

## THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Joy

December 11 & 12, 2021

### AS WE GATHER

Some Advent wreaths have a pink candle for this Third Sunday in Advent. The festive, joyful pink candle reflects today's Readings, which begin to anticipate the unbridled joy that Jesus' birth brings. We do many joyful things during Advent. We sing Christmas carols, bake cookies, decorate our homes inside and out, and travel far and wide to visit those we love. Yet all these joyful things point to an even greater joy—the joy that comes by the Creator of the universe, the Lord almighty, who loves you, forgives you in Jesus, and cares about you beyond human measure! “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!”  
Christmas?



### PRAYER

O Lord, our creator, redeemer, and comforter, as we come together to worship You in spirit and in truth, we humbly pray that You would open our hearts to the preaching of Your Word so that we may repent of our sins, believe in Jesus Christ as our only Savior, and grow in grace and holiness. Hear us for His sake.

### OPENING SENTENCES *Zephaniah 3:14a, 15b; 16b–17, 20*

P Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart.  
C **The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil.**

P “Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak.  
C **The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save;**

P He will rejoice over you with gladness; He will quiet you by His love;  
C **He will exult over you with loud singing.**

P 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.  
C **We worship You, O Lord!**

+ CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION +

### OPENING HYMN LSB 367 “ANGELS FROM THE REALMS OF GLORY”

1 Angels from the realms of glory,  
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
Ye who sang creation's story,  
Now proclaim Messiah's birth. Refrain

ref Come and worship, come and worship;  
Worship Christ, the newborn King.

2 Shepherds in the field abiding,  
Watching o'er your flocks by night,  
God with us is now residing,  
Yonder shines the Infant Light. Refrain

3 Sages, leave your contemplations,  
Brighter visions beam afar;  
Seek the great Desire of nations,  
Ye have seen His natal star. Refrain

4 Saints before the altar bending,  
Watching long in hope and fear,  
Suddenly the Lord, descending,  
In His temple shall appear. Refrain

D 5 All creation, join in praising  
God the Father, Spirit, Son,  
Evermore your voices raising  
To the\_ eternal Three in One. Refrain

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*(The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.)*

P In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
C **Amen.**

P Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our  
Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,  
C **who made heaven and earth.**  
P I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,  
C **and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.**

*(Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.)*

P O almighty God, merciful Father,  
C **I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I  
have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment.  
But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your  
boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of  
Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful  
being.**

- P Upon this your confession, the Word, announces the grace of God unto all of you and forgives you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
C **Amen.**

+ **SERVICE OF THE WORD** +

**INTROIT** *Psalm 146:5–8; antiphon: Philippians 4:4*

P Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

C **Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God,**

P who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever;

C **who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry.**

P The LORD sets the prisoners free; the LORD opens the eyes of the blind. The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

- C **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**

**KYRIE** *LSB 186*

- C **Lord, have mercy upon us.  
Christ, have mercy upon us.  
Lord, have mercy upon us.**

**GLORIA IN EXCELSIS** *LSB 187*

P Glory be to God on high:

C **and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.**

**We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee,  
we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee, for Thy great glory.**

**O Lord God, heav'nly King, God the Father Almighty.**

**O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ;**

**O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us.**

**Thou that takest away the sin of the world, receive our prayer.**

**Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us.**

**For Thou only art holy; Thou only art the Lord.**

**Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost,  
art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P Let us pray. Lord Jesus Christ,

C **we implore You to hear our prayers**

P and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation;

C **for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.  
Amen.**

**OLD TESTAMENT READING** *Zephaniah 3:14–20*

<sup>14</sup>Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! <sup>15</sup>The 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. <sup>16</sup>On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: “Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak. <sup>17</sup>The 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. <sup>18</sup>I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival, so that you will no longer suffer reproach. <sup>19</sup>Behold, 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. <sup>20</sup>At 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.

L This is the Word of the Lord. C **Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM** *Psalms 85; antiphon: v.2*

P You forgave the iniquity of Your people; You covered all their sin.

C **LORD, You were favorable to Your land;  
You restored the fortunes of Jacob.**

P You forgave the iniquity of Your people; You covered all their sin.

