

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

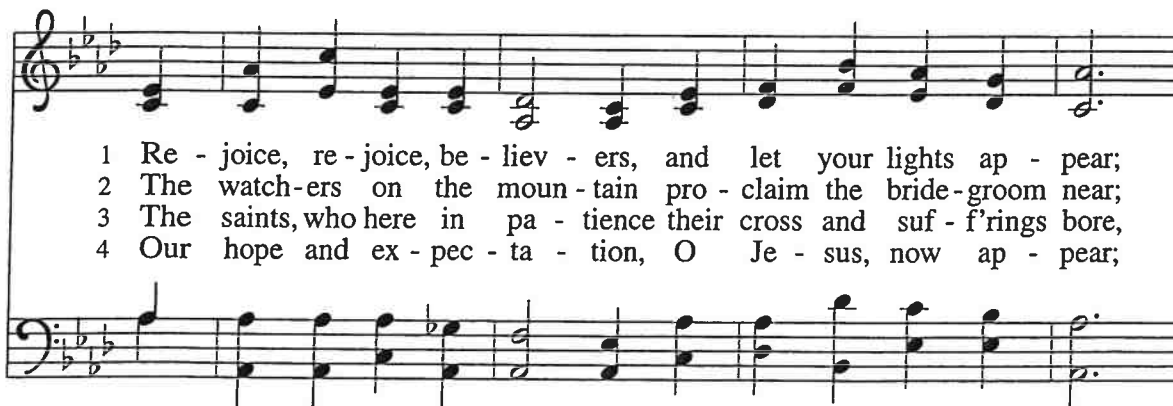
December 14 & 15, 2024

INTRODUCTION

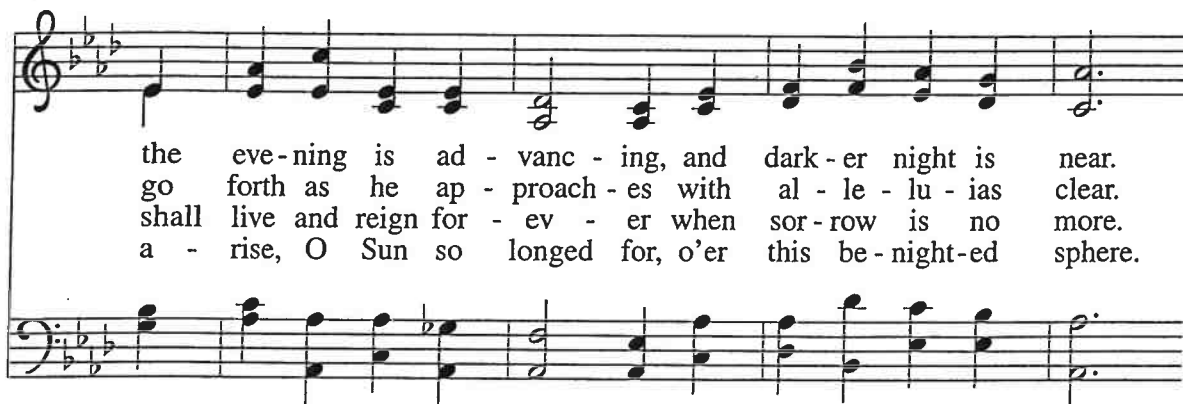
Christ's presence in our midst in the wonder of the holy supper is cause for singing. The nearness of the God in prayer, in every circumstance, is cause for rejoicing. The coming of one "more powerful" than John, even with a winnowing fork in hand, is good news—and cause for exultation—for us who are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

