



THIRD SUNDAY OF

Advent

Sunday, December 17, 2023

Advent 3

Service Theme

THE KING SHALL COME AND BRING PERFECT JOY

The historic Christian Church gave Latin titles to each Sunday. They titled the Third Sunday in Advent “Gaudete,” which means “Rejoice!” As we reach the midway point of Advent, we remember that when the King shall come, he will bring us perfect and everlasting joy. Joy is not the same thing as happiness. Happiness is an emotion. Joyfulness is a condition. Happiness comes from your circumstances. Joyfulness comes from your King entering into your heart and assuring you of his abiding love and your glorious future. Therefore, happiness is fleeting. Joyfulness is enduring.

INVOCATION AND LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

M: In the name of the Father and of the Son (+) and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

M: We light three Advent candles remembering Jesus, the Light of the world. He came to defeat the prince of darkness.

C: We remember Jesus, who came in answer to his people's prayers. John proclaimed him the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

M: We hear his call to see the light.

C: We light three Advent candles as a sign of our trust and confidence.

M: Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.

C: Through your Word and Spirit may our souls be blessed.

Hymn

CW 28 Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord

- 1 Let the earth now praise the Lord, Who has truly kept his word
And at last to us did send Christ, the sinner's help and friend.
- 2 What the fathers most desired, What the prophets' heart inspired,
What they longed for many a year Stands fulfilled in glory here.
- 3 Abram's promised great reward, Zion's helper, Jacob's Lord—
Him of twofold race behold—Truly came, as long foretold.
- 4 Welcome, O my Savior, now! Joyful, Lord, to you I bow.
Come into my heart, I pray; Oh, prepare yourself a way.
- 5 Crush for me the serpent's head That, set free from doubt and dread,
I may cling to you in faith, Safely kept through life and death,
- 6 And, when you shall come again As a glorious king to reign,
I with joy may see your face, Freely ransomed by your grace.

DIVINE SERVICE II

Christian Worship Supplement, page 28

CONFESSION

M: Dear friends, let us approach God with a true heart and confess our sins, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to forgive us.

**C: Lord of life, I confess that I am by nature dead in sin.
For faithless worrying and selfish pride,
For sins of habit and sins of choice,
For the evil I have done and the good I have failed to do,
You should cast me away from your presence forever.
O Lord, I am sorry for my sins. Forgive me, for Jesus' sake.**

ABSOLUTION

M: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. In his great mercy, God made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in our sins. Hear the word of Christ through his called servant: I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son (+) and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

LORD, HAVE MERCY

M: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

For the well-being of all people everywhere, that they may receive from you all they need to sustain body and life, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

M: For the spread of your life-giving gospel throughout the world, that all who are lost in sin may be brought to faith in you, hear our prayer, O Christ.

C: Christ, have mercy.

M: For patience and perseverance in this life, that we may not lose the hope of heaven as we await your return, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

M: Lord of life, live in us that we may live for you.

C: Amen.

GLORY BE TO GOD

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| <p>1 All glory be to God on high!
Your name, O Lord, we glorify;
We praise you for your peace and
grace,
Your favor toward our fallen race.</p> <p>2 Our grateful thanks to you we bring,
For your great glory, heav'nly King,
For all, O Father, you have done
Through Jesus Christ, your only Son.</p> | <p>3 O Lamb of God, to you we pray.
You take all human sin away.
Have mercy, Lord; receive our prayer;
From God's right hand, your mercy
share.</p> <p>4 You, Christ, are holy—Lord alone;
The Father's glory you made known.
We by your Spirit sing again:
"All glory be to God!" Amen.</p> |
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SALUTATION

M: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

M: Let us pray.

Hear our prayers, Lord Jesus Christ, and come with the good news of your mighty deliverance. Drive the darkness from our hearts, and fill us with your light; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen

FIRST LESSON – Isaiah 61:1-3 (EHV)

Through the prophet Isaiah, the Savior-King proclaims good news of great joy for all those who are brokenhearted.

The Spirit of the LORD God is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to preach good news to the afflicted.
He sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release for those who are bound,
²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor
and the day of vengeance for our God,
to comfort all who mourn,
³to provide for those who mourn in Zion,
to give them a crown of beauty instead of ashes,
the oil of joy instead of mourning,
a cloak of praise instead of a faint spirit,
so that they will be called oaks of righteousness,
a planting of the LORD to display his beauty.

PSALM – 71 (CW, p. 92)

Refrain



Bless-ed are they who hope, who hope in the Lord.

