

ADVENT III WORSHIP ❖ December 17, 2023

Words of Welcome

Gathering Hymn: "The angel Gabriel"

Blue Hymnal #265

Video prepared by Rachel Behrens in 2021

The Opening Verse, Confession & Absolution

Officiant Keep watch, for you know not when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning; lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.
Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

A substantial silence for reflection is kept.

Officiant Lord Jesus, you came to gather the nations into the peace of your kingdom: Lord, have mercy.

People **Lord, have mercy.**

Officiant You come in word and sacrament to strengthen us in holiness: Christ, have mercy.

People **Christ, have mercy.**

Officiant You will come in glory with salvation for all your people: Lord, have mercy.

People **Lord, have mercy.**

Celebrant The almighty and merciful God grant us pardon and remission of all our sins, renewal of life, and the grace and comfort of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Officiant In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord.

People **Make straight in the desert a pathway for our God.**

Reader People of God: return! You are called to be God's own. From the mountains announce the good news. God comes in justice and peace, to all who follow holy ways.

The first, second and third Advent candles are lit.

Celebrant Let us pray.

People **Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.**

The Invitatory and Psalter

Officiant Lord, open our lips.

People **And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.
Glory to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God;
As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen.**

Officiant Our King and Savior now draws near; come let us adore God.

Song of Faith: Luke 1:46-55

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; *
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed: *

the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him *

in every generation.

He has shown the strength of his arm, *

he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, *

and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things, *

and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel, *

for he has remembered his promise of mercy,

The promise he made to our fathers, *

to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to the Holy and Undivided Trinity, one God;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.

The First Reading: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Reader A reading from the book of the prophet 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.
Hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Song of Faith: Luke 1:68-72, 78-79

**Blessed are You, O God of Israel;
you have come to your people and set them free.
You have raised up for us a mighty savior,
born of the house of your servant David.
Through your holy prophets you promised of old
that you would save us from our enemies,
from the hands of all who hate us.
You promised to show mercy to our forebears,
and to remember your holy covenant.
In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.
Glory to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God;
As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen.**

The Gospel Reading: John 1:6-8, 19-28

Reader A reading from the gospel of John.

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.

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Homily

The Prayers

Officiant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Officiant As we pray together, you may unmute yourself if you choose, and you may pray using any version of this prayer that is in your heart. Now, let us pray as God's beloved children, using the prayer Jesus taught us.

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever.

Amen.

Officiant We now continue in prayer. Let us hold a brief silence now, while we allow things to come into our minds and hearts that we want to hold in prayer with our community today. You may wish to bow your head, open your hands, or prepare your body for prayer in some other way.

A brief silence is kept.

Officiant Let us now hold up our needs and blessings to God. You can speak your prayers out loud, type them into the Chat area, or hold them in your heart. As you are able, please hold others' prayer requests before God in your heart as well.

Officiant Let us pray for all churches and their leaders, and for all God's people everywhere.

The people may offer their prayers aloud.

- Officiant* Let us pray for all those in authority.
The people may offer their prayers aloud.
- Officiant* Let us pray for all nations and peoples.
The people may offer their prayers aloud.
- Officiant* Let us pray for the earth and the whole created order.
The people may offer their prayers aloud.
- Officiant* Let us pray for our local communities.
The people may offer their prayers aloud.
- Officiant* Let us pray for those in any need or trouble, especially those on our parish prayer list: You are invited to name others in need of prayer, and to hold up your own struggles to the light of God's love.
The people may offer additional names.
- Officiant* Let us pray for all who have died, and for those who mourn.
The people may offer additional names.
- Officiant* Let us pray for our common life and work as God's people.
The people may offer their prayers aloud.

Officiant

Let us pray. O Lord, you have set before us the great hope that your kingdom shall come on earth, and have taught us to pray for its coming: Give us grace to discern the signs of its dawning, and to work for the perfect day when your will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Officiant may read one of the following Collects as well:

A Collect for Peace

O God, the author of peace and lover of concord, to know you is eternal life and to serve you is perfect freedom: Defend us, your humble servants, in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in your defense, may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A Collect for Grace

Lord God, almighty and everlasting One, you have brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all we do, direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A Collect for Guidance

Heavenly Father, in you we live and move and have our being: We humbly pray you so to guide and govern us by your Holy Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our life we may not

forget you, but may remember that we are ever walking in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Sharing of Blessings

Officiant

Does anyone have any blessings or celebrations to share with the assembly today?

The Peace

Officiant

In the tender mercy of our God,
the Dayspring from on high shall break upon us,
to give light to those who dwell in the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.
The peace of the Lord be always with you!

People

And also with you!

We greet one another, wishing one another the peace of Christ.

Announcements

The Blessing & Dismissal

Celebrant

May Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you,
scatter the shadows from before your path,
and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory;
and the blessing of God Almighty, Source, Word, and Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Officiant

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People

Thanks be to God!