



December 15, 2024

The Third Sunday of Advent

Rev. Ken Bersche

Maggie Kent, Secretary

Prelude

Invocation

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 28:19b

Amen.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

We light the third Advent candle as we prepare for the arrival of the Savior, who would come to His people in human flesh, and who promises to come again. In a world of darkness, a light shines. Jesus Christ is the light of the world.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

John 1:5

The third, pink Advent candle has been known as the shepherd candle or the candle of joy. The third Sunday of Advent is known also as Gaudete Sunday. “Gaudete” in Latin means “rejoice,” as found in Philippians 4:4. We find our joy in Christ this season and always as we prepare to celebrate His birth. Jesus affirms the joy found only in Him as we remain connected to Him: “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.”

John 15:10–11

The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

John 1:9

Guided by the light of joy, we respond with the psalmist: “Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into His presence with singing!

Know that the Lord, He is God! It is He who made us, and we are His; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture.

Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise!

Give thanks to Him; bless His name!

For the Lord is good; His steadfast love endures forever,

And His faithfulness to all generations.”

Psalms 100:1–5

Processional Hymn *Please Stand*

“Joy to the World”

- ♪ 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.
- ♪ Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
- ♪ No more let sins and sorrows 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.

♪ 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.

*Lutheran Service Book, Hymn 387-Text: Isaac Watts 1674-1748; Tune: George Frideric Handel 1685-1759;
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Confession and Absolution

As we gather today to hear God's Word and call upon Him in prayer and praise, we come before Him as people who are broken by an imperfect world, burdened by sin, and bearing guilt for the things we have done and the things we have left undone. In the midst of our condition, the Word of God speaks to us. In today's Epistle, we hear, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice."

We confess we do not rejoice in everything; instead, we let the weight of this world bring us down. Instead of seeing all good things from Your hand, at times we focus on that which does not give You glory nor bring lasting joy to our lives.

"Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand."

We confess we have at times been unreasonable in our relationships with others and in our relationship with You. Our witness to Your grace has faltered.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

Philippians 4:4-7

We confess we have been anxious about our sin and our circumstances of life. Create in us a clean heart and renew in us a right spirit that we may abide in Your love and that Your joy may be in us, and our joy may be full. *A Time of Silence*

Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of the Word, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Amen.

Prayer

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Hymn of Praise *Please Be Seated*

"Rejoice, O Pilgrim Throng"

♪ Rejoice, O pilgrim throng! Rejoice, give thanks, and sing;
Your festal banner wave on high, The cross of Christ your king.
~Rejoice! Rejoice! Rejoice, give thanks, and sing!

♪ With voice as full and strong As ocean's surging praise,
Send forth the sturdy hymns of old, The psalms of ancient days. ~Rejoice...

♪ With all the angel choirs, With all the saints on earth
Pour out the strains of joy and bliss, True rapture, noblest mirth. ~Rejoice...

- ♪ Yet on and onward still, With hymn and chant and song,
Through gate and porch and columned aisle The hallowed pathways throng. ~Rejoice...
- ♪ Still lift your standard high, Still march in firm array,
As pilgrims through the darkness wend Till dawns the golden day. ~Rejoice...
- ♪ At last the march shall end; The wearied ones shall rest;
The pilgrims find their home at last, Jerusalem the blest. ~Rejoice...
- ♪ Praise Him who reigns on high, The Lord whom we adore:
The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, One God forevermore. ~Rejoice....

*Lutheran Service Book, Hymn 813 -Text: Edward H. Plumptre 1821-91; Tune: Arthur H. Messiter 1834-1916;
Setting: Service Book and Hymnal 1958; Public Domain; LSBHymnLicense.net #100012386.*

Old Testament Reading

Zephaniah 3:14–20

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

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

¹⁵The Lord has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies.

The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil.

¹⁶On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:

“Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak.

¹⁷The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save;
he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing.

¹⁸I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival,
so that you will no longer suffer reproach.

¹⁹Behold, at that time I will deal with all your oppressors.

And I will save the lame and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.

²⁰At that time I will bring you in, at the time when I gather you together;
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.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Epistle

Philippians 4:4–7

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

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gradual Hymn

“Let All Together Praise Our God”

♪ Let all together praise our God Before His glorious throne;
Today He opens heav’n again To give us His own son, To give us His own Son.

♪ He leaves his heav’nly Father’s throne, Is born an infant small,
And in a manger, poor and lone, Lies in a humble stall, Lies in a humble stall.

♪ Within an earthborn form He hides His all-creating light;
 To serve us all he humbly cloaks The splendor of His might, The splendor of His might.