C **You withdrew all Your wrath; You turned from Your hot anger.**

P Restore us again, O God of our salvation, and put away Your indignation toward us!

C **Will You be angry with us forever?  
Will You prolong Your anger to all generations?**

P Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You?

C **Show us Your steadfast love, O LORD, and grant us Your salvation.**

P Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,  
for He will speak peace to His people, to His saints;  
but let them not turn back to folly.

C **Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him,  
that glory may dwell in our land.**

P Steadfast love and faithfulness meet; righteousness and peace kiss each other.

C **Faithfulness springs up from the ground,  
and righteousness looks down from the sky.**

P Yes, the LORD will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase.

C **Righteousness will go before Him and make His footsteps a way.  
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

P You forgave the iniquity of Your people; You covered all their sin.

**EPISTLE** *Philippians 4:4–7*

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

L This is the Word of the Lord. C **Thanks be to God.**

**VERSE** *Matthew 11:10b*

P Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You.

**ALLELUIA** *LSB 190*

C **Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.**

**HOLY GOSPEL** *Luke 7:18–28*

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the seventh chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

<sup>18</sup>The disciples of John reported all these things to him. And John, <sup>19</sup>calling 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?” <sup>20</sup>And 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?’” <sup>21</sup>In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight. <sup>22</sup>And 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. <sup>23</sup>And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.” <sup>24</sup>When 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? <sup>25</sup>What 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. <sup>26</sup>What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>27</sup>This is he of whom it is written, “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.’” <sup>28</sup>I 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.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord. C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

**APOSTLES’ CREED**

C **I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried.  
He descended into hell.  
The third day He rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven  
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.  
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy Christian Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,**

**and the life T everlasting. Amen.**

**HYMN OF THE DAY LSB 368 “ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH”**

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

ref Gloria in excelsis Deo.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

2 Shepherds, why this jubilee?  
Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be  
Which inspire your heav’nly song? Refrain

3 Come to Bethlehem and see  
Him whose birth the angels sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee  
Christ the Lord, the newborn King. Refrain

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**PRAYER**

Blessed Lord, You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning. Grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them that, by patience and comfort of Your holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**SERMON “Focus On Rejoicing” Philippians 4:4–7**

Introduction:

Is God being realistic when He commands us to rejoice? There is not much in the world today that we lead us to always rejoice. Therefore, He commands us to rejoice in the Lord, not in what the world offers.

Yet, we live in the world. We have families, friends, neighbors and other people in our lives. There is the needs of others and those who need our care. How can we be always rejoicing when the sting of death lies heavy in our hearts.

What God offers to us is not a distraction from the sorrows of life. He doesn’t offer us an escape to a happy place in our hearts. He offers us help and a way to face the sorrows and difficulties of life.

I. Letting our requests be known to God

He invites us strongly to make our requests known to Him. He has commanded us to call upon

Him in the day of trouble. And He has promised to deliver us.

When sorrows and difficulties fill our hearts, we do turn to God for help. We will ask Him to deliver us, a loved one or even a stranger from the troubles of life. This is good and proper. It should become our habit. That is to say, it is the first thing that we do when we face any situation in our lives.

Paul includes that we make these requests with thanksgiving. Again, not as a distraction to the problem, but because it leads us to the comfort we desire and the solution we need.

We thank a person for doing something for us. They had offered assistance or help, provided us with a needed item or gift. It made our lives a little brighter or easier.

In the same way, when call upon God in our day of trouble, we thank Him for His omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence. We thank Him for knowing our situation far better than we ourselves do. We thank Him for His strength, wisdom and power to deliver us, our loved ones or that stranger we have included in our prayers. We thank Him for being there when we needed Him the most.

## II. The peace of God which is ours already

Does this drive away sadness, depression or the sting of death? At times, most often it battles against these things.

Sadness can remain. But there is peace in knowing that someone greater than ourselves is taking care of the request we have made. We know that there was someone who listened and could, and would act our behalf. The sadness remains while peace fills the hearts.

Depression that is more than sadness can remain. We feel helpless and not able to do anything. Yet, we ask God to move us as He sees fit to use us in caring or resolving the situation we face. In some case, when the depression does not leave, it may be a sign that there may be a psychological problem that needs medical attention. The peace that comes is the strength to go and seek help.