PRELUDE

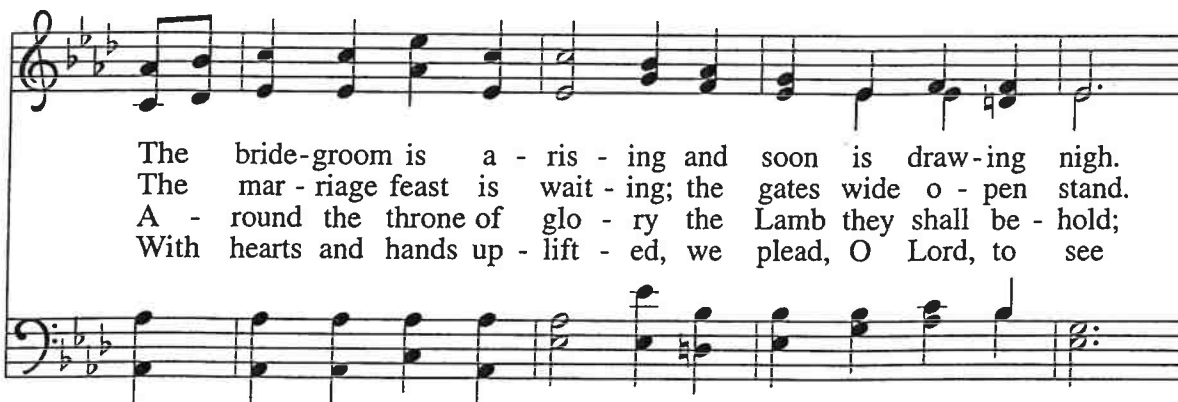
WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS



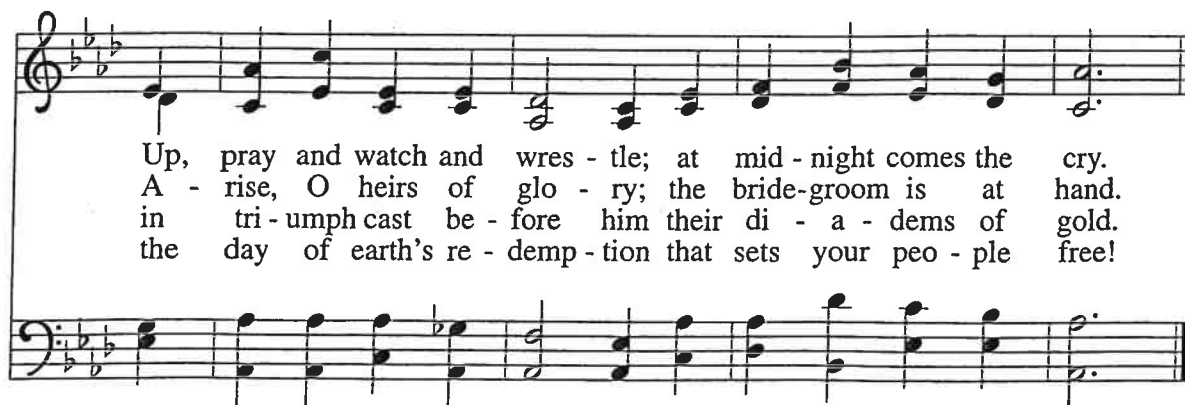
1 Re - joice, re - joice, be - liev - ers, and let your lights ap - pear;
 2 The watch - ers on the moun - tain pro - claim the bride - groom near;
 3 The saints, who here in pa - tience their cross and suf - f'ings bore,
 4 Our hope and ex - pec - ta - tion, O Je - sus, now ap - pear;



the eve - ning is ad - vanc - ing, and dark - er night is near.
 go forth as he ap - proach - es with al - le - lu - ias clear.
 shall live and reign for - ev - er when sor - row is no more.
 a - rise, O Sun so longed for, o'er this be - night - ed sphere.



The bride - groom is a - ris - ing and soon is draw - ing nigh.
 The mar - riage feast is wait - ing; the gates wide o - pen stand.
 A - round the throne of glo - ry the Lamb they shall be - hold;
 With hearts and hands up - lift - ed, we plead, O Lord, to see



Up, pray and watch and wres - tle; at mid - night comes the cry.
 A - rise, O heirs of glo - ry; the bride - groom is at hand.
 in tri - umph cast be - fore him their di - a - dems of gold.
 the day of earth's re - demp - tion that sets your peo - ple free!

