

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2020 – 10:00 AM

“In the beginning was a song—and the song was God’s joy, and God was joy.”
~ Lo The Poet

Congregational responses are in **bold** type.

WE PREPARE FOR WORSHIP

The Prelude

Announcements

Joys and Concerns

PRAISE

Call to Worship

Leader: As these days are growing darker, we look for the light that will guide us.

All: Jesus is the light which God has given to welcome us home.

Leader: We come this day, continuing our journey toward our true home.

All: We open our hearts and take courage. God is with us!

Prayer of Invocation (Unison)

God, we who have lived in darkness, fear and hopelessness ask to have Your light to shine through our darkness, bringing us hope. Open our hearts for the journey, our eyes for the light, our spirits for the peace which You offer, and fill us with shouts of joy that we shall reveal Your love to all we encounter. We make this prayer in the name of the One who is coming into the world bringing Your hope, love, peace, and joy, Jesus Christ. AMEN.

Hymn: #122

Come, O Long-Expected Jesus vs 1 & 3

1 Come, thou long expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us,
grant us your true liberty.

3 Born all people to deliver,
born a child, you came to reign!

Born to rule on earth forever,
Come, be known to us again.

Lighting the Advent Candle

The Candle of Joy

Choir: The sun shall be no more your light by day,
nor for brightness shall the moon adorn the night.
But the Lord will be your glory, the lamp to light your way.
The Lord will be your everlasting light.

All: **Lift up your eyes and see the light surround you;**
With radiant hope, illuminate the night.
Lift up your voice and sing, let earth and heaven ring,
Lift up your eyes and see the everlasting light.

Responsive litany with music underscore

Leader: As we continue the season of Advent, we wait in joyful anticipation

People: God speaks, “My Joy shall be yours.”

Leader: We seek to live as a people of joy,

People: God speaks, “My Joy shall be yours.”

Leader: We seek to bless others with the happiness we have in Jesus Christ.

People: God speaks, “My Joy shall be yours.”

Candle Lighting: lighting the first purple candle, the second purple candle, and the third candle

(music continues to play in the background)

Leader: This morning we light three candles. The **first candle** reminds us that from darkness and chaos God created all good in the world, and in the midst of our darkness, God again brings us all good through the light of Jesus Christ.

The **second candle** reminds us that in this time of anticipation, there is peace in knowing Emmanuel – God is with us.

The **third candle** is a sign of our joy in the beautiful things of this season – not only what glitters, but the deeper things, the beauty of the heart and the soul, the beauty of love shared in service and hospitality.

Congregational Sung Response

Unison Closing Prayer (please wait for music to end)

We give thanks to you, O God, for the promise of full joy that this season brings to light.

Renew in us this day with Your promises of light after darkness, day after night, with hope after despair, and with joy in this and every morning. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

OLD TESTAMENT READING: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

61:1 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;

61:2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;

61:3 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.

61:4 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.

61:8 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.

61:9 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.

61:10 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.

61:11 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.

NEW TESTAMENT READING: John 1:6-8, 19-28

1:6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

1:7 He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him.

1:8 He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

1:19 This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"

1:20 He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah."

1:21 And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No."

1:22 Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

1:23 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.

1:24 Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.

1:25 They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?"

1:26 John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know,

1:27 the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal."

1:28 This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

Message: *"What Difference Will It Make?"*

Rev MaryAnn Purtill

Silent Prayer

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as

we forgive those who sin 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. Amen.

WE PREPARE TO GO TO THE WORLD

Closing Hymn: #107, *“Awake, Awake, and Greet the New Morn”* vs 1 & 4

1 Awake! Awake and greet the new morn,
 for angels herald its dawning.
sing out your joy, for Jesus is born,
 behold! the Child of our longing.
Come as a baby weak and poor,
 to bring all hearts together,
to open wide the heavenly door,
 and lives now inside us forever.

4 Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night,
 though cold the winter and cheerless,
the rising sun shall crown you with light,
 be strong and loving and fearless;
Love be our song and love our prayer,
 and love, our endless story,
may God fill every day we share,
 and bring us at last into glory.

Benediction

Postlude