And the sting of death, never fully is gone. We still caring a sinful nature. The sting is there because we are still sinful. And death is still foreign to us. This is to say that we were not created to die. Death is the wages of sin. And so the sting remains. The peace is that in Christ we have the hope of salvation. There is the forgiveness of sins. There is the strength of faith to know and accept things that are out of our control and must be left up to God, alone to handle.

## Conclusion:

When Christ commands us to rejoice always, He doesn't leave it up to us to work out our problems and sorrows that interfere with joy and peace. He has given us the right and the freedom to call upon Him in the day of trouble. He has already placed His peace within our hearts when He brought us to faith. He reassures that what we need to rejoice always He has

provided us. Rejoice in the Lord for He is good and His mercy endures forever.

+AMEN+

### **PRAYER**

Lord God, bless Your Word wherever it is proclaimed. Make it a word of power and peace to convert those not yet Your own and to confirm those who have come to saving faith. May Your Word pass from the ear to the heart, from the heart to the lip, and from the lip to the life that, as You have promised, Your Word may achieve the purpose for which You send it; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

### **OFFERTORY** *LSB 192*

**C Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.  
Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.  
Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free spirit. Amen.**

### **OFFERING HYMN** *LSB 370* “*WHAT CHILD IS THIS*”

- 1 What child is this, who, laid to rest,  
On Mary’s lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet  
While shepherds watch are keeping?  
This, this is Christ the king,  
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,  
The babe, the son of Mary!
  
- 2 Why lies He in such mean estate  
Where ox and ass are feeding?  
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here  
The silent Word is pleading.  
Nails, spear shall pierce Him through,  
The cross be borne for me, for you;  
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,  
The babe, the son of Mary!
  
- 3 So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh;  
Come, peasant, king, to own Him.  
The King of kings salvation brings;  
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.  
Raise, raise the song on high,  
The virgin sings her lullaby;  
Joy, joy, for Christ is born,  
The babe, the son of Mary!

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### **PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

**P** As we prepare our hearts and minds for Christ’s coming, we turn to the Lord in prayer.

*A brief time of silence may be observed.*

P O Wisdom from on high, lead us by Your Spirit to rejoice in all that You have done to demonstrate Your love for us. Move the leaders, pastors, teachers, and all the people of our Synod to rejoice in the Lord always. We pray,

C **hear us, coming Lord.**

P O Desire of nations, bless the leaders of nations, our president and Congress, our governors and local leaders. Move all leaders to cease envy and boastfulness, injustice and corruption. Guide our leaders to be honorable people who do not neglect the poor and who strive toward the flourishing of all human beings. Bless those who serve in our armed forces and lift up refugees and all victims of war. Bring peace between us and our enemies and let Your peace reign over this broken world. We pray,

C **hear us, coming Lord.**

P O Dayspring from on high, come to the aid of all who are in need. As You humbly entered this world as a vulnerable baby, help all of us humbly to enter the lives of those who are sick, facing surgery, or dying, to offer comfort and hope, [*especially . . .*]. Bring healing according to Your will and peace to those whose suffering endures. Thank You for the work of doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals who work toward healing and restoration of wholeness. Guide scientists searching for cures for diseases that bring suffering to the world that their work might lead to healing for many. We pray,

C **hear us, coming Lord.**

P O Key of David, let Your joy, forgiveness, and peace flow freely in and among the families of this congregation. Empower parents and grandparents to love their children and children to love their parents. Watch over all who travel and comfort families who are separated by many miles. Guide families to be places where Your love is demonstrated to strangers as well as to friends. We pray,

C **hear us, coming Lord.**

P O Lord of might, help us to see in the miracles of Jesus a sign pointing forward to that Day when He will come again in great glory to restore all creation. Help us to be instruments by which our wandering world may come to see Jesus as the one who alone brings true joy into our lives. We pray,

C **Hear us, coming Lord.**

P O Immanuel, You deliver Your people even from the grip of death. Comfort those who mourn and use us to express the hope that comes from trusting in You. Bring us to be with them on that great day to come, and until that day give us grace to endure life's difficulties, while also abiding in Your love. We pray,

C **hear us, coming Lord.**

P You, O Lord, know the thoughts of our hearts and hear those prayers that come to You in sighs too deep for words. All our prayer we entrust to You in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

**LORD'S PRAYER** *LSB 196*

P 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.

