



# Sunday, December 12, 2021

## 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.

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### Advent Candlelighting

Choral Introduction (Choir)

### THIRD SUNDAY - PREPARE

*Responsive Litany*

Advent is a time to prepare.

**Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the way for our God.**

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

**Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the way for our God.**

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

**Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the way for our God.**

During Advent we prepare to share the joy of Christ.

**Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the way for our God.**

During Advent we prepare to embrace the promise of Christ.

**Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the way for our God.**

### *Candle Lighting*

This morning we light three candles. The **first candle** reminds us that Advent is a time to wait upon the Lord. We wait for the unfolding of God's plan in accordance with God's time. The **second candle** reminds us that Advent is also a time to watch. During Advent, we eagerly watch for God's presence and work in our world. As we light the **third candle** we also remember that Advent is a time to prepare. During Advent, we prepare ourselves in heart, soul and strength to welcome our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who was, and is, and is to come. Let each of us ask God to prepare us to celebrate the glory of Christmas.

# We Wait in Hope

*A Candle Lighting Ceremony for Advent*

Words and Music by  
JOEL RANEY

Congregation:  
Refrain

We pre - pare in hope \_\_\_\_\_ for the morn - ing Light,  
for the love of Christ to il - lu - mi - nate\_\_\_\_ the night.\_\_\_\_  
We pre - pare with joy \_\_\_\_\_ for the Sav - ior's birth; 3  
we pre - pare in hope for peace on earth.

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## Closing Prayer

God in heaven, as we continue our Advent journey, help us to be people who wait for you, watch for you, and through your Spirit be prepared for you. Continue to shine your light in our lives as we look at all you have done, all you are doing, and all you will do. **Amen.**

# Gathering Song.....“Jesus, Name Above All Names”

Words and Music by  
Naida Hearn

The musical score consists of four staves of music in common time (indicated by 'C') and G clef. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The first staff begins with a dotted half note followed by eighth notes. The second staff begins with a dotted half note followed by eighth notes. The third staff begins with a dotted half note followed by eighth notes. The fourth staff begins with a dotted half note followed by eighth notes.

1. Je - sus, name a - bove all names, beau - ti - ful  
2. Je - sus, lov - ing Shep - herd, Vine of the  
3. Praise him, Lord a - bove all lords, King a - bove

Sav - ior, glo - ri - ous Lord. Em -  
branch - es, Son \_ of God. \_\_\_\_\_  
all kings, God's on - ly Son. \_\_\_\_\_ The

-man - u - el, God \_ is with \_\_\_ us, bless - ed Re -  
Prince of Peace, Won - der - ful Coun - se - lor,  
Prince of Peace, who by his Spir - it Lord of the  
comes to live

-deem - er, Liv - ing Word. \_\_\_\_\_  
u - ni - verse, Light of the world. \_\_\_\_\_  
in \_\_\_ us, Mas - ter and Friend. \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who alone does wonders, who lifts up the lowly, who fills the hungry with good things.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin, trusting in the tender mercy of our God.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

God for whom we wait,

**in the presence of one another, we confess our sin before you. We fail in believing that your good news is for us. We falter in our call to tend your creation. We find our sense of self in material wealth. We fear those different from ourselves. We forget that we are your children and turn away from your love. Forgive us, Blessed One, and assure us again of your saving grace.**

**Amen.**

God, in Christ Jesus, has looked with favor upon you! Through the power of the Holy Spirit, † your sins are forgiven. You are children of the Most High, inheritors of the eternal promise, and recipients of divine mercy. God strengthens you anew to follow the way of peace.

**Amen.**

## **Prayer of the Day**

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.**

## **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 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.**

## **Choir Anthem....."Christmas is Coming" (Choir)**

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## **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 Song....."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

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

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

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**

In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God's presence.

