



Worship Program
December 16 & 17 2023

3rd week 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.

Confession and Forgiveness

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God, who opens the heavens and draws near to us with salvation.

A: Amen.

P: God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance. Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

P: Everlasting God,

A: You love justice, and you hate wrongdoing.

We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness that make us reluctant to work against oppression. We are complicit in systems of exploitation. We choose comfort over courage.

We are careless with creation’s bounty. Look upon us with mercy. Turn our hearts again to you. Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways for the sake of our waiting world.

Amen.

P: Hear these words of assurance: God clothes you with garments of salvation and covers you with robes of righteousness. In the tender compassion of ✠ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. God’s covenant is eternal, and God’s blessing rests upon us all.

A: Amen.

Greeting

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

Gathering Song

“My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness” (ELW 251)

My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness



- 1 My soul pro-claims your great-ness, Lord; I sing my Sav - ior's praise!
2 To all who live in ho - ly fear your mer - cy ev - er flows.
3 To Is - ra - el, your ser - vant blest, your help is ev - er sure;



You looked up - on my low - li - ness, and I am full of grace.
With might - y arm you dash the proud, their schem - ing hearts ex - pose.
the prom - ise to our par - ents made their chil - dren will se - cure.



Now ev - 'ry land and ev - 'ry age this bless - ing shall pro - claim—
The ruth - less you have cast a - side, the low - ly throned in - stead;
Sing glo - ry to the Ho - ly One, give hon - or to the Word,



great won - ders you have done for me, and ho - ly is your name.
the hun - gry filled with all good things, the rich sent off un - fed.
and praise the Pow'r of the Most High, one God, by all a - dored.

Text: *With One Voice*, 1995, based on the Magnificat

Music: KINGSFOLD, English 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 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.

A: Amen.

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

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. The word of the Lord, **A: Thanks be to God.**

Psalmody: Psalm 126

P: When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, then were we like those who dream.

A: Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy. Then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."

P: The LORD has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.

A: Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like the watercourses of the Negeb.

P: Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy.

A: Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

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. The word of the Lord, **A: Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Acclamation

“Alleluia” (Setting 1, ELW pg. 102)

**Alleluia, Alleluia,
Alleluia, Alleluia.**

**Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life.**

**Alleluia, Alleluia,
Alleluia, Alleluia.**

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

The holy gospel according to John. **A: Glory to you, O Lord.**

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. **A: Praise to you, O Christ!**

Sermon

Hymn of the Day

“Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming” (ELW 272)

Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming

1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom - ing from ten - der stem hath
2 I - sai - ah had fore - told it, the rose I have in
3 This flow'r, whose fra - grance ten - der with sweet-ness fills the
4 O Sav - ior, child of Mar - y, who felt our hu - man

sprung! Of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing as
mind; with Mar - y we be - hold it, the
air, dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor the
woe; O Sav - ior, king of glo - ry, who

seers of old have sung, it came, a flow'r so bright, a -
vir - gin moth - er kind. To show God's love a - right, she
dark-ness ev - 'ry - where. True man, yet ver - y God, from
dost our weak - ness know: bring us at length, we pray, to

mid the cold of win - ter, when half - spent was the night.
bore to us a Sav - ior, when half - spent was the night.
sin and death he saves us and light - ens ev - 'ry load.
the bright courts of heav - en and in - to end - less day.

Text: German carol, 15th cent.; tr. Theodore Baker, 1851–1934, sts. 1–2; Harriet R. Krauth, 1845–1925, st. 3; John C. Mattes, 1876–1948, st. 4
Music: ES IST EIN ROS, *Alte catholische geistliche Kirchengesänge*, Köln, 1599

Apostles' Creed

A: 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

P: With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration. Fill our mouths with laughter and our tongues with shouts of joy as we bear witness to the great things you have done. Give your church a spirit of gladness as we gather and as we are sent. Merciful God, **A: Receive our prayer.**

P: Let the trees of the field sing your praise. Protect forests, orchards, rainforests, and all wooded areas from disease and deforestation. Keep us grateful for their gifts of oxygen, food, shade, and shelter. Merciful God, **A: Receive our prayer.**

P: You love justice and promise your favor to those who are oppressed, brokenhearted, and incarcerated. Grant wisdom and compassion to those who work for public safety and all who work within prisons, jails, and courts, that mercy may increase and violence wither away.