BAPTISM (8:30 & 11:00)

*** GREETING**

P Christ has called us to this place,
gathered one and all by his Holy Spirit

C **We are followers of Christ
who seek to hear the Word,
live the Word,
and share the Word.**

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C **And also with you.**

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

BLESSING OF THE ADVENT WREATH: *Shepherd*

P O faithful and loving God,
we praise you for your tender compassion
and give thanks for your steadfast love for us and all creation.
Bless us who see the light of this wreath,
that we, like the Shepherds, may hear Good News of great
joy in your advent among us,
and live toward the completion of all things in you.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

C **Amen.**

"Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah"

ELW #240



3 Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.



Lift your heads and lift high the gate-way for the King of glo - ry.

Text: Wayne L. Wold, b. 1954

Music: TIF IN VELDELE, Yiddish folk tune

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*** PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P 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.

C **Amen.**

SPECIAL MUSIC

5:30 Chancel Choir

8:30 Leah Wilson

11:00 Praise Team

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.

- ¹⁴Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;
shout, O Israel!
Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem!
- ¹⁵The 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.
- ¹⁶On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
Do not fear, O Zion;
do not let your hands grow weak.
- ¹⁷The 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
- ¹⁸as on a day of festival.
I will remove disaster from you,
so that you will not bear reproach for it.
- ¹⁹I 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.
- ²⁰At 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.

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.

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

* GOSPEL VERSE

Refrain



Re-joyce! Re - joyce!

Em-man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

Text: *Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum*, Köln, 1710; tr. John M. Neale, 1818–1866, alt.
Music: VENI, EMMANUEL, French processional, 15th cent.

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 3rd chapter.

C **Speak, Lord, your servants are listening!**

* GOSPEL: Luke 3:7-18

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.

⁷John 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? ⁸Bear 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. ⁹Even 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."

¹⁰And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" ¹¹In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise."

¹²Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?"

¹³He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." ¹⁴Soldiers 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."

¹⁵As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶John 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. ¹⁷His 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."

¹⁸So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

P The Gospel of the Lord.
C Thanks be to God!

SERMON Pr. Sharon

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Now the Heavens Start to Whisper”

1. Now the heavens start to whisper, as the veil is growing thin.
Earth from slumber wakes to listen to the stirring, faint within:
seed of promise, deeply planted, child to spring from Jesse's stem!
Like the soil beneath the frost line, hearts grow soft to welcome him.
2. Heavy clouds that block the moonlight now begin to drift away.
Diamond brilliance through the darkness shines the hope of coming day.
Christ, the morning star of splendor, gleams within a world grown dim.
Heaven's ember fans to fullness; hearts grow warm to welcome him.
3. Christ, eternal Sun of justice, Christ, the rose of wisdom's seed,
come to bless with fire and fragrance hours of yearning, hurt, and need.
In the lonely, in the stranger, in the outcast, hid from view;
Child who comes to grace the manger, teach our hearts to welcome you.

*** THE APOSTLES' CREED (5:30)**

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again 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**

P 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.

P Lord, in your mercy,

C receive our prayer.

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

C Amen.

THE OFFERING



* THE OFFERTORY

“In the Bleak Midwinter” (v. 3 only)

ELW #294

3 What . . . can I give him, poor . . . as I am?

If I were a shep - herd I would bring a lamb;

if I were a wise . . . man I would do my part;

yet what I can I give him— give my heart.

Text: Christina Georgina Rossetti, 1830–1894
Music: Gustav Holst, 1874–1934

CRANHAM
Irregular

Welcome to the Feast of Holy Communion.(Gluten free wafers available, ask the Pastors)
We believe that in the sacrament Holy Communion, the crucified and risen Christ is present, giving his true body and blood as food and drink. This real presence is a mystery. All who trust in Jesus and call upon his name as Lord are invited to receive Holy Communion. Guests who are with us, who regularly commune in their home congregations, are also welcome. Children who have not yet been instructed in receiving the sacrament are encouraged to come forward to receive a blessing.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

P 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 testament 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**

* INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P The gifts of God for the people of God.
C **I am not worthy to receive you, Lord;
but only say the Word and I shall be healed.**

* LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the

world: have mer - cy on us, mer - cy on us,

mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you

take a - way the sins of the world: grant us peace,

grant us peace, grant us peace.

