

# Third Sunday of Advent

December 13, 2020

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## Welcome and Worship Announcements

### Invocation

Blessed be God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,  
whose forgiveness is sure  
and whose steadfast love endures forever.  
**Amen.**

### Confession and Forgiveness

Together let us honestly and humbly confess  
that we have not lived as God desires.

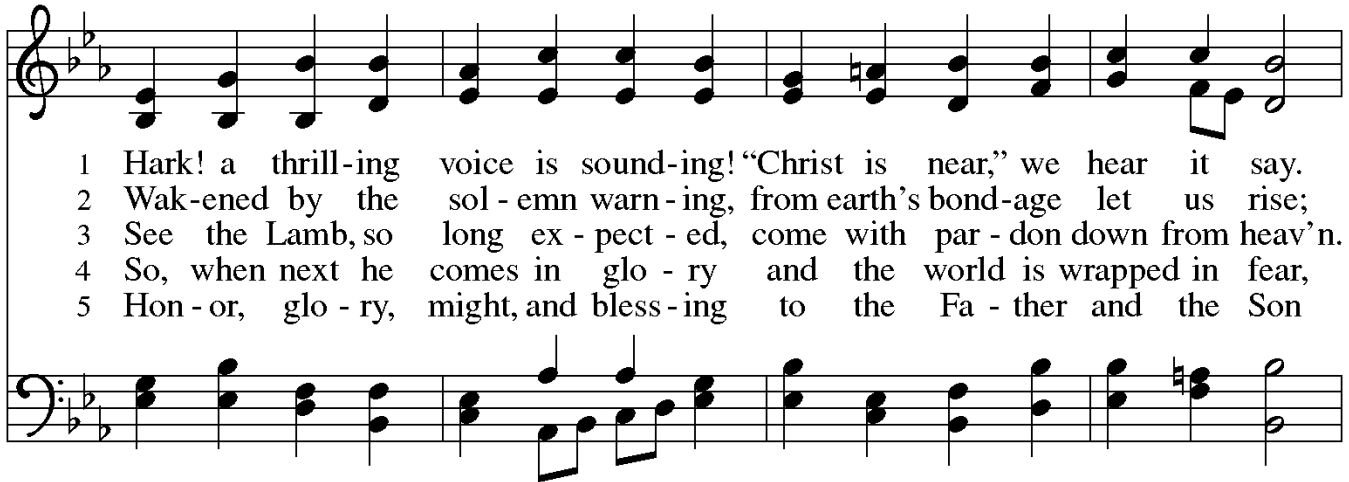
*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Loving and forgiving God,  
**we confess that we are held captive by sin.**  
**In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray. We have not welcomed the stranger;**  
**we have not loved our neighbor;**  
**we have not been Christ to one another.**  
**Restore us, O God.**  
**Wake us up and turn us from our sin.**  
**Renew us each day in the light of Christ. Amen.**

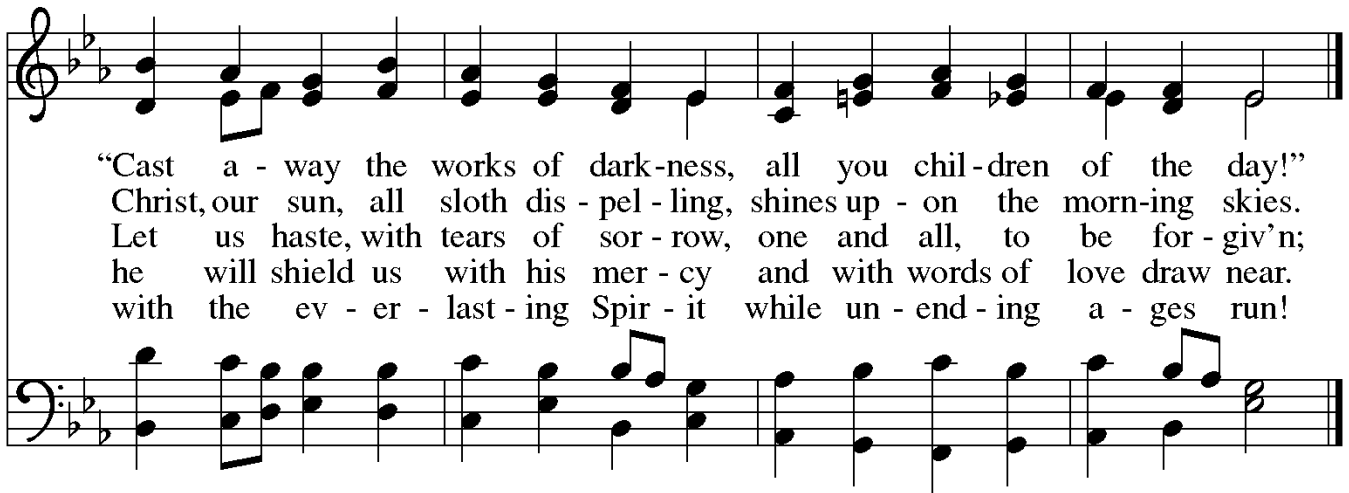
People of God, hear this glad news:  
by God's endless grace  
your sins are forgiven, and you are free—  
free from all that holds you back  
and free to live in the peaceable realm of God.  
May you be strengthened in God's love,  
† comforted by Christ's peace,  
and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit.  
**Amen.**

