



# Sunday, December 13, 2020

## Third Sunday of Advent

### Introduction

"Rejoice always," begins the reading from 1 Thessalonians. Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. "All God's children got a robe," go the words of a spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes we are happy to wear. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God's party.

### Opening Hymn....."O Come O Come Emmanuel"

O Come O Come Emmanuel (Veni Emmanuel)

    O come O come Emmanuel

        And ransom captive Israel

        That mourns in lonely exile here

        Until the Son of God appear

*Chorus*



    Rejoice rejoice Emmanuel

        Shall come to thee O Israel

O come Thou Dayspring come and cheer

    Our spirits by Thine advent here

        Disperse the gloomy clouds of night

        And death's dark shadows put to flight

*Chorus*

O come Thou Wisdom from on high

    And order all things far and nigh

        To us the path of knowledge show

        And cause us in her ways to go

*Chorus*

O come Desire of nations bind

    All peoples in one heart and mind

        Bid envy strife and quarrels cease

        Fill the whole world with heaven's peace

*Chorus*

*Chorus*

Shall come to thee O Israel  
Shall come to thee O Israel

John Mason Neale | Thomas Helmore

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## **Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be God, Father, <sup>☩</sup> Son, and Holy Spirit, whose forgiveness is sure and whose steadfast love endures forever.

**Amen.**

Together let us honestly and humbly confess that we have not lived as God desires.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Loving and forgiving God,

**we confess that we are held captive by sin. In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray. We have not welcomed the stranger; we have not loved our neighbor; we have not been Christ to one another. Restore us, O God. Wake us up and turn us from our sin. Renew us each day in the light of Christ. Amen.**

People of God, hear this glad news: by God's endless grace your sins are forgiven, and you are free—free from all that holds you back and free to live in the peaceable realm of God. May you be strengthened in God's love, <sup>☩</sup> comforted by Christ's peace, and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

## **Prayer of the Day**

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **First Reading: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11**

*Though the people had returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, they continued to face hardship and oppression. In the language of the jubilee year described in Leviticus 25, the prophet, moved by the spirit of God, announces deliverance for those who are oppressed and comfort for those who mourn.*

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory. They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed. I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

**HERE ENDS THE READING.**

## **Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24**

*Paul concludes his letter to the Thessalonians by encouraging them to live lives of continual joy, prayer, and thanksgiving. The closing blessing is grounded in the hope of Christ's coming.*

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil. May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

**HERE ENDS THE READING.**

## **Gospel: John 1:6-8, 19-28**

The Holy Gospel according to St. John

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*John's gospel describes Jesus as the "light of the world." John the Baptist is presented as a witness to Jesus, one who directs attention away from himself to Christ, the true light.*

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' "as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you O Christ.**

## **Sermon**

### **Sermon Song....."Graves Into Gardens"**



I searched the world but it couldn't fill me  
Man's empty praise and treasures that fade  
Are never enough  
Then You came along and put me back together  
And every desire is now satisfied here in Your love

#### ***Chorus***

**Oh there's nothing better than You  
There's nothing better than You  
Lord there's nothing  
Nothing is better than You**

I'm not afraid to show You my weakness  
My failures and flaws  
Lord You've seen them all  
And You still call me friend  
'Cause the God of the mountain  
Is the God of the valley  
And there's not a place  
Your mercy and grace won't find me again

***Chorus***  
***Chorus***

*Bridge 1*

You turn mourning to dancing  
You give beauty for ashes  
You turn shame into glory  
You're the only one who can

*Bridge 1*

*Bridge 2*

You turn graves into gardens  
You turn bones into armies  
You turn seas into highways  
You're the only one who can

***Chorus***  
***Chorus***

*Bridge 2*  
*Bridge 2*

You're the only one who can  
You're the only one who can

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## 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**

God of power and might, shine your radiance and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

**A brief silence.**

God of preachers and messengers, you have entrusted your church with the work of proclaiming good news. Strengthen the witness of bishops, pastors, deacons, church musicians, lay leaders, and all people who contribute their prayers and talents to public worship. Embed your word in their hearts. Lord, in your mercy.

**Hear our prayer.**

God of every living creature, you announce the year of your favor for all of creation. Extend your kindness and relief to endangered animals and plants. Strengthen the human beings who rely on the rhythms of nature to make their living. Lord, in your mercy.

**Hear our prayer.**

God of all peoples and nations, you plant us as your oaks of righteousness and ask us to care for one another. Be present with the leaders of every nation as they govern. Give them a spirit of righteousness, that your goodness and mercy is revealed through their actions. Lord, in your mercy.

**Hear our prayer.**

God of exiles and wanderers, you repair what was once destroyed. We pray for people who have been displaced from their homes by fire, flood, earthquake, or storm. Support the work of Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Disaster Response, and all disaster relief organizations in their recovery efforts. Lord, in your mercy.

**Hear our prayer.**

God of the powerful and helpless, you clothe us with strength when our spirits are weak and weary. Bestow your spirit upon this congregation and empower us to comfort the people who turn to us in times of need. Make your church a place of refuge and healing (*especially Lisle, Cy, Becky, Judi, Janet, Don, Victoria, Audrey, Vicki, Louise, Margo, Joy, Lourdes, Michelle, LauraLee, Barbara, Jennifer, Gloria, Sharon, Kathryn, Alan, Michael, JJ, Sharon, Ann, John, Dan, Joe, Gini, Darell, Richard, Kathie, Ruth, James, Lew*). Lord, in your mercy.

**Hear our prayer.**

God of sinners and saints, you offer joy even in the midst of our grief. We are grateful for the beloved, imperfect people whose lives testified to your radiant love. Anoint all who mourn with the oil of gladness (*especially Friends and Family of Paul, Janet, Jim, Ethan, Evan, Jean, Thelma and Bill*). Lord, in your mercy.

**Hear our prayer.**

Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **Sharing of the Peace**

The peace of the Lord be with you all.

**And also with you.**

## **Offering Prayer**

Generous God, you have created all that is, and you provide for us in every season. Bless all that we offer, that through these gifts the world will receive your blessing. In the name of Jesus, Emmanuel, we pray.

**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.

## **Invitation to the Table**

Even as we watch and wait, Christ is here. Come, eat and drink.

## **Distribution**

*At this time take the elements you have with you saying these words:*

**The Body of Christ given for you. The Blood of Christ shed for you.**

## **Post Communion Prayer**

Gracious and abundant God, you have done great things for us, and we rejoice. In this bread and cup you give us life forever. In your boundless mercy, strengthen us and open our hearts to the world's needs, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Amen.**

## Blessing

The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting, the long-expected Savior fill you with love, the unexpected Spirit guide your journey, <sup>+</sup> now and forever.

Amen.

## Sending Hymn.....“Rise Up And Praise Him”

### *Verse*

Let the heavens rejoice let the earth be glad  
Let the people of God sing His praise  
All over the land  
Everyone in the valley come and lift your voice  
All those on the mountaintop  
Be glad and shout for joy

### *Chorus*

Rise up and praise Him  
He deserves our love  
Rise up and praise Him  
Worship the Holy One  
With all your heart  
With all your soul  
With all your might  
Rise up and praise Him

### *Verse*



### *Chorus*

### *Chorus*

Rise up and praise Him  
Rise up and praise Him

Gary Sadler | Paul Baloche

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## Dismissal

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**