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

"What Feast of Love"

ELW #487

1 What feast of love is of - fered here, what ban - quet come from heav - en?
 2 What light of truth is of - fered here, what cov - e - nant from heav - en?
 3 What wine of love is of - fered here, what crim - son drink from heav - en?

What food of ev - er - last - ing life, what gra - cious gift is giv - en?
 What hope of ev - er - last - ing life, what won - drous word is giv - en?
 What stream of ev - er - last - ing life, what pre - cious blood is giv - en?

This, this is Christ the king, the bread come down from heav - en.
 This, this is Christ the king, the sun come down from heav - en.
 This, this is Christ the king, the sweet - est wine of heav - en.

Oh, taste and see and sing! How sweet the man - na giv - en!
 Oh, see and hear and sing! The Word of God is giv - en!
 Oh, taste and see and sing! The Son of God is giv - en!

Text: Delores Dufner, OSB, b. 1939
 Music: English ballad, 16th cent.
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GREENSLEEVES
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“We Light the Advent Candles”

1 We light the Ad-vent can - dles a - gainst the win - ter night,
 2 The first one will re - mind us that Christ will soon re - turn.
 3 We light the sec - ond can - dle, and hear God's ho - ly Word,
 4 Three can - dles now are gleam - ing and show us the true way,
 5 Four can - dles burn - ing bright - ly an - nounce that Christ has come,

to wel - come our Lord Je - sus who is the world's True Light,
 We light it in the dark - ness and watch it gleam and burn,
 it tells us, cling to Je - sus, pre - pare to meet your Lord,
 re - joice, the Bap - tist cries out, your Lord has come to - day,
 pre - pare, my heart, be - lieve it, and give the Christ child room,

to wel-come our Lord Je - sus who is the world's True Light.
 We light it in the dark - ness and watch it gleam and burn.
 it tells us, cling to Je - sus, pre - pare to meet your Lord!
 re - joice, the Bap - tist cries out, your Lord has come to - day!
 pre - pare, my heart, be - lieve it, and give the Christ child room.

WORDS: Gracia Grindal (1943-)

MUSIC: German folk tune

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WIR HATTEN GEBAUET
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- P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
 C **Amen.**

*** PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

- P Gracious 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 serve you.
 C **Amen.**

*** BLESSING**

- P Let us bless our God:
 C **praise and thanks to you.**
 P May God the Father bless you and keep you,
 may Christ be ever light for your lives,
 may the Spirit of Love be your guide and path,
 for all of your days.
 C **Amen.**

* SENDING HYMN

“Lift Up Your Heads”



1 Lift up your heads, ye might - y gates; be - hold, the
2 Oh, blest the land, the cit - y blest, where Christ the
3 Fling wide the por - tals of your heart; make it a
4 Re - deem - er, come! I o - pen wide my heart to
5 So come, my Sov - 'reign; en - ter in! Let new and



King of glo - ry waits! The King of kings is
rul - er is con - fessed! Oh, hap - py hearts and
tem - ple, set a - part from earth - ly use for
thee: here, Lord, a - bide! Let me thy in - ner
no - bler life be - gin; thy Ho - ly Spir - it



draw - ing near; the Sav - ior of the world is here.
hap - py homes to whom this King in tri - umph comes!
heav'n's em - ploy, a - dorned with prayer and love and joy.
pres - ence feel: thy grace and love in me re - veal.
guide us on, un - til the glo - rious crown be won.

Text: Georg Weissel, 1590–1635; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1829–1878
Music: TRURO, T. Williams, *Psalmodia Evangelica*, 1789

* DISMISSAL

P Go in Peace. Serve the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

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