Merciful God, **A: Receive our prayer.**

P: Give us strength to pray for our world without ceasing and provoke us toward love and good deeds for all who are in need. Provide for all without adequate housing, food, employment, or access to health care. Empower us as helpers and advocates. Merciful God,

A: Receive our prayer.

P: Open our hearts to those who serve as truth-tellers in our church and in our society. Bless leaders in church and society in their task of proclamation. Amplify voices of peacemakers, advocates, and especially those whose voices are ignored or marginalized. Merciful God,

A: Receive our prayer.

P: With gratitude we rejoice in the saints who witnessed to your life in all circumstances, in whom your Spirit was not quenched, even in death. Through them, teach us always to hold fast to what is good. Merciful God, **A: Receive our prayer.**

P: Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy. **A: Amen.**

Sharing of the Peace

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

A: And also, with you.

Offertory Song

“Angels We Have Heard on High” (ELW 289, ver. 1)

Offering Prayer

P: God our provider, by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior. **A: Amen.**

The Dialogue

P: The Lord be with you.

A: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

A: We lift them to the Lord.

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

A: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P: It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God through our Savior Jesus Christ. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness.

And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

“Holy, holy, holy” (Setting 2, ELW pg. 108)

Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Thanksgiving at the Table

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.

P: 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. **A: Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

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

A: 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: In this meal, righteousness and peace meet together. Come, take your place at the table.

A: Amen

"O Lamb of God" (Setting 1, ELW pg. 112)

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Featured Music

"Let the Light In" Performed by Cody Carnes

Prayer after Communion

P: 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. **A: Amen.**

Blessing

P: May the God of peace bless you, the love of Christ sustain you in hope, and the anointing of the Spirit ✠ remain upon you now and forever. **A: Amen.**

Sending

“Comfort, Comfort Now My People” (ELW 256)

Comfort, Comfort Now My People



- 1 “Com - fort, com-fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!” So says our God.
- 2 For the her - ald’s voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,
- 3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er plac - es plain.



Com-fort those who sit in dark - ness mourn-ing un - der sor - row’s load.
call - ing us to true re - pen - tance, since the reign of God is here.
Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be - fits God’s ho - ly reign.



To God’s peo - ple now pro-claim that God’s par - don waits for them!
Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way.
For the glo - ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a - broad,



Tell them that their war is o - ver; God will reign in peace for - ev - er.
Val - leys, rise to greet the Sav - ior; hills, bow down in hum-ble fa - vor.
and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God’s word is nev - er bro - ken.

Text: Johann G. Olearius, 1635–1711; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.
Music: FREU DICH SEHR, *Trente quatre pseauxes de David*, Geneva, 1551

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Keep awake. **A: Thanks be to God.**

December Readers/ Communion Assist

Dec 16 Corlee Louder

Dec 17 Deb McQuaide

Dec 23 ****HELP NEEDED****

Dec 24 8:45 Ray Leverknight

Dec 24 4:00 Missy Brodt

Dec 24 7:00 Noelle Berkey

Dec 30 Joan Bunell

Dec 31 ****HELP NEEDED****



December Ushers/ Greeters

Dec 16 Missy Brodt

Dec 17 The Swartz's

Dec 23 ****HELP NEEDED****

Dec 24 8:45 Todd Moss

Dec 24 4:00 Mark & Deb Rychak

Dec 24 7:00 Mayket Family

Dec 30 ****HELP NEEDED****

Dec 31 ****HELP NEEDED****

Upcoming Events & Meetings

Sat. Dec. 16th - Lunch with Santa - Noon

Sun. Dec. 17th - Children's Christmas Play 8:45 AM

Tues. Dec. 19th - Church Council Meeting - 6:30 PM

Christmas Worship Schedule

Sat. Dec. 23rd - Regular Saturday Worship - 5:30 PM

Sun. Dec 24th - Sunday Morning Worship - 8:45 AM

Sun. Dec 24th - Family Christmas Eve Service - 4:00 PM

Sun. Dec 24th - Traditional Christmas Eve Service - 7:00 PM

2024 Contribution Envelopes

The giving envelopes for next year are available in the narthex. If you donate electronically, you will not receive envelopes. As usual, you will still receive credit for your donation. **If you don't see your envelopes or would like envelopes, please contact the office.** Please verify the number on your label matches the number of the envelope.

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