

Third Sunday of Advent

December 13th, 2020

Theme: Although Israel was in exile, God still promised a better future. One day God would adorn the people with salvation and righteousness.

PRELUDE

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Holy God, we confess that we have forgotten what this season is about – the birth of Jesus.

We get confused, so we wrap ourselves with planning, and shopping, and gift giving and sending,

with so much decorating and card-writing and partying that we haven't left any time...

to sit in the dark, to sit in silence,

to contemplate the mystery of the Incarnation and to give thanks for this one life that changed the world. We have celebrated so many Christmases, and yet –

we still need You to remind us what this season is all about,

to turn us around and set us in the right direction.

Make the generosity that drives us this season be present all year.

May the intentional reaching out to the far-flung and the neighbor continue beyond the holidays. May our hearts, full of so much, be full of love,

For You, for each other, and for ourselves. Heal us, we pray.

Hear this Good News! God could not love you any more than God loves you at this very moment. You are that beloved. Know that wrapped in love, grace and forgiveness, for today and always.

Amen

GREETING

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

OPENING SONG

Joyous Light of Heavenly Glory

Haugen

**Joyous light of heav'nly glory, loving glow of God's own face,
you who sing creation's story, shine on ev'ry land and race.**

Now as (morning dawns*) around us, we shall raise our songs to you. *original words are (evening falls)

God of daybreak, God of shadows, come and light our hearts anew.

**In the stars that grace the darkness, in the blazing sun of dawn,
in the light of peace and wisdom, we can hear your quiet song.**

**Love that fills the night with wonder, love that warms the weary soul,
love that bursts all chains asunder, set us free and make us whole.**

**You who made the heaven's splendor, ev'ry dancing star of night,
make us shine with gentle justice, let us each reflect your light.**

**Mighty God of all creation, gentle Christ who lights our way,
loving Spirit of salvation, lead us on to endless day.**

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Today, as we relight the first two candles of **HOPE** and of **PEACE**, we light the third candle, the candle of **JOY**. As the coming of Jesus, draws nearer, our joy builds with our anticipation of his birth.

From the Book of Isaiah we read these words: *“But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight.”*—Isaiah 65:18

ADVENT HYMN

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah

240 v.3

**Light three candles to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness.
Lift your heads and lift high the gateway for the King of glory.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray: **Faithful God, You restore to your people all that has been lost. Renew our hopes for the future and our zeal for serving you as chosen and beloved children, through Jesus Christ. Amen.**

FIRST READING

Isaiah 61:1-11

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

GOSPEL

Luke 15:1-10

The Holy Gospel according to Luke the 15th chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**
The reading concludes: The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ**

SERMON

SERMON HYMN

Prepare the Royal Highway

#264

***Prepare the royal highway; the King of kings is near!
Let ev'ry hill and valley a level road appear!
Then greet the King of glory, foretold in sacred story:
Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God's word!***

**God's people, see him coming: your own eternal king! Palm branches strew before him!
Spread garments! Shout and sing! God's promise will not fail you!
No more shall doubt assail you!
Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God's word!**

**Then fling the gates wide open to greet your promised king! Your king, yet ev'ry nation its
tribute too may bring. All lands will bow before him; their voices join your singing:
Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God's word!**

**His is no earthly kingdom; it comes from heav'n above.
His rule is peace and freedom and justice, truth, and love.
So let your praise be sounding for kindness so abounding:
Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God's word!**

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 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 THE CHURCH

We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Generous God, **hear our prayer.**

Our eyes await the fulfillment of all your promises, the answer to all our prayers: your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray...

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

BENEDICTION

The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting, the long-expected Savior fill you with love, the unexpected Spirit guide your journey, † now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN

The Angel Gabriel From Heaven Came

#265

**The angel Gabriel from heaven came, with wings as drifted snow, with eyes as flame:
"All hail to thee, O lowly maiden Mary, most highly favored lady." Gloria!**

**"For know a blessed mother thou shalt be, all generations laud and honor thee;
thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold, most highly favored lady." Gloria!**

**Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head; "To me be as it pleaseth God," she said.
"My soul shall laud and magnify God's holy name." Most highly favored lady, Gloria!**

**Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born in Bethlehem all on a Christmas morn,
and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say: "Most highly favored lady." Gloria!**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Stay safe and be safe. Prepare the way of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE