

CREATED, SAVED AND GIFTED BY GOD,
WE SEEK, SERVE AND SHARE JESUS CHRIST.



THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
DECEMBER 17, 2023
10:30 A.M.

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH
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THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Introduction

“Rejoice always,” begins the reading from First Thessalonians. Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. “All God’s children got a robe,” go the words of the spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes that make us feel happy just to put on. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God’s party.

Patterns of Grace

People who sew often use patterns to guide their creations. To make a skirt, suit, or quilt of a certain size, one cuts out the pattern, pins it to fabric, and then cuts along the pattern to get pieces of cloth that are the right sizes and shapes to be sewn together.

In today’s gospel reading we find a pattern that is repeated throughout the biblical narrative: a person of faith does something that draws the attention of others, which gives them an opportunity to share the story of their faith. The prophets often performed public actions that led to them speaking the word of the Lord. It is not surprising that the conspicuous work of John the Baptist at the Jordan River caused the priests and Levites to wonder if he was “the prophet.”

Early in the Gospel of John we are told that John the Baptist was a witness who would testify to the light that is Jesus. John’s answer to the religious leaders’ queries continues with the language of testimony, as he confesses that he is not the Messiah. We see the pattern at work here: John’s actions are a proclamation all their own, but those actions draw others’ attention, and that gives him an opportunity to testify, to share his story of God’s way.

This pattern keeps going with us today as God continues to stitch grace into the world. Whose actions of faith have drawn your attention? How have their stories of faith been a comfort or challenge to you? Our actions need not be as ambitious as baptizing a whole community in the river for people to take notice. Our following the way of Jesus will draw people’s attention, and their curiosity then gives us an opportunity to testify, to share our stories of transformation, faith, hope, and love.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

PRELUDE

WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pr. Jamie Vannoy

** CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In remembrance of their baptism, all may make the sign of the cross.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, the parent who rouses us from slumber, the shepherd who gathers us on the holy mountain, the deliverer who sets us free. **Amen.**

Let us come before the living God in confession.

Silence is kept for reflection.

As we wait and watch for the promised day of salvation, **we open our hearts to you, O God. Search us and know us. Reveal all that we keep inside. To you, O God, we confess our sins, known and unknown. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us in your ways of justice and peace. Make us reflections of the radiant love of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Beloved children of the Most High, you are gathered before the righteous judge who has mercy on all. Splash exuberantly in the waters of baptism, where sin is washed away in the river of life. Dwell peacefully in the loving arms of the one who nurtures all creation. Go forth boldly in the assurance that your sins are forgiven in the name of the one who is coming and is already here, † Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

** GATHERING SONG

“Come, Emmanuel” | Chancel Choir

Response, sung during the verses:



Come, O come, Em - man - u - el.

Verse 1

Cantor: You are Dawn, beauty loved in night.
You are Dawn, lovely as the night.
You are Dawn, dreams from deepest night.
You are Dawn, scatter fears of night.

**All: Come, O come, Emmanuel.
Come, O come, Emmanuel.
Come, O come, Emmanuel.
Come, O come, Emmanuel.**

Refrain: All

Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el shall
 come to you, O Is - ra - el.

Verse 2

Cantor: You are Dawn, morning shall sing.
 You are Dawn, birds awake and sing.
 You are Dawn, rising sun shall sing.
 You are Dawn, Sun of Justice, sing

**All: Come, O come, Emmanuel.
 Come, O come, Emmanuel.
 Come, O come, Emmanuel.
 Come, O come, Emmanuel.**

Refrain: All

Verse 3

Cantor: You are Dawn, wake us now to see.
 You are Dawn, earth and sky and sea
 You are Dawn, all creation, see.
 You are Dawn, blest be all we see.

**All: Come, O come, Emmanuel.
 Come, O come, Emmanuel.
 Come, O come, Emmanuel.
 Come, O come, Emmanuel.**

Refrain: All

**** 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.**

**** KYRIE**

Assistant Minister

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

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

Lord, have mer - cy.

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.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,

let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord.

A - men, a - men.

**** 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.

**** LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH**

Praise to you, O God, who holds our joy and sorrow. You bring water to parched ground and life out of death. Bless us as this light grows, and send sorrow and sighing to flee away. Give us strength and patience, trusting that you are true to your promises. Transform the lives of all who suffer with your wonders near at hand. **Amen.**

Advent Week 1 - December 3 Verse 1
Advent Week 2 - December 10 Verse 1, 2
Advent Week 3 - December 17 Verse 1, 2, 3
Advent Week 4 - December 24 Verse 1, 2, 3, 4

Verses



1. Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban ish
2. Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban ish
3. Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban ish
4. Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban ish



dark - ness. He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra - el,
dark - ness. He shall feed the flock like a shep-herd,
dark - ness. Lift your heads, and lift high the gate - way
dark - ness. He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings.



God ful - fills the prom - ise.
gent - ly lead them home - ward.
for the King of glo - ry.
Let your lights be shin - ing!

Refrain



Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the dark - ness.



Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gath-ered to-day.

THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

WORD

*Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets,
Jesus interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.*

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.

A reading from the book of Isaiah.

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.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

Reading

Luke 1:46b-55

You, Lord, have lifted up the lowly. (Lk. 1:52)

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
you, the Almighty, have done great things for me
and holy is your name.
You have mercy on those who fear you,
from generation to generation.
You have shown strength with your arm
and scattered the proud in their conceit,

casting down the mighty from their thrones
and lifting | up the lowly.
You have filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.
You have come to the aid of your servant Israel,
to remember the promise of mercy,
the promise made to our forebears,
to Abraham and his children forever.

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.

A reading from Paul's letter to the Thessalonians.

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.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

**** GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

**** GOSPEL READING**

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.

The Holy Gospel according to John. **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.**

YOUTH MESSAGE

MESSAGE

Pr. Jamie Vannoy

HYMN OF THE DAY

People, Look East (ELW 248)

1 Peo - ple, look east. The time is near of the crown - ing
 2 Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is
 3 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more light the
 4 An - gels an - nounce with shouts of mirth him who brings new

of the year. Make your house fair as you are a - ble,
 plant - ed there. Give up your strength the seed to nour - ish,
 bowl shall brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y weath - er,
 life to earth. Set ev - 'ry peak and val - ley hum - ming

trim the hearth and set the ta - ble. Peo - ple, look
 that in course the flow'r may flour - ish. Peo - ple, look
 bright as sun and moon to - geth - er. Peo - ple, look
 with the word, the Lord is com - ing. Peo - ple, look

east, and sing to - day— Love, the Guest, is on the way.
 east, and sing to - day— Love, the Rose, is on the way.
 east, and sing to - day— Love, the Star, is on the way.
 east, and sing to - day— Love, the Lord, is on the way.

**** 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 power of the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended into hell.
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 INTERCESSION**

With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration.

A brief silence.

Each intercession concludes: 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.**

OFFERTORY


MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.


** DIALOGUE



The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.



Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.



Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,



heav-en and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho - san - na in the



high-est. Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -



san-na in the high-est. Ho - san - na in the high-est.

** WORDS OF INSTITUTION

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.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:



Christ has died. Christ is ris - en. Christ will come a - gain.

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth. **Come, Holy Spirit.**

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.



** LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus 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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

In this meal, righteousness and peace meet together. Come, take your place at the table.

Amen.