## Gathering Hymn

## “Hark! A Thrilling Voice is Sounding”



1 Hark! a thrill-ing voice is sound-ing! “Christ is near,” we hear it say.  
2 Wak-ened by the sol- emn warn- ing, from earth’s bond-age let us rise;  
3 See the Lamb, so long ex- pect- ed, come with par- don down from heav’n.  
4 So, when next he comes in glo- ry and the world is wrapped in fear,  
5 Hon- or, glo- ry, might, and bless- ing to the Fa- ther and the Son



“Cast a - way the works of dark-ness, all you chil-dren of the day!”  
Christ, our sun, all sloth dis - pel - ling, shines up - on the morn-ing skies.  
Let us haste, with tears of sor - row, one and all, to be for - giv’n;  
he will shield us with his mer - cy and with words of love draw near.  
with the ev - er - last - ing Spir - it while un - end - ing a - ges run!

Text: Latin hymn, 1632; tr. Edward Caswall, 1814-1878  
Music: MERTON, William H. Monk, 1823-1889

## Greeting

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



**A** Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son:    **G** Lord, have mer - cy.  
*Lord, . . . . have mer - cy:*



**A** Chri - ste e - le - i - son:    **G** Christ, have mer - cy.  
*Christ, . . . . have mer - cy:*



**A** Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son:    **G** Lord, have mer - cy.  
*Lord, . . . . have mer - cy:*

### 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.**

### Advent Wreath Lighting

**Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe.  
 Your prophets spoke of a day when the desert would blossom  
 and waters would break forth in the wilderness.  
 Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath.  
 Strengthen our hearts  
 as we prepare for the coming of the Lord.  
 May he give water to all who thirst,  
 for he is our light and our salvation.  
 Blessed be God forever.  
 Amen.**

### Psalms 126

**Sung by all**

- <sup>1</sup>When the LORD restored the for- | tunes of Zion,  
 then were we like | those who dream.
- <sup>2</sup>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."
- <sup>3</sup>The Lord has done great | things for us,  
 and we are | glad indeed.
- <sup>4</sup>Restore our for- | tunes, O LORD,  
 like the watercourses | of the Negeb.
- <sup>5</sup>Those who | sowed with tears  
 will reap with | songs of joy.
- <sup>6</sup>Those who go out weeping, carry- | ing the seed,  
 will come again with joy, shoulder- | ing their sheaves.