Psalm tone



In you, O LORD, I have taken refuge;*
let me never be put to shame.

Rescue me and deliver me in your
righteousness;*
turn your ear to me and save me.

Be my rock of refuge to which I can
always go;*
For you are my rock and my fortress.

Refrain

Since my youth, O God, you have
taught me,*
and to this day I declare your
marvelous deeds.

Even when I am old and gray,*
do not forsake me, O God,

till I declare your power to the next
generation,*

your might to all who are to come.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son*
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning,*
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Refrain

SECOND READING – 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 (EHV)

The promises of the coming King let us live with joy, regardless of present circumstances.

¹⁶Rejoice always. ¹⁷Pray without ceasing. ¹⁸In everything give thanks. For this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. ¹⁹Do not extinguish the Spirit. ²⁰Do not treat prophecies with contempt. ²¹But test everything. Hold on to the good. ²²Keep away from every kind of evil.

²³May the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

VERSE OF THE DAY

Alleluia. Alleluia. I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you. Alleluia. (Matthew 11:10)



Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!



Faith comes from hear - ing the mes - sage, and the



mes - sage is heard through the Word of Christ. Al - le -



lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

GOSPEL – John 1:6–8,19–28 (EHV)

M: The Gospel according to John 1:6–8,19–28

C: **Glory be to you, O Lord.**

Sorrow, hardship, and persecution are temporary. Future glory and eternal blessings are coming, a gift from God to all his saints.

⁶There was a man, sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as an eyewitness to testify about the light so that everyone would believe through him. ⁸He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light.

¹⁹This is the testimony John gave when the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him, “Who are you?”

²⁰He confessed and did not deny. He confessed, “I am not the Christ.”

²¹And they asked him, “Who are you then? Are you Elijah?”

He said, “I am not.”

“Are you the Prophet?”

“No,” he answered.

²²Then they asked him, “Who are you? Tell us so we can give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?”

²³He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' just as Isaiah the prophet said."

²⁴They had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵So they asked John, "Why then do you baptize, if you are not the Christ, or Elijah, or the Prophet?"

²⁶"I baptize with water," John answered. "Among you stands one you do not know. ²⁷He is the one coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie."

²⁸These things happened in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

M: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise be to you, O Christ.

Hymn

CW 19 O Lord, How Shall I Meet You

- 1 O Lord, how shall I meet you, How welcome you aright?
Your people long to greet you, My Hope, my heart's Delight.
O Jesus, let your Word be A lamp to light my way,
To show me how to please you, To guide me ev'ry day.**
- 2 Love caused your incarnation; Love brought you down to me.
Your thirst for my salvation Procured my liberty.
Oh, love beyond all telling That led you to embrace
In love, all love excelling, Our lost and fallen race!**
- 3 Rejoice, then, you sad-hearted, Who sit in deepest gloom,
Who mourn o'er joys departed And tremble at your doom.
Despair not; he is near you, He's standing at the door
Who best can help and cheer you And bids you weep no more.**
- 4 Sin's debt, that fearful burden, Let not your souls distress;
Your guilt the Lord will pardon And cover by his grace.
He comes, for you procuring The peace of sin forgiv'n,
His children thus securing A heritage in heav'n.**
- 5 He comes to judge the nations, A terror to his foes,
A light of consolations, And blessed hope to those
Who love the Lord's appearing. O glorious Sun, now come,
Send forth your beams most cheering, And guide us safely home.**

SERMON TEXT & THEME

Isaiah 61:1-3 ... Jesus is the Joy of Christmas

NICENE CREED –

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father.

Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and became fully human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.

He suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH – CW page 123

M: Eternal Father, throughout the centuries you repeated and affirmed your promise to send the offspring of the woman to crush the serpent's head. Through your prophets of old, you continually directed the eyes of your people to the advent of their Savior.

C: We praise you, O Lord, for keeping your promise and sending your Son to destroy the works of the devil.

M: As we prepare to celebrate the birth of our King, use your mighty Word to shatter our pride and to rouse us from spiritual slumber and apathy.

C: Move us to take to heart the words of John: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

M: You sent your Son to redeem us from sin. Let this good news be our joy and strength. Use it to cheer the lonely, encourage the fearful, and give hope to the despairing. In these days before Christmas, spare us from the stress of deadlines and the frenzy of commercialism.

C: Fill our lives with the message of your peace and the music of your grace.

M: Direct our eyes not only to the manger but also to the skies, where we will see your Son coming again, not as a lowly child but as the Lord of lords.

