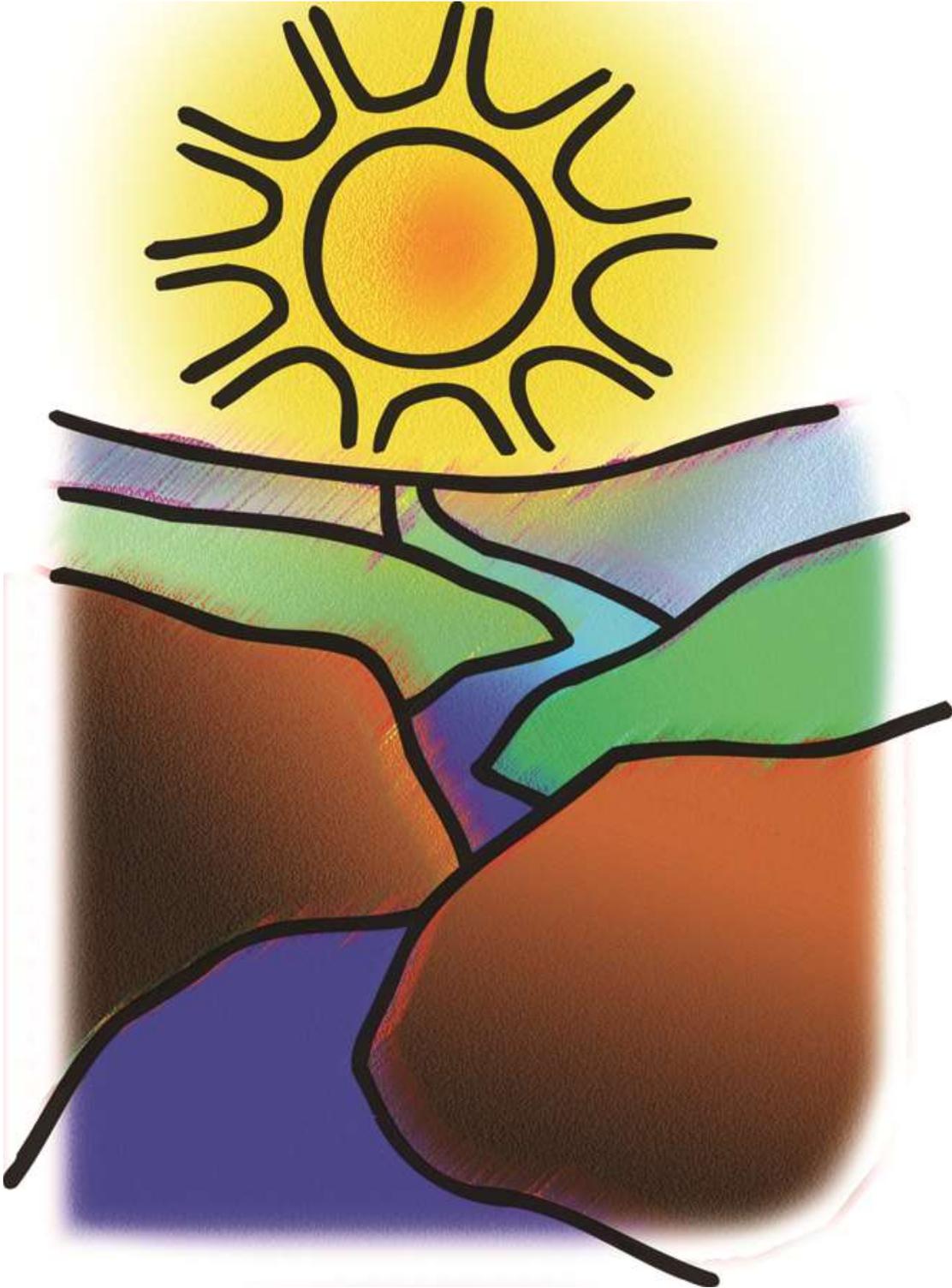


Third Sunday of Advent



The Third Sunday of Advent

ELW Service of the Word

St. Paul Lutheran Church – December 13th, 2020– 10:00 A.M.