♪ He undertakes a great exchange, Puts on our human frame,
 And in return gives us His realm, His glory, and His name, His glory and His name.

♪ He is a servant, I a lord! How great a mystery!
 How strong the tender Christ Child's love! No truer friend than He, No truer friend than He.

♪ He is the key and He the door To blessed paradise;
 The angel bars the way no more. To God our praises rise, To God our praises rise.

Please Stand

♪ Your grace in lowliness revealed, Lord Jesus, we adore
 And praise to God the Father yield And Spirit evermore; We praise You evermore.

Lutheran Service Book, Hymn 389-Text & Tune: Nicolaus Herman c.1480-1561; tr. F. Samuel Janzow 1913-2001 vv.1,3-7;
 tr. August Crull 1845-1923 v.2; ©1969 Concordia Publishing House; Used by permission; LSBHymnLicense.net #100012386.

Holy Gospel

Luke 7:18–35

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the twenty-first chapter.

Glory to You, O Lord.

¹⁸The disciples of John reported all these things to him. And John, ¹⁹calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” ²⁰And when the men had come to him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?’” ²¹In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight. ²²And he answered them, “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. ²³And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.”

²⁴When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ²⁵What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who are dressed in splendid clothing and live in luxury are in kings' courts. ²⁶What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ²⁷This is he of whom it is written,

“Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
 who will prepare your way before you.’

²⁸I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.” ²⁹(When all the people heard this, and the tax collectors too, they declared God just, having been baptized with the baptism of John, ³⁰but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.)

³¹“To what then shall I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like? ³²They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another,

“We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;
 we sang a dirge, and you did not weep.’

³³For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ ³⁴The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ ³⁵Yet wisdom is justified by all her children.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

Nicene Creed

Children's Message *Please Be Seated*

The Hymn

“Angels We Have Heard on High”

♪ Angels we have heard on high, Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply, Echoing their joyous strains.

~Glo - - - ria in excelsis Deo. Glo - - - ria in excelsis Deo.

♪ Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be Which inspire your heav'nly song? ~Glo-ria...

♪ Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King. ~Glo-ria....

*Lutheran Service Book, Hymn 368-Text: French, tr. The Crown of Jesus, Part 2, London 1862
Tune: French, setting: Edward S. Barnes 1887-1958; Public Domain; LSBHymnLicense.net #100012386.*

Proclamation of the Word

“Undertaking The Joy”

Zephaniah 3:14–20

Offering and Musical Offering

Preface *Please Stand*

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to God.

It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

Proper Preface

Sanctus

Music: “It Came Upon a Midnight Clear”, Hymn 366

♪ Holy, holy, holy, Lord God, Almighty, Heavenly King.
Heaven and earth Your glory fills; Hosannas, loud we sing.
Blessed is He who comes to us in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the high'st, sing; Hosanna to our King!

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Lord's Prayer

Words of Our Lord

The Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

Agnus Dei

Music: "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear", Hymn 366

♪ O Lamb of God, You take away the world's sin, We pray.
O Lamb of God, You take away the world's sin, We pray.
O Lamb of God, You take away the world's sin, We pray.
Have mercy on us all, We pray And grant us peace, today.

Distribution Hymn *Please Be Seated*

"Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee"

♪ Joyful, joyful we adore Thee, God of glory, Lord of love!
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before Thee, Praising Thee, their sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness, Drive the gloom of doubt away.
Giver of immortal gladness, Fill us with the light of day.

♪ All Thy works with joy surround Thee, Earth and heav'n reflect Thy rays,
Stars and angels sing around Thee, Center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain, Flow'ry meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird, and flowing fountain Call us to rejoice in Thee.

♪ Thou art giving and forgiving, Ever blessing, ever blest,
Well-spring of the joy of living, Ocean-depth of happy rest!
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Fountain-head of love divine:
Joyful, we Thy heav'n inherit! Joyful, we by grace are Thine!

Lutheran Service Book, Hymn 803 -Text: Henry Van Dyke 1852-1933; Tune: Ludwig van Beethoven 1770-1827;
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Prayer of the Church *Please Stand*

Lord, in Your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Benediction

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.
Amen.

Numbers 6:24-26

Recessional Hymn *Music: "Joyful, Joyful" Hymn 803* "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"

♪ Come, Thou long-expected Jesus, Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us; Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, Hope of all the earth Thou art,
Dear desire of ev'ry nation, Joy of ev'ry longing heart.

♪ Born Thy people to deliver; Born a child and yet a king!
Born to reign in us forever, Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.
By Thine own eternal Spirit Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all-sufficient merit Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

Lutheran Service Book, Hymn 338 -Text: Charles Wesley 1707-88; Public Domain;
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Postlude