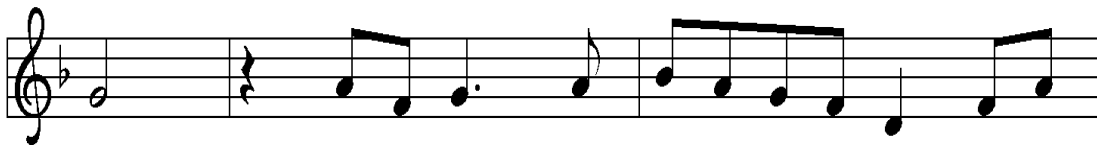
COMMUNION

The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you. **Amen.**

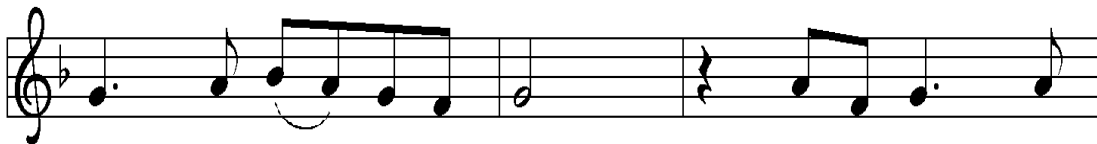
** LAMB OF GOD



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 peace.

** COMMUNION HYMN

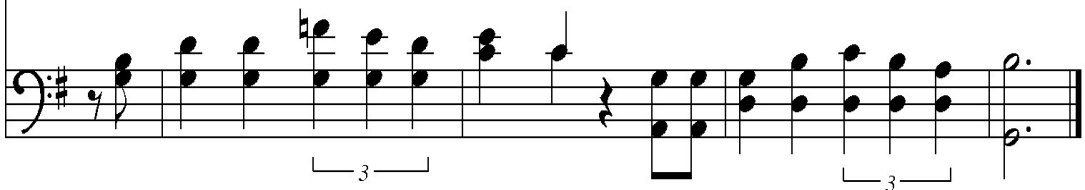
He came Down (ELW 253)



1 He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love;
2 He came down that we may have light; he came down that we may have light;
3 He came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may have peace;
4 He came down that we may have joy; he came down that we may have joy;



he came down that we may have love;
he came down that we may have light; hal-le - lu - jah for-ev - er - more.
he came down that we may have peace;
he came down that we may have joy;



** TABLE BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bless you and always keep you in God's grace.
Amen.

SONG AFTER COMMUNION: The Canticle of Simeon



Now, Lord, you let your ser-vant go in peace: your word has been ful-



filled. My own eyes have seen the sal - va - tion which you have pre -



pared in the sight of ev-'ry peo - ple: a light to re-veal you to the



na - tions and the glo - ry of your peo - ple Is - ra - el.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Generous God, in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

** BLESSING

The God of peace bless you, the love of Christ sustain you in hope, and the anointing of the Spirit remain upon you now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG

Canticle of the Turning (ELW 723)



1 My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the
2 Though I am small, my . . . God, my all, you . . .
3 From the halls of pow'r to the for - tress tow'r, not a
4 Though the na - tions rage from . . age to age, we re -



God of my heart is great, and my spir - it sings of the
work great . . things in me, and your mer - cy will last from the
stone will be left on stone. Let the king be - ware for your
mem - ber who holds us fast: God's mer - cy must de -



won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
jus - tice tears ev - 'ry ty - rant . . . from his throne.
liv - er us from the con - quer - or's crush - ing grasp.



You fixed your sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my
Your ver - y name puts the proud to shame, and to
The hun - gry poor shall . . weep no more, for the
This sav - ing word that our fore - bears heard is the



weak - ness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my
 those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the
 food they can nev - er earn; there are ta - bles spread, ev - 'ry
 prom - ise which holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be



name be blest. Could the world be a - bout to turn?
 strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.
 mouth be fed, for the world is a - bout to turn.
 crushed by God, who is turn - ing the world a - round.



Refrain
 My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your jus - tice burn.



Wipe a - way all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn.

**** DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Keep awake.

Created, saved and gifted by God, we seek, serve and share Jesus Christ.

Hallelujah, thanks be to God!

“W + 2” = Worship Plus Two

**Make a commitment to not only worship each week
 but also try to find a way to serve in the congregation
 and seek out a way to serve our community.**

YOU ARE NOW ENTERING THE MISSION FIELD

Upcoming Commemorations

Katharina von Bora Luther, renewer of the church, died 1552

Wednesday, December 20, 2023

Born to an impoverished nobleman, Katie eventually took vows as a nun, but around age twenty-four she and several other nuns who were influenced by the writings of Martin Luther left the convent. Six children were born to Katie and Martin.

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