Introduction to the day

“Rejoice always,” begins the reading from 1 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 a spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes we are happy to wear. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God’s party.

PRELUDE

*O Word of God Incarnate
The Only Son from Heaven
Savior of the Nations, Come*

Alec Wyton
Johann Walther
Dieterich Buxtehude

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

We praise you, O God, for this victory wreath
that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent.
As we light the candles on this wreath,
strengthen our hearts as we await the Lord's coming in glory.
Enlighten us with your grace,
that we may serve our neighbors in need.
Grant this through Christ our Lord,
whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. **Amen.**

WELCOME

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,
whose steadfast love is everlasting,
whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation. **Amen.**
Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Reconciling God,
**we confess that we do not trust your abundance,
and we deny your presence in our lives.
We place our hope in ourselves
and rely on our own efforts.
We fail to believe that you provide enough for all.
We abuse your good creation for our own benefit.
We fear difference and do not welcome others
as you have welcomed us.
We sin in thought, word, and deed.**

**By your grace, forgive us;
through your love, renew us;
and in your Spirit, lead us;
so that we may live and serve you in newness of life. Amen.**

Beloved of God,
by the radical abundance of divine mercy
we have peace with God through † Christ Jesus,
through whom we have obtained grace upon grace.
Our sins are forgiven. Let us live now in hope.
For hope does not disappoint,
because God's love has been poured into our hearts
through the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

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!

Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772–1847; in: *Lutheran Book of Worship*
 Music: BEREDEN VÄG FOR HERRAN, Swedish folk tune, 17th cent.
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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.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

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.

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.

¹The 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;

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

³to 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.

⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.

⁸For 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.

⁹Their 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.

¹⁰I 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.

¹¹For 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. **Thank be to God.**

PSALM

Psalm 126



Psalm 126:3

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¹When the LORD restored the for- | tunes of Zion,
then were we like | those who dream.

²**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."

³The LORD has done great | things for us,
and we are | glad indeed.

⁴**Restore our for- | tunes, O LORD,**
like the watercourses | of the Negeb. R

⁵Those who | sowed with tears
will reap with | songs of joy.

⁶**Those who go out weeping, carry- | ing the seed,**
will come again with joy, shoulder- | ing their sheaves. R

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.

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise the words of prophets, ²¹but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil.

²³May 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. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (from setting 4)



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

THE GOSPEL

John 1:6-8, 19-28

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah."

²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ²²Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,

'Make straight the way of the Lord,' "

as the prophet Isaiah said.

²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

The Reverend Luther Zeigler

On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

1 On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry an - nounce - es
 2 Then cleansed be ev - 'ry life from sin; make straight the
 3 We hail you as our Sav - ior, Lord, our ref - uge
 4 Stretch forth your hand, our health re - store, and make us
 5 All praise to you, e - ter - nal Son, whose ad - vent

that the Lord is nigh; a - wake and heark - en,
 way for God with - in, and let us all our
 and our great re - ward; with - out your grace we
 rise to fall no more; oh, let your face up -
 has our free - dom won, whom with the Fa - ther

for he brings glad tid - ings of the King of kings!
 hearts pre - pare for Christ to come and en - ter there.
 waste a - way like flow'rs that with - er and de - cay.
 on us shine and fill the world with love di - vine.
 we a - dore, and Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er - more.

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676-1749; tr. composite

Music: PUER NOBIS, European tune, adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1571-1621

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God,

the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,

the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;

through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation

he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son,*
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,

and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

God of power and might, shine your radiance and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

A brief silence.