C: Lift up our hearts in joyful anticipation of that day.

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

M: Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

Silent prayer.

M: Come quickly, Lord Jesus, in your grace, in your power, and in your glory.

C: Come, Lord Jesus! Amen.

THE SACRAMENT

PREFACE

M: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

M: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up to the Lord.

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

C: It is good and right so to do.

M: It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, *who comes with his Father to make his home in human hearts, working repentance and faith by his Spirit until he comes again.* Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

**1 O holy, holy, holy
Lord God of pow'r and might,
Your glory, earth and heaven
In countless ways recite.
Hosanna! Come and save us,
Lord God of hosts on high,
And in your grace and mercy
Receive our fervent cry.**

**2 Hosanna in the highest!
How truly blest is he
Who in God's name is coming
To set his people free!
He comes to bring salvation
And with his blood outpoured,
Deliver us from bondage—
Hosanna, mighty Lord!**

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

M: Blessed are you, O Lord of heaven and earth. We praise and thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, and we remember the great acts of love through which he has ransomed us from sin, death, and the devil's power.

By his incarnation, he became one with us.
By his perfect life, he fulfilled your holy will.
By his innocent death, he overcame hell.
By his rising from the grave, he opened heaven.

Invited by your grace and instructed by your Word, we approach your table with repentant and joyful hearts. Strengthen us through Christ's body and blood, and preserve us in the true faith until we feast with him and all his ransomed people in glory everlasting.

C: Amen.

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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my (+) body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my (+) blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."
The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

Lamb of God, you take a - way the
 sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
 world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God,
 you take a - way the sin of the world;
 grant us your peace. A - men.

DISTRIBUTION

SONG OF SIMEON

1 O Lord, now let your servant
 Depart in peace, assured:
 For I have seen your promised
 incarnate, saving Word—
 A Light that will enlighten
 All gloom where Gentiles dwell;
 The brilliant, crowning glory
 Of those in Israel!

2 All glory to the Father,
 All glory to the Son,
 All glory to the Spirit,
 Forever three in one;
 For as in the beginning,
 Is now, shall ever be,
 God's triune name resounding
 Through all eternity.

THANKSGIVING

M: We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet that you have given us to eat and to drink in this sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith, nourished our hope, and strengthened our love. By your Spirit help us to live as your holy people until that day when you will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

BLESSING

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and (+) give you peace.

C: **Amen.**

Hymn

CW 7 Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

- 1 Rejoice, rejoice, believers, And let your lights appear;
The evening is advancing, And darker night is near.
The Bridegroom is arising And soon is drawing nigh.
Up, pray and watch and wrestle; At midnight comes the cry.**
- 2 The watchers on the mountain Proclaim the Bridegroom near;
Go forth, as he approaches, With alleluias clear.
The marriage feast is waiting; The gates wide open stand.
Arise, O heirs of glory; The Bridegroom is at hand.**
- 3 You saints, who here in patience Your cross and suff'rings bore,
Shall live and reign forever When sorrow is no more.
Around the throne of glory The Lamb you shall behold;
In triumph lay before him Your shining crowns of gold.**
- 4 Arise, Desire of nations; O Jesus, now appear,
The Hope and Expectation Of ev'ry Christian here.
With hearts and hands uplifted We plead, O Lord, to see
The day of earth's redemption That sets your people free.**

Announcements

Christmas Plants:

Congregational members wishing to contribute to the Christmas altar display will be asked to purchase a plant(s) of their choice and drop it off at the church by noon on Saturday, December 23rd. You are also encouraged to take their plants home with you after the December 31st worship service.

Church Cleaners:

December 24 – Luke // December 31 – Timothy

DIVINE WORD'S TWO-WEEK CALENDAR

Su (17)	9:00 am 10:30 am 11:30 am	Sunday School and Bible Class Worship & Communion Coffee Hour
Tu (19)	7:00 pm	Elders Meeting
We (20)	6:30 pm	“Test the Spirits” Bible Information Class.
Th (21)	6:00 pm	Illuminé (at St. Paul’s)
Fr (22)	3:00 pm	Women’s Bible Study
Su (24)	10:30 am 11:30 am 3:00 pm 7:00 pm	Layled-Worship Coffee Hour <i>Poltimore’s</i> Christmas Eve Service Christmas Eve Service
Mo (25)	11:00 am	Christmas Day Service
Su (31)	9:00 am 10:30 am	Sunday School and Bible Class Worship



Divine Word

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