## 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.

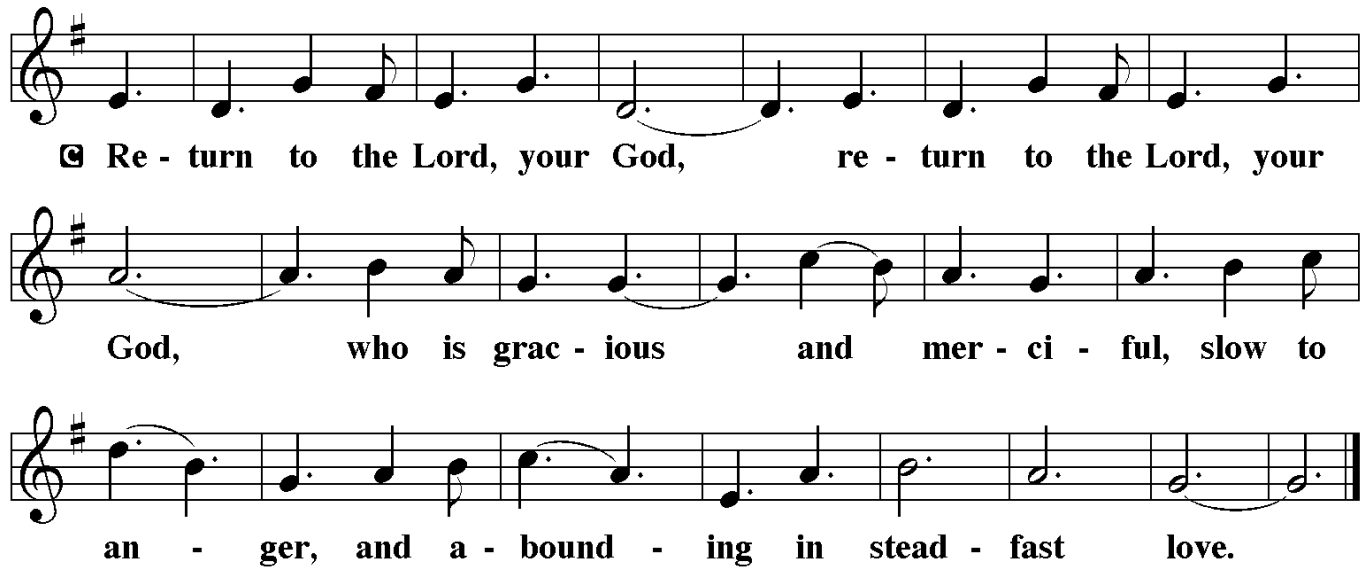
## Second Reading

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.

Gospel Acclamation

“Return to the Lord”



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, re - turn to the Lord, your  
God, who is grac - ious and mer - ci - ful, slow to  
an - ger, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

Gospel

John 1: 6-8, 19-28

The Holy Gospel according to \_\_\_\_\_.  
**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.  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

*Silence for reflection follows the sermon*

Hymn of the Day

“Hark, the Glad Sound!”

1 Hark, the glad sound! The Sav - ior comes, the Sav - ior  
 2 He comes the pris - 'ners to re - lease, in Sa - tan's  
 3 He comes the bro - ken heart to bind, the bleed - ing  
 4 Our glad ho - san - nas, Prince of peace, your wel - come

prom - ised long; let ev - 'ry heart pre -  
 bond - age held. The gates of brass be -  
 soul to cure, and with the trea - sures  
 shall pro - claim, and heav'n's e - ter - nal

pare a throne and ev - 'ry voice a song.  
 fore him burst, the i - ron fet - ters yield.  
 of his grace to en - rich the hum - ble poor.  
 arch - es ring with your be - lov - ed name.

Text: Philip Doddridge, 1702-1751  
 Music: CHESTERFIELD, Thomas Haweis, 1734-1820

**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 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.**

## Prayers of Intercession

Peace

Offering

### Thanksgiving for the Word

Holy God,  
the Beginning and the Ending, our Hope as we wait, we praise you for joining us to your people of old.  
We bless you for your prophets who call us to righteousness and promise a new earth with peace for all.  
For the Word of your covenant, we thank you, O God. **We thank you, O God.**

We praise you for the coming of Jesus our Lord, who lifts up the lowly, heals the suffering world,  
and proclaims your way of mercy and truth. For your Word who is Christ, we magnify you, O God.  
**We magnify you, O God.**

Send your Spirit on all who receive your Word. Nurture our faith with your grace,  
accompany us with your might, and empower our zeal for your justice and joy.  
For your Word through the church, we praise you, O God. **We praise you, O God.**

All praise to you, holy God, today, tomorrow, and forever. **Amen.**

### Lord's Prayer





## Blessing

Almighty God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and for ever.

Amen.

## Sending Hymn

## “Prepare the Royal Highway”

1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!  
2 God's peo - ple, see him com - ing: your own e - ter - nal king!  
3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised king!  
4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heav'n a - bove.

Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley a lev - el road ap - pear!  
Palm branch - es strew be - fore him! Spread gar - ments! Shout and sing!  
Your king, yet ev - 'ry na - tion its trib - ute too may bring.  
His rule is peace and free - dom and jus - tice, truth, and love.

Then greet the King of glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:  
God's prom - ise will not fail you! No more shall doubt as - sail you!  
All lands will bow be - fore him; their voic - es join your sing - ing:  
So let your praise be sound - ing for kind - ness so a - bound - ing:

*Refrain*  
Ho - san - na to the Lord, for he ful - fills God's word!

**Announcements and Dismissal**

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**