C For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

**HYLMN LSB 374** "*GENTLE MARY LAID HER CHILD*"

- 1 Gentle Mary laid her child  
Lowly in a manger;  
There He lay, the Undefined,  
To the world a stranger.  
Such a babe in such a place,  
Can He be the Savior?  
Ask the saved of all the race  
Who have found His favor.
  
- 2 Angels sang about His birth,  
Wise Men sought and found Him;  
Heaven's star shone brightly forth  
Glory all around Him.  
Shepherds saw the wondrous sight,  
Heard the angels singing;  
All the plains were lit that night,  
All the hills were ringing.
  
- 3 Gentle Mary laid her child  
Lowly in a manger;  
He is still the Undefined  
But no more a stranger.  
Son of God of humble birth,  
Beautiful the story;  
Praise His name in all the earth;  
Hail the King of glory!

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**HYMN LSB 393** "*INFANT HOLY, INFANT LOWLY*"

- 1 Infant holy,  
Infant lowly,  
For His bed a cattle stall;  
Oxen lowing,

Little knowing  
Christ the child is Lord of all.  
Swiftly winging,  
Angels singing,  
Bells are ringing,  
Tidings bringing:  
Christ the child is Lord of all!  
Christ the child is Lord of all!

- 2 Flocks were sleeping,  
Shepherds keeping  
Vigil till the morning new  
Saw the glory,  
Heard the story,  
Tidings of a Gospel true.  
Thus rejoicing,  
Free from sorrow,  
Praises voicing,  
Greet the morrow:  
Christ the child was born for you!  
Christ the child was born for you!

Text: Public domain

**HYMN LSB 383 “A GREAT AND MIGHTY WONDER”**

- 1 A great and mighty wonder,  
A full and holy cure:  
The virgin bears the infant  
With virgin honor pure! Refrain
- ref Proclaim the Savior’s birth:  
“To God on high be glory  
And peace to all the earth!”
- 2 The Word becomes incarnate  
And yet remains on high,  
And cherubim sing anthems  
To shepherds from the sky. Refrain
- 3 While thus they sing your Monarch,  
Those bright angelic bands,  
Rejoice, O vales and mountains,  
And oceans, clap your hands. Refrain
- 4 Since all He comes to ransom,  
By all be He adored,  
The infant born in Bethl’em,  
The Savior and the Lord. Refrain

5 All idols then shall perish  
And Satan's lying cease,  
And Christ shall raise His scepter,  
Decreeing endless peace. Refrain

Text: Public domain

**NUNC DIMITTIS** *LSB 199*

**C Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word,  
for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all  
people,  
a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel.  
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**

**THANKSGIVING** *LSB 200*

**A O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,**

**C and His mercy endureth forever.**

**BENEDICAMUS** *LSB 202*

**A Bless we the Lord.**

**C Thanks be to God.**

**BENEDICTION** *LSB 202*

**P The Lord bless you and keep you.**

The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.

The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and T give you peace.

**C Amen, amen, amen.**

**HYMN OF DEPARTURE LSB 388 "GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN"**

ref Go tell it on the mountain,  
Over the hills and ev'rywhere;  
Go tell it on the mountain  
That Jesus Christ is born!

1 While shepherds kept their watching  
O'er silent flocks by night,  
Behold, throughout the heavens  
There shone a holy light. Refrain

2 The shepherds feared and trembled  
When lo, above the earth  
Rang out the angel chorus  
That hailed our Savior's birth. Refrain

3 Down in a lonely manger  
The humble Christ was born;

And God sent us salvation  
That blessed Christmas morn. Refrain

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## **PRAYER**

Almighty and merciful God, we have again worshiped in Your presence and received both forgiveness for our many sins and the assurance of Your love in Jesus Christ. We thank You for this undeserved grace and ask You to keep us in faith until we inherit eternal salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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