**A brief silence.**

Holy God, renew your church and raise up leaders who announce your good news. Grant peace to congregations and seminarians in the midst of transition. Guide the work of candidacy and call committees. Lord, in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

Creating God, your Spirit brought forth the earth and all that is in it. Breathe life into us, that we are inspired to live in harmony with one another and the planet. Lord, in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

Shepherding God, you lead your people in paths of righteousness. Raise up prophets in our own day who warn against captivity to greed and point us to the freedom found in generosity. Lord, in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

Nurturing God, you come near in times of worry and need. Cradle us in your arms, that we trust you and are not afraid. Attend to any who are hungry, imprisoned, or ill this day (*especially Joyce, Don, Fred, Barbara, Victoria, Christi, Larry, Kristina, Sue & Dave, Dominic & Megan, Vicki, Peter, Joe, Dave & Joy, Michelle, Gloria, Sharon, Michael, JJ, Larrie, Ellen, Liana, Elijah, Maryann, Darell, Richard, Robin, Henry, Ron, Lisa, Ruth, Karen, Ardie, James, Peter, Dorie, Nancy and Gavin and Friends & Family of Ken, Jay and Stanley*).

Lord, in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

Rejoicing God, you exult over us in singing. Enliven the song of this assembly and bless the ministry of church musicians. With instruments and dance, join our voices to the song of all creation. Lord, in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

We give you thanks for your servants who showed us your goodness and grace. By the power of your Spirit, keep us steadfast in faith until we make our home with you. Lord, in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus.

**Amen.**

## **Sharing of the Peace**

The peace of the Lord be with you all.

**And also with you.**

## **Offering**

### **Offering Prayer**

God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and 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.

### **Invitation to the Table**

God fills the hungry with good things. Taste and see that the Lord is good.

### **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**

Holy One, we give you thanks that in this bread and cup we have feasted again on your endless love. Let that love overflow more and more in our lives, that we may be messengers to prepare your way, harvesters of justice and righteousness, and bearers of your eternal Word, our Savior Jesus Christ.

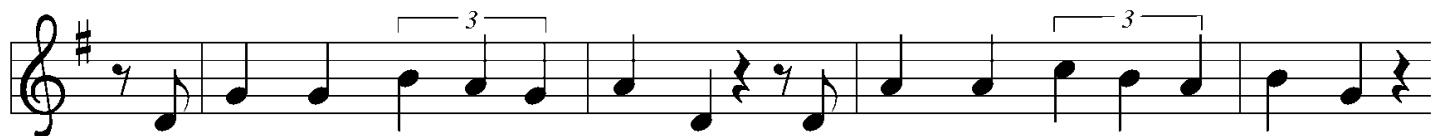
**Amen.**

### **Blessing**

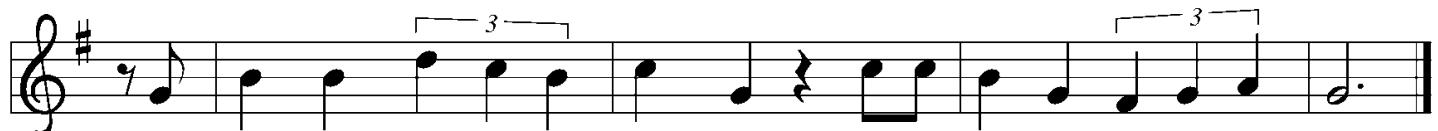
May God direct your ways in peace, make you abound in love for one another and for all, and strengthen your hearts until the coming of our Lord Jesus. Almighty God, Father, <sup>+</sup>Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

## Sending Hymn.....“He Came Down”



1 He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love;  
2 He came down that we may have light; he came down that we may have light;  
3 He came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may have peace;  
4 He came down that we may have joy; he came down that we may have joy;



he came down that we may have love;  
he came down that we may have light;  
he came down that we may have peace; hal - le - lu - jah for - ev - er - more.  
he came down that we may have joy;

Text: Cameroon traditional

Music: HE CAME DOWN, Cameroon traditional

## Dismissal

Go in peace, serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**