## Third Sunday of Advent

## ~ December 17, 2023 ~ Faith & First

**Prelude**

**Welcome & Announcements**

## Confession and Forgiveness LBW pg. 56 ELW pg. 94

P: In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

***C: Amen.***

P: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

***C: Amen.***

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

P: Most merciful God,

***C: we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways to the glory of your holy name. Amen.***

P: God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of + Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

***C: Amen.***

**Lighting of the Advent Wreath “*Love*”**

“God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

Lord, we thank you for your great gift of love to us. Help us, through Jesus, to love you more. Amen.

**Gathering Hymn *“Peace, Peace, Peace”****(Tune: Still, Still, Still)*

Love, love, love – the heart of Christ is love.

On all who come He pours His presence – Live and love in holy  essence.

     Love, love love – The heart of Chris is love.

**Greeting** LBW pg. 57 ELW pg. 138

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

***C: And also with you.***

**Kyrie** LBW pg. 57 ELW pg. 138

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

***C: Lord, have mercy.***

P: For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

***C: Lord, have mercy.***

P: For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

***C: Lord, have mercy.***

P: For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

***C: Lord, have mercy.***

P: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

***C: Amen.***

**Hymn of Praise** LBW pg. 58 ELWPg 139

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God’s people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,

We worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God,

You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us;

You are seated at the right hand of the Father; receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,

You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,

In the glory of God the Father. 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 God will cause righteousness and praise to spring

up before all the nations.

**Psalm126**

1When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, then were we like those who dream.

**2Then was our mouth flled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy. Then they said among the nations, “The Lord has done great things for them.”**

3The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.

**4Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like the watercourses of the Negeb. The Lord has done great things for us.**

5Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy.

**6Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves. The Lord has done great things for us.**

**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 prophets,

but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.

May that very God of peace 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.

**GOSPEL**: **John 1:6-8, 19-28**

*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.*

**6**There was a man sent from God whose name was John. **7**He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. **8**He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

**19**This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” **20**He confessed and did not deny it, but he confessed, “I am not the Messiah.”[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=john+1%3A19-28&version=NRSVUE#fen-NRSVUE-26055a)] **21**And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” He answered, “No.” **22**Then they said to him, “Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” **23**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.

**24**Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. **25**They asked him, “Why, then, are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=john+1%3A19-28&version=NRSVUE#fen-NRSVUE-26060b)] nor Elijah, nor the prophet?” **26**John answered them, “I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, **27**the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandal.” **28**This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

**Sermon**

**Hymn of the Day *“People, Look East”***  WOV #626 ELW #248

Vs 1. People, look east. The time is near of the crowning

of the year. Make your house fair as you are able,  
 trim the hearth and set the table. People, look

east and sing today: Love, the Guest, is on the way.

Vs 2. Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is

planted there: Give up your strength the seed to nourish,  
 that in course the flower may flourish. People, look

east and sing today: Love, the rose, is on the way.

Vs 3. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more light the

bowl shall brim, shining beyond the frosty weather,  
 Bright as sun and moon together. People, look

east and sing today: Love, the star, is on the way.

Vs 4. Angels, announce with shouts of mirth him who brings new

life to earth. Set every peak and valley humming  
 with the word, the Lord is coming. People, look

east and sing today: Love, the Lord, is on the way.

**Apostles’ Creed**  LBW pg. 65 ELW pg. 105

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.

**Prayers of the People**

**“*Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying***” WOV #775 ELW #752

Lord, listen to your children praying,  
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;  
Lord, listen to your children praying,  
send us love, send us pow'r, send us grace.

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, **receive our prayer.**

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, **receive our prayer.**

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, **receive our prayer.**

Give us strength to pray for our world without ceasing and provoke us toward love and good deeds for all who are in need especially

Provide for all without adequate housing, food, employment, or access to health care. Empower us as helpers and advocates. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

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, **receive our prayer.**

With gratitude we rejoice in the saints especially Chuck 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, **receive our prayer.**

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

**“*Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying***” WOV #775 ELW #752

Lord, listen to your children praying,  
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;  
Lord, listen to your children praying,  
send us love, send us pow'r, send us grace.

**Peace**

P: The peace of the Lord be with you all.

***C: And also with you.***

**Offering**

**Offering Prayer**

Let us pray, God of all creation, all you have made is good, and your love endures forever. You bring forth bread from the earth and fruit from the vine. Nourish us with these gifts, that we might be for the world signs of your gracious presence in Jesus, Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

**Great Thanksgiving** LBW pg. 68 ELW pg. 145

P: The Lord be with you.

***C: And also with you.***

P: Lift up your hearts.

***C: We lift them to the Lord.***

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

***C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.***

**Words of Institution**

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.

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.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

***C: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.***

**Lord’s Prayer** LBW pg. 71 ELW pg. 145

P: Let us pray as Jesus has taught us.

***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.***

**Communion**

**Post Communion Blessing**

**Prayer after Communion**

P: God of abundance, with this bread of life and cup of salvation you have united us with Christ, making us one with all your people. Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world and continue forever in the risen life of Jesus Christ, our Lord. ***Amen.***

**Blessing**

The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord’s face shine on us with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon us with favor and + give you peace.

**Sending Hymn *“Joy to the World”*** LBW #39 ELW #267

Vs. 1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth

receive her king; let ev'ry heart prepare him

room and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n and nature

sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Vs. 2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their

songs employ, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and

plains repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding

joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

Vs. 3 No more let sin and sorrow grow nor thorns

infest the ground; he comes to make his blessings

flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is

found, far as, far as the curse is found.

Vs. 4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the

nations prove the glories of his righteousness  
 and wonders of his love, and wonders of his

love, and wonders, wonders of his love.

**Dismissal**

L: Go in peace. Christ is coming soon!

***C: Thanks be to God!***

**Postlude**