
✠ Third Sunday of Advent ✠

ORDER OF WORSHIP • DECEMBER 17, 2023 • 9:00 AM

✠ Indicates the congregation should stand as able.

PRELUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS & GREETING

✠ OPENING HYMN

AWAKE, AWAKE
AND GREET THE NEW MORN

First stanza sung by the cantor:

*Awake! Awake, and greet the new morn,
for angels herald its dawning.
Sing out your joy, for soon he is born,
behold! the Child of our longing.
Come as a baby weak and poor,
to bring all hearts together,
he opens wide the heav'nly door
and lives now inside us forever.*

**To us, to all in sorrow and fear,
Emmanuel comes a-singing,
his humble song is quiet and near,
yet fills the earth with its ringing;
music to heal the broken soul
and hymns of lovingkindness,
the thunder of his anthems roll
to shatter all hatred and blindness.**

**In darkest night his coming shall be,
when all the world is despairing,
as morning light so quiet and free,
so warm and gentle and caring.
Then shall the mute break forth in song,
the lame shall leap in wonder,
the weak be raised above the strong,
and weapons be broken asunder.**

Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night,
though dark the winter and cheerless,
the rising sun shall crown you with light,
be strong and loving and fearless.
Love be our song and love our prayer
and love our endless story;
may God fill ev'ry day we share
and bring us at last into glory.

✠ INVOCATION

WL: In In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,
✠ one God, who comes to wake us from sleep, who leads us into
the light of grace.

All: **Amen.**

✠ CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

WL: Let us confess our sins to God, who loves us with an unending love,
who is patient and full of compassion, and who calls us to return
from our wandering and come home in this Advent season.

a time of silence for reflection

WL: God of compassion, we confess to you and to one another our sins in
thought, word and deed; what we have done, and what we have left
undone. We have not loved you with our whole hearts. We have not
loved our neighbors as ourselves. Come, Lord Jesus.

All: **Lead us home.**

WL: God of unending love, we pray weekly that *YOUR* kingdom come, yet
we so often work, and watch, and wait for our own kingdom to come.
Forgive us, renew us, and lead us. Come, Lord Jesus.

All: **Lead us home.**

WL: God of surpassing peace, we confess that we have not always
followed your way. We have responded to violence with more
violence, to hatred with more hatred. Lead us in paths of justice and
call to us to lives of service. Teach us to share with all in need, to turn
our swords into plowshares, to forgive others as you forgive us.
Come, Lord Jesus.

All: **Lead us home.**

WL: Sisters and brothers, enter God's house with joy!
Siblings in Christ, God is our home!
Come now and hear God's life-giving Word:
God's divine love is powerful. Our sin is washed away!
New life takes root to grow!

WL: I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

WL: Let us sing together as we light our first, second, and third Advent candles. God comes to us in love to enlighten us, to dwell in us, and to finish his new creation.

The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Advent candles are lighted as we sing.

✠ WREATH LIGHTING

KINDLE A FLAME

Kindle a flame to lighten the dark and take all fear away.

FIRST LESSON

ISAIAH 61:1-11

R: Our First Lesson on this Third Sunday of Advent is from the 61st chapter of the prophet Isaiah.

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me,
because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners,

to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor
and the day of vengeance of our God,

to comfort all who mourn,

and provide for those who grieve in Zion—

to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes,

the oil of joy instead of mourning,

and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.

They will be called oaks of righteousness,

a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.

They will rebuild the ancient ruins

and restore the places long devastated;

they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations.

Strangers will shepherd your flocks;
foreigners will work your fields and vineyards.
And you will be called priests of the Lord,
you will be named ministers of our God.
You will feed on the wealth of nations,
and in their riches you will boast.

Instead of your shame you will receive a double portion,
and instead of disgrace you will rejoice in your inheritance.
And so you will inherit a double portion in your land,
and everlasting joy will be yours.

“For I, the Lord, love justice;
I hate robbery and wrongdoing.
In my faithfulness I will reward my people
and make an everlasting covenant with them.
Their descendants will be known among the nations
and their offspring among the peoples.
All who see them will acknowledge
that they are a people the Lord has blessed.”

I delight greatly in the Lord;
my soul rejoices in my God.
For he has clothed me with garments of salvation
and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness,
as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
For as the soil makes the sprout come up
and a garden causes seeds to grow,
so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness
and praise spring up before all nations.

WL: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

SECOND LESSON

1 THESS. 5:16- 24

R: Our Second Lesson is from the 5th chapter of First Thessalonians.

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil. May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

WL: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

✠ VERSE

Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning

Keep your lamps trimmed and burning (3X)

The Lord is drawing nigh. REPEAT ALL

✠ HOLY GOSPEL LESSON

JOHN 1:6-8, 19- 28

WL: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the first chapter.

All: **Glory to You, O Lord!**

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Messiah."

They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?"

He said, "I am not."

"Are you the Prophet?"

He answered, "No."

Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'"

Now the Pharisees who had been sent questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

“I baptize with water,” John replied, “but among you stands one you do not know. He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.”

This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

WL: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All: **Praise to You O Christ!**

TODAY'S MESSAGE

✝ MESSAGE HYMN

HARK, THE GLAD SOUND!

LBW #35

✝ PROFESSION OF FAITH

Apostles' Creed

WL: With the church throughout the ages, let us boldly confess our faith, using the words of the Apostles' Creed:

All: **I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

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

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

*Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

GATHERING OF TITHES & OFFERINGS

SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT

✝ PREFACE

WL: The Lord be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

WL: Lift up your hearts.

All: **We lift them to the Lord.**

WL: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

✠ THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

✠ THE LORD'S PRAYER

WL: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**All: 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.**

✠ PAX DOMINI

WL: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

All: Amen.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

COMMUNION HYMN

OH, COME, OH, COME, EMMANUEL
LBW #34

✠ DISMISSAL

WL: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body and soul to life everlasting. Depart in peace.

All: Amen.

✠ CLOSING PRAYER

WL: Let us pray. Generous God, in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior.

All: Amen.

✠ BLESSING

WL: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace.

All: Amen.

✠ SENDING SONG

ONE FOOT – LEAD WITH LOVE
by Melanie DeMore

CHORUS (2X) **You gotta put one foot in front of the other
And lead with love
Put one foot in front of the other
And lead with love**

Don't give up hope (*ECHO*)
You're not alone (*ECHO*)
Our God is here . . .
He'll lead you home . . .

CHORUS 2X

Lift up your eyes . . .
Don't you despair . . .
Christ went before . . .
The path is there . . .

CHORUS 2X

✠ SENDING

WL: Go in peace! Serve the Lord!

All: **Thanks be to God.**

TO GOD ALONE BE THE GLORY

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KINDLE A FLAME

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ONE FOOT – LEAD WITH LOVE

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