

December 13th Worship
3rd Sunday in Advent

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.

Lighting the Advent Candle – A Light of Joy

We encourage you to find some form of Advent Wreath in your own home.

Today we light a candle of JOY

We bask in the extraordinary glow of the JOY that we find in Jesus Christ.

We wait for the coming Messiah at Christmas

Good news comes to the oppressed, those who are broken are bound, the captive are freed and the prisoners released, and those who mourn are comforted.

This is Extraordinary JOY

Let us carry this light of JOY into the world for all to see.

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.

Lesson – Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

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.

Gospel – John 1:6-8, 19-28

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.

Message

People of God, grace to you and peace from God, and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. AMEN

Week three of Advent – as we explore what it means to live into the Extra Ordinary hope, peace, joy, and love of Jesus Christ.

Week three of Advent – and we hear again from the prophet Isaiah, as we examine the extra ordinary joy of these texts.

At first reading, perhaps it is difficult to find where that extra ordinary joy comes from. You could equate the beginning, the first four verses of this text from Isaiah, to a true underdog story, where good news comes to the oppressed. The broken hearted are bound up. There is freedom for the captive. A release for the prisoners. It is a true underdog story because it's a story where good things come to those who have everything stacked against them.

Pondering this text brought me back to when I was in eighth grade and my brother Jake was a junior in high school. Their basketball team started their season, the first 10 games, absolutely awful. After 10 games, they were 2-8. They were so bad they would have trouble winning a forfeit, but this team rallied. This team rallied and went on and eventually made it all the way to state.

But to get there was a true underdog story. The first round of the playoffs they played the number one seeded team. And in the packed, matchbox gymnasium at Chetek High School, they upended the number one seed. The mighty fell – the lowly experienced extra ordinary joy – and that story repeated itself

and repeated itself

and repeated itself

and repeated itself

until they got to the state semi-finals before they did eventually lose. That team experienced extra ordinary joy to the point that after they lost that final game, one of their leaders – a senior captain, came out of the tunnel at

the Kohl Center in Madison, waving to the fans, thanking them for being on this journey with them from 2-8 to state. The Community of Chetek experienced extra ordinary joy.

Now, you're probably asking, "what does a basketball team 20 years ago have to do with the Prophet Isaiah?"

Depending where you fall on that continuum of the underdog story probably affects how you hear this and where you find the extra ordinary joy.

Isaiah speaks.

"The spirit of the Lord is upon 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."

Isaiah speaks joy to those who've maybe never experienced it.

Isaiah speaks a word of joy to those who've had the cards stacked against them.

So what does it mean for us?

In the gospel reading from John chapter one, again we hear Isaiah being quoted in our gospels. John is at the bank of the river, preaching of a new baptism that is to come. Those who hear it start to wonder who he is, and it tells us, "John is one who has come, not as the light, but to testify to the light."

John has heard the call in the Prophet Isaiah and is pushed, is urged, to preach this good news.

John hears the call in Isaiah and is pushed and urged to testify to the good news that is coming.

John has heard the message in Isaiah that he had been sent to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners.

John had heard those words and they shaped his life. John knew the promise of Jesus Christ that was to come and it shaped his life.

He could have easily taken all of the credit. He could have urged those who hear him to hear how great his message was, but he knew it wasn't his message. But instead he says, "I'm not the one, I'm simply talking about how great it will be for you when Christ comes." That is the extra ordinary joy this Third Sunday in the Season of Advent...

Because...

we too have been sent to testify to the light.

The light is Jesus Christ. The light is the good news that is to be brought to our attention.

Yes, the light is the binding up of the broken hearted. The light is the freedom of the captive. The light is the release of the prisoners. The extra ordinary joy in this gospel text may very well be that it isn't necessarily for us.

But instead it is about what we are called to do.

We go back again to that word – extra ordinary. Ordinary joy would be that we experience those things. The extra ordinary joy – the exact opposite of ordinary joy, is that we are called, claimed, gathered, and sent to make sure that others get it too.

In this case that is the oppressed.

In this case that is the brokenhearted.

In this case that is the captives.

In this case that is those who are in prison.

And maybe that is you.

People of God, we hear a word calling us into action to realize that as people who are called to testify to the light, that we are to bring this good news to other people.

We, like John, are to testify to the light that is Christ in our lives. And it is a challenge. It is never easy.

But to experience this extra ordinary joy, we are called to do those things. And maybe, just maybe, perhaps it means seeing others in our lives who are doing that for us. If we're feeling the underdog in this, look for those who've come to set you free. Look for those who want to come alongside you in this journey.

As people of faith, like John before us, who knew the good news of Christ that was coming, we are called to testify to the light that will bring extra ordinary joy to all people.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Nicene Creed

Prayers

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

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. Make your church a place of refuge and healing. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

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.

Offering and Offertory Prayer

Our 4th Quarter Well Offering / Mission Offering:

Northwest Synod of Wisconsin and Lutheran Disaster Response.

Generous God, you have created all that is, and you provide for us in every season.
Bless all that we offer, that through these gifts the world will receive your blessing.
In the name of Jesus, Emmanuel, we pray.

Amen.

At Home Communion Liturgy

+WORDS OF INSTITUTION+

(Holding the bread) 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."

(Holding the cup) 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 all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this in remembrance of me." When we eat this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

(Tear the bread, share with each person – invite them to dip into the cup of wine/grace juice) +

LORD'S PRAYER +

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION +

Gracious and abundant God,
you have done great things for us, and we rejoice. In this bread and cup you give us life forever. In your boundless mercy, strengthen us and open our hearts to the world's needs, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

BLESSING EACH OTHER +

(Using your pointer finger, dip it in the bowl of water, and make the sign of the cross on another's forehead or the back of their hand)

"Child of God, marked as God's own, Jesus loves you, and will love you forever. AMEN"

Take turns until each person has been blessed.

Blessing

The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting,
the long-expected Savior fill you with love,
the unexpected Spirit guide your journey,

✠ now and forever. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ANNOUNCEMENTS! ANNOUNCEMENTS! ANNOUNCEMENTS!

Advent at Good Shepherd

Carport Communion THIS WEEKEND - Sunday, December 13th from 9:30 to 11.

Come for communion following worship and receive communion elements for At-Home Communion for the coming weeks.

Starting Monday, November 30, and going through Wednesday, December 23rd be a part of the Good Shepherd Extra Ordinary Community Secret Santa gift exchange

Purchase a gift and bring it to church Monday – Thursday between 8 am and 7 pm. When you drop your gift off, take the gift that is there. Along with your gift write a note to the recipient of your gift to brighten their holiday season. If bringing a gift is difficult for you, come and get a gift anyways, we will have extras.

Good Shepherd Christmas Boxes

Christmas Food Boxes will be happening this year, but it will look different. Instead of asking for food donations to be put into boxes and then delivered, we are asking for monetary donations to purchase boxes/gift cards. Those donations can be sent to the church office.

Christmas Eve Silent Night Luminaries and candles

Unable to safely gather for the Christmas Eve worship this year, we will be looking at Extra Ordinary Traditions to come alive. One of those is the singing of Silent Night by candlelight. Instead of a sanctuary full of people and candles, we are asking you to decorate a Luminary to be in the sanctuary for our Christmas Eve worship. Bags were sent out last week and can be returned anytime before next Sunday.

And when you come for communion, you can also pick up your Christmas Eve candles for lighting them at home.