity but of bearing fruits of merciful justice, radical generosity, and vocational integrity.

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin 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." And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation and be satisfied with your wages." As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

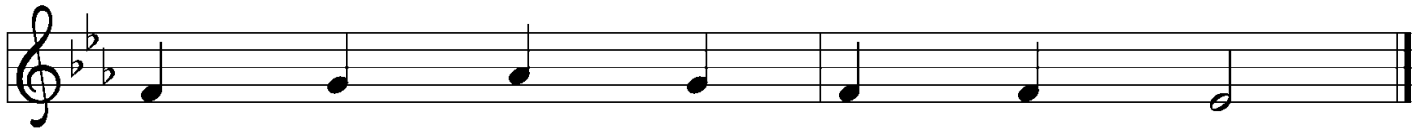
Sermon Hymn..... "Hark! A Thrilling Voice is Sounding!"



1 Hark! a thrill - ing voice is sound - ing! "Christ is near," we
2 Wak - ened by the sol - emn warn - ing, from earth's bond - age
3 See the Lamb, so long ex - pect - ed, come with par - don
4 So, when next he comes in glo - ry and the world is
5 Hon - or, glo - ry, might, and bless - ing to the Fa - ther



hear it say. "Cast a - way the works of dark - ness,
let us rise; Christ, our sun, all sloth dis - pel - ling,
down from heav'n. Let us haste, with tears of sor - row,
wrapped in fear, he will shield us with his mer - cy
and the Son with the ev - er - last - ing Spir - it



all you chil - dren of the day!"
shines up - on the morn - ing skies.
one and all, to be for - giv'n;
and with words of love draw near.
while un - end - ing a - ges run!

Text: Latin hymn, 1632; tr. Edward Caswall, 1814-1878
Music: MERTON, William H. Monk, 1823-1889

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,

he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.

Amen

Prayers of Intercession

As we prepare for Emmanuel, God-with-us, let us pray for all people and places that long for God's presence.

A brief silence.

God who reforms, fill your church with courage to do your will. Empower your people in taking risks that bear fruit. Raise up leaders who will proclaim the good news. Lord in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God who creates, you hold in balance diverse ecosystems. Encourage efforts to protect wild lands from devastation. Care for animals and people in the path of destructive fires, storms, and other disasters. Lord in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God who leads, this world cries out for true justice. Guide legislatures, judges, and lawyers in actions steeped in love and restoration. Increase the desire to advocate for all who are confronted with discrimination and oppression based on race, gender, sexuality, class, or age. Lord in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God who embraces, help us notice the places where your people are hurting or sick (*especially Charlie, Eric, Terry, Barbara, Lizzy, Christi, Anelika, Jenna, Dave, Joy, Frank, Carol, Vicki, David, Tyler, Dick, Kristin, Tom, Michael, Gabriele, Merle, Prentice, Rebecca, Bonnie, Kathie, Mark, Ruth, Bob, Michael, Peter, Don, Del, Jeff, Eric and Michael*). Show your compassion and remember your people in love. Lord in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God who abides, you dwell among the people of this congregation. Deepen our relationships with one another, and make us aware of the diverse talents and gifts present here. Lord in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God who consoles, we thank you for the time we have had with loved ones who have died. Comfort us with the promise of everlasting life in you. Lord in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Savior of the nations, come, and receive these prayers and the pleas of our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Sharing of the Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you all.
And also with you.

Offering

Offering Hymn..... "Midnight Clear (Love Song)"

Offering Prayer

Creator God, you made the whole world, even the farthest stars, and you draw near to feed us. We praise you for these gifts of bread and wine. Strengthen us with this food that we may live in expectation for the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Thanksgiving at the Table

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass 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 and ever.
Amen.**

Distribution

We will be using the intinction method for distribution. You will be handed bread and asked to dip the bread in the chalice. Gluten-free bread and grape juice are available. Please make your way forward by the center aisle, returning down the side. If mobility is a problem for you, please notify an usher and you will be served at your seat.

Invitation to Communion

God feeds us with tender mercy. Come to the table.

Communion Song..... "Came To My Rescue"

Post Communion Prayer

Generous God, we thank you for the gift of life, for the bread of salvation. We thank you for coming among us, for leading us into peace. We thank you for showering us with mercy, for sending us into the world. Come, Lord Jesus, and go with us as we feed the hungry in your name.

Amen.

Blessing

God of endings and beginnings, God in the darkness and the light, God, our hope for the journey, ✚ bless and keep you now and forever.

Amen.

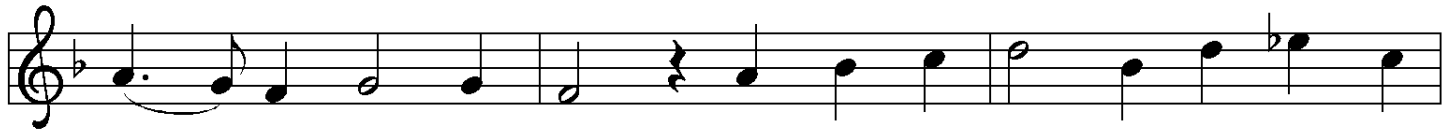
Sending Song..... "In Thee is Gladness"



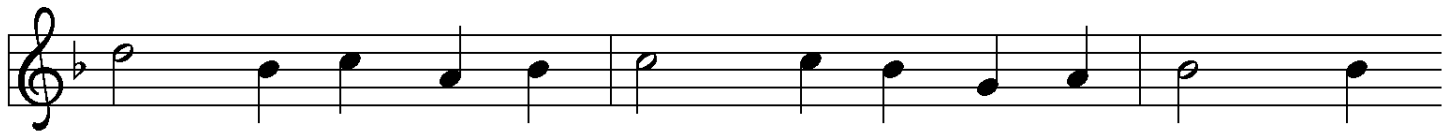
1 In thee is glad-ness a - mid all sad - ness, Je - sus, sun - shine of my
2 Je - sus is ours! . . . We fear no pow - ers, not of earth or sin or



heart. By thee are giv - en the gifts of heav - en, thou the
death. He sees and bless - es in worst dis - tress - es; he can



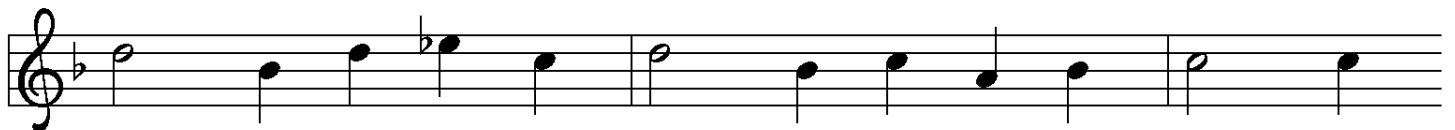
true re - deem - er art. Our souls thou wak - est; our bonds thou
change them with a breath. Where-fore the sto - ry tell of his



break - est. Who trusts thee sure - ly has built se - cure - ly
glo - ry with heart and voic - es; all heav'n re - joic - es



and stands for - ev - er: Al - le - lu - ia! Our hearts are
in him for - ev - er: Al - le - lu - ia! We shout for



pin - ing to see thy shin - ing, dy - ing or liv - ing,
glad - ness, tri - umph o'er sad - ness, love him and praise him



to thee are cleav - ing; naught can us sev - er: Al - le - lu - ia!
and still shall raise him glad hymns for - ev - er: Al - le - lu - ia!

Dismissal

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.