God of preachers and messengers, you have entrusted your church with the work of proclaiming good news. Strengthen the witness of bishops, pastors, deacons, church musicians, lay leaders, and all people who contribute their prayers and talents to public worship. Embed your word in their hearts. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of every living creature, you announce the year of your favor for all of creation. Extend your kindness and relief to endangered animals and plants. Strengthen the human beings who rely on the rhythms of nature to make their living. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of all peoples and nations, you plant us as your oaks of righteousness and ask us to care for one another. Be present with the leaders of every nation as they govern. Give them a spirit of righteousness, that your goodness and mercy is revealed through their actions. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of exiles and wanderers, you repair what was once destroyed. We pray for people who have been displaced from their homes by fire, flood, earthquake, or storm. Support the work of Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Disaster Response, and all disaster relief organizations in their recovery efforts. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of the powerful and helpless, you clothe us with strength when our spirits are weak and weary. Bestow your spirit upon this congregation and empower us to comfort the people who turn to us in times of need, especially those on our prayer list and those whose name we offer now... Make your church a place of refuge and healing. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of sinners and saints, you offer joy even in the midst of our grief. We are grateful for the beloved, imperfect people whose lives testified to your radiant love. Anoint all who mourn with the oil of gladness. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

THE EXCHANGE OF PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

SOLO

But the Lord is Mindful of His Own (from *St. Paul*)

Felix Mendelssohn

OFFERTORY SONG

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

The image shows a musical score for a hymn. It consists of two systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are written below the notes. The first system of music covers the first line of lyrics, and the second system covers the second line. The music is a simple, homophonic setting of the hymn.

Praise God, from whom all bless-ings flow; praise him, all crea-tures here be - low;

praise him a - bove, ye heav'n - ly host; praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637–1711
Music: OLD HUNDREDTH, Louis Bourgeois, 1510–1561

Text: Latin hymn, 9th cent.; tr. *Hymnal* 1940, alt.
Music: CONDITOR ALME SIDERUM, plainsong mode IV
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THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Gracious and merciful God, slow to anger, rich in love, we bless your name and give you thanks. In our need, you make haste to help us. You plant us beside streams of your wisdom, teach us in pastures greenening with truth, and guide us on the path of your promise. By your Spirit awaken our faith, that, feasting on your Word, we may love you more fully and serve our neighbor more faithfully; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

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 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.

BLESSING

Life is short.

We haven't much time to gladden the hearts of those with whom we walk this earth.

So be swift to love.

Make haste to be kind.

And may the blessing of Almighty God,

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

be with you and all those you love now and forever. **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

People, Look East

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.

Text: Eleanor Farjeon, 1881-1965.

Music: BESANCON, French carol; arr. Barry Rose, b. 1934.

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DISMISSAL Go in peace. Share the good news. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

Savior of the Nations, Come

J. S. Bach

WORSHIP LEADERS TODAY:

Presiding and Preaching: The Rev. Luther Zeigler

Reader: Martha Johnson

Musician and Choir Director: Theodore Stoddard

Soloist: Carolyn Stowell

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NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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978-283-6550, office@stpaulcapeann.org

WELCOME TO ST. PAUL

Thank you for joining virtually. Please follow us on Facebook and/or sign up for our FYI Newsletter by logging into our website at stpaulcapeann.org.

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

Reminder – the meeting will be held Monday night at 7:00 PM via Zoom. Details will be emailed.

QUARRY HOME COMPANION – STEWARDSHIP 2020-2021

If you have not done so already, please submit your pledge card or send an email to amwheelerap@gmail.com with your pledge. Thank you to all those who have already pledged!

OFFICE HOURS FOR PASTOR LUTHER ZEIGLER

Pastor Luther will be in the church offices every Wednesday from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m., and it available for individual visits from 10 a.m. to Noon and from 2-3 p.m.. He is happy to meet inside or outside, using all necessary precautions regarding distancing and wearing masks. Please call him (617-999-6419) or email him (luther.zeigler@gmail.com) if you would like to make an appointment. He is also always available for pastoral emergencies.

PRAYER LISTS

Please keep these people in your prayers for healing throughout the week: Heidi H., Pastor O., Roger K., Dan W., Caitlin G., Janet C., Elaine V., Andrew G., Hope L., Amy P., Alane B., Daneen R., Sonny M., Mitch O., Tasha R., Carole F., Carrie T., Willy G., Henry K., Jim W., Brian D., Ron M., Judith O., Rachael and Tyler, Verna

Armed services: Josh Coakley, Stephanie Norberg, Brian Misuraca, Christian DiGregorio, John Korpi III, Danny Hill, Rachel Misuraca Lewin, Zach Hafey, Liam Carney, and Tony Favalora

Please see the FYI emails for more information