

December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – Third Sunday of Advent

### Introduction to the Day

Christ's presence in our midst in the wonder of the holy supper is cause for singing. The nearness of the God in prayer, in every circumstance, is cause for rejoicing. The coming of one "more powerful" than John, even with a winnowing fork in hand, is good news—and cause for exultation—for us who are being saved. Great joy is the tone for the third Sunday of Advent.

### Lighting of the Advent Candle – JOY has a Home Here

Leader: We light a candle in JOYful celebration

**All: Surely God is my salvation, I will trust, and will not be afraid**

Leader: When we feel empty and run out

**All: With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.**

Leader: God, let the JOY that is the Christ Child dwell in us.

**All: God, let your JOY have a home in us.**

### Gathering Song "O Come All Ye Faithful"

#### Prayer of the Day

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

#### Lesson – Zephaniah 3:14-20

<sup>14</sup>Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;  
shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,  
O daughter Jerusalem!

<sup>15</sup>The LORD has taken away the judgments  
against you,

he has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;  
you shall fear disaster no more.

<sup>16</sup>On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:  
Do not fear, O Zion;

do not let your hands grow weak.

<sup>17</sup>The LORD, your God, is in your midst,  
a warrior who gives victory;

he will rejoice over you with gladness,  
he will renew you in his love;

he will exult over you with loud singing  
<sup>18</sup>as on a day of festival.

I will remove disaster from you,  
so that you will not bear reproach for it.

<sup>19</sup>I will deal with all your oppressors  
at that time.

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 home,  
at the time when I gather you;

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.

#### Gospel – Luke 3:7-18

<sup>7</sup>John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup>Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. <sup>9</sup>Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

<sup>10</sup>And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" <sup>11</sup>In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." <sup>12</sup>Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" <sup>13</sup>He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." <sup>14</sup>Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not

extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”

<sup>15</sup>As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, <sup>16</sup>John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>17</sup>His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

<sup>18</sup>So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

### **Message – Children’s Christmas Program – Checkin’ it Twice**

The children have a bunch of checklists to tell this Christmas story and, once they get their checklist, they will all be Checkin’ It Twice.

. . . Mary and Joseph use sticky notes to keep track of what to pack for their trip to Bethlehem.

. . . The angels will double-check their list for the things they need for an upcoming concert.

. . . The shepherds will use a clipboard to lead a roll call of their sheep on a hillside.

. . . The wisemen will collect star-gazing equipment that will lead them to the newborn savior.

### **Apostle’s Creed**

#### **Prayers**

In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God’s presence.

*A brief silence.*

Holy God, renew your church and raise up leaders who announce your good news. Grant peace to congregations and seminarians in the midst of transition. Guide the work of candidacy and call committees.

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Creating God, your Spirit brought forth the earth and all that is in it. Breathe life into us, that we are inspired to live in harmony with one another and the planet. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Shepherding God, you lead your people in paths of righteousness. Raise up prophets in our own day who warn against captivity to greed and point us to the freedom found in generosity. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Nurturing God, you come near in times of worry and need. Cradle us in your arms, that we trust you and are not afraid. Attend to any who are hungry, imprisoned, or ill this day (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Rejoicing God, you exult over us in singing. Enliven the song of this assembly and bless the ministry of church musicians (*especially*). With instruments and dance, join our voices to the song of all creation. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We give you thanks for your servants who showed us your goodness and grace (*especially*). By the power of your Spirit, keep us steadfast in faith until we make our home with you. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus.

**Amen.**

#### **Offering**

### **Offertory Prayer**

God of our waiting and watching,  
we offer the gifts of our hearts and our lives  
to the service of all your people.  
Prepare the way before us  
as we meet you in this simple meal,  
through Christ Jesus, our pathway and our peace.  
**Amen.**

### **Words of Institution – We invite you to find bread and wine or juice and partake in this Holy Meal.**

(Holding the bread) In the night in which we was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and broke it, gave thanks and gave it for all to eat saying, “This is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

(Holding the cup) Again after supper he took the cup, and after giving thanks he gave it for all to drink saying, “this cup is the new covenant in my blood shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sins. So often as you do this, remember me.”

Once you’ve taken the elements say, “Wellspring of joy, through this meal you have put gladness in our hearts. Satisfy the hunger still around us, and send us as joyful witnesses, that your love may bring joy to the hearts of all people, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Lord’s Prayer**

### **Communion Prayer**

**Sending Songs**      “Go Tell & Jump for Joy” & “Christmas Checklist”

### **Blessing**

The God of hope  
fill us with all joy and peace in believing,  
so that we may abound in hope  
by the power of the Holy Spirit,  
through Christ Jesus for whom we wait.  
**Amen.**

Go in peace. Christ is near.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **Announcements**

The **Choral Program** will be Sunday, Dec. 19 at 9 a.m. Be sure to join us for this special day of music and readings.

**Offering envelopes** are now available for you to pick up.

Make sure to get your **end of the year giving** in to the church by Dec. 30.

### **Christmas Worship schedule:**

Christmas Eve 2, 4:30 and 9 p.m.

No service on Christmas Day

Sunday, Dec. 26 at 9 a.m.