

Third Sunday of Advent

December 15, 2024

10:15 am

Prelude

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.

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God, alive in the world, reviving creation, arriving soon. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of mercy, **we confess that we have sinned. We trust earthly powers and human authority alone. We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts.**

God of might, **we confess that we have sinned. We have turned away from our neighbors. We have trusted false promises.**

God in our midst, **we confess that we have sinned. We plead: come to us. Bring your mercy to birth in us.**

A righteous branch springs forth: it is Christ the Lord, our Savior, in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy. By the power of the Holy Spirit, receive the grace and forgiveness of God through ✚ Christ Jesus, whose day draws near. **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn: ELW #242

"Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn"

- 1. 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 forever.**
- 2. To us, to all in sorrow and fear, Emanuel 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 loving kindness, the thunder of his anthems roll to shatter all hatred and blindness.**
- 3. 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.

4. 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.

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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.

Readings and Psalm

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.

¹⁴ Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;
shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem!

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
Do not fear, O Zion;
do not let your hands grow weak.

¹⁷ 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

¹⁸ as on a day of festival.

I will remove disaster from you,
so that you will not bear reproach for it.

¹⁹ 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.

²⁰ 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.

Psalm: Isaiah 12:2-6

In your midst is the Holy One of Israel. (Is. 12:6)

² Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid,
for the LORD GOD is my strength and my might, and has become my salvation.

³ **With joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation. R**

⁴ And you will say in that day: Give thanks to the LORD, call on God's name;
make known the deeds of the LORD among the nations; proclaim that this name is
exalted.

⁵ **Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously;
let this be known in all the earth.**

⁶ Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion,
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

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 that they will experience God's joy and peace.

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵ Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. I am sending my messenger before you, who will prepare your way before you.
Alleluia. (Matt. 11:10)

The Holy Gospel according to the book of Luke starting with the third Chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord**

Gospel: Luke 3:7-18

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.

⁷ 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? ⁸ 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. ⁹ 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."

¹⁰ And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" ¹¹ In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." ¹² Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" ¹³ He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." ¹⁴ 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."

¹⁵ As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ 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."

¹⁸ So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

Sermon

Hymn of the Day: ELW #239 "Hark the Glad Sound!"

- 1. Hark, the glad sound! The savior comes, the Savior promised long; let ev'ry heart prepare a throne and ev'ry voice a song.**
- 2. He comes the pris'ners to release, in Satan's bondage held. The gates of brass before him burst, the iron fetters yield.**
- 3. He comes the broken heart to bind, the bleeding soul to cure, and with the treasures of his grace to enrich the humble poor.**
- 4. Our glad hosannas, Prince of peace, your welcome shall proclaim, and heav'n's eternal arches ring with your beloved name.**

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The Apostle's 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 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.

Peace

Offering

Offering Hymn: ELW #686 "We Give Thee But Thine Own"

1. We give thee but thine own, whate'er the gift may be;
all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.

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Offering Prayer

Creator God, you made the whole world, even the farthest stars, and you draw near to feed us. We praise you for these gifts of bread and wine. Strengthen us with this food that we may live in expectation for the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

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

The Great Thanksgiving

Preface

Thanksgiving at the Table

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 Communion

God feeds us with tender mercy. Come to the table.

Distribution Hymn: ELW #247 "Come Now, O Prince of Peace"

1. Come now, O Prince of peace, make us one body.
Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile your people.

2. **Come now, O God of love, make us one body.
Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile your people.**
3. **Come now and set us free, O God, our Savior.
Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile all nations.**
4. **Come, Hope of unity, make us one body.
Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile all nations.**

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Post Communion Blessing

Prayer after Communion

Generous God, we thank you for the gift of life, for the bread of salvation. We thank you for coming among us, for leading us into peace. We thank you for showering us with mercy, for sending us into the world. Come, Lord Jesus, and go with us as we feed the hungry in your name. Amen.

Blessing

God of endings and beginnings, God in the darkness and the light, God, our hope for the journey, ✝ bless and keep you now and forever. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn: ELW #264 "Prepare the Royal Highway"

1. **Prepare the royal highway; the King of kings is near! Let ev'ry hill and valley a level road appear! Then greet the King of glory, foretold in sacred story:**

Refrain: Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God's word!

2. **God's people, see him coming; your own eternal king! Psalm branches strew before him! Spread garments! Shout and sing! God's promise will not fail you! No more shall doubt assail you! *Refrain:***
3. **Then fling the gates wide open to greet your promised king! Your kin, yet ev'ry nation its tribute too many bring. All lands will bow before him; their voices join your singing: *Refrain:***
4. **His is no earthly kingdom; it comes from heav'n above. His rule is peace and freedom and justice, truth, and love. So let your praise be sounding for kindness so a bounding: *Refrain:***

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Dismissal

Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.
Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Announcements

✝ **Thank You Pastor Paul Meierding** for leading worship today.

✚ Calvary is looking for a volunteer (or volunteers) to represent Calvary on the **Welcome Committee**, which is where Calvary and four other Mankato ELCA churches are sponsoring a family of four from Nicaragua. Ariac and Andrea Cruz and their two boys have been in Minnesota almost two years. This committee meets monthly at Bethlehem Lutheran Church. Contact Bob Diesch or Jolene Anderson for more information on the committee.

✚ **Prayers:** Please continue to keep our members and loved ones in your prayers, including Arlen, Lan-Shiang, Vivian, Ken, Deb, Ruth, Barry, Monica, Chloe, Jeff, Jenny, Dennis, Caroline, Jane, Paul and Jeannie at the loss of her sister.

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