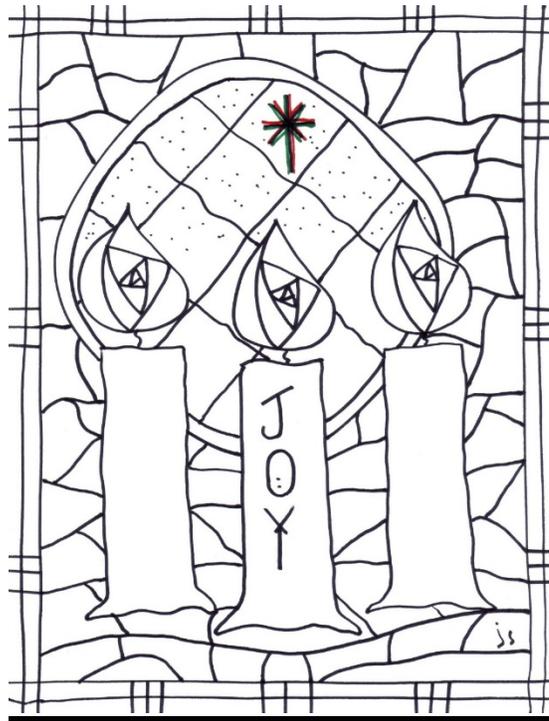


Sunday, December 13 – Advent 3



Gathering

Welcome

Prelude

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God,
whose forgiveness is sure and whose steadfast love endures forever. **Amen**

With hearts anticipating God's incarnation, we make preparation by confessing
our sin:

A moment for silent reflection.

Loving and forgiving God,
we confess that we are held captive by sin.
In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray.
We have not welcomed the stranger;
we have not loved our neighbour;
we have not been Christ to one another.
Restore us, O God.
Wake us up and turn us from our sin.
Renew us each day in the light of Christ. Amen

People of God, hear this glad news:
by God's endless grace your sins are forgiven, and you are free – free from all
that holds you back, and free to live in the peaceable realm of God. May you be
strengthened in God's love, + comforted in the peace of Christ, and accompanied
by the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

Gathering Song *“Awake, Awake, and Greet the New Morn”* **# 242**

1. Awake, awake and greet the new morn, for angels herald its dawning.
Sing out your joy, for soon he his born, behold! The child of our longing.
Come as a baby weak and poor, to bring all hearts together,
he opens wide the heav'nly door and lives now inside us forever.
2. In darkest night his coming shall be, when all the world is despairing,
as morning light so quiet and free, so warm and gentle and caring.
Then shall the mute break forth in song, the lame shall leap in wonder,
the weak be raised above the strong, and weapons be broken asunder.
3. Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night,
though dark 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 ev'ry day we share and bring us at last into glory.

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Greeting

Lighting the Advent Wreath

P: Let us pray: Holy and joyful God, we are surrounded by the gifts of laughter and high spirits. For this we are thankful. Help us to be spreaders of joy in the world. And when it is difficult to join in and see joy in every day, help us to remember that, even when life is not good, you always are. In Christ's name we pray. **Amen**

Candle Lighting Song (Sung to the tune of Away in A Manger)

(The Assisting Minister lights the first candle while the first verse is sung.)

A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,
A candle of HOPE in the winter's long night.
While angels sing blessings from heaven's starry sky
Our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh.

(The Assisting Minister lights the second candle while the second verse is sung.)

A candle is burning a candle of PEACE;
A candle to signal that conflict must cease;
For Jesus is coming to show us the way;
A message of peace humbly laid in the hay.

(The Assisting Minister lights the third candle while the third verse is sung.)

A candle is burning, a candle of JOY
A candle to welcome young Mary's new boy
Our hearts fill with wonder and eyes light and glow
As joy brightens winter like sunshine on snow

Words: Sandra Dean, 1986

L: *Although the people had returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, they continued to face hardship and oppression. They are beginning to understand that, even though life has its challenges, God has not abandoned them.*

A reading from the prophet Isaiah, the 61st chapter.

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 broken-hearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Word of God. Word of Life.
Thanks be to God!

Psalm 126 (Audio CD) *“Our God Has Done Great Things for Us”*

*Our God has done great things for us;
we are filled with joy; we are filled with joy.*

**C: *Our God has done great things for us;
we are filled with joy; we are filled with joy.***

When our God delivered Zion it was like a dream.
Then our mouth was filled up with laughter,
our tongue with shouting.
Then word went round the nations:
“Their God did great things for them.”

*Our God has done great things for us;
we are filled with joy; we are filled with joy.*

**C: *Our God has done great things for us;
we are filled with joy; we are filled with joy.***

Bring us out, O God, from capture; fill our dried up stream.
Those who go out weeping and sowing
return with laughter.
With tears they go out planting;
rejoicing they harvest home.

*Our God has done great things for us;
we are filled with joy; we are filled with joy.*

**C: *Our God has done great things for us;
we are filled with joy; we are filled with joy.***

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Gospel Acclamation (*sung together*)

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Alleluia, Lord to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Gospel

P: The holy gospel according to Luke, the 1st chapter.
Glory to you, O Lord.

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

⁴⁶ And Mary said,
'My soul magnifies the Lord,
⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
⁴⁸ for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
⁵⁰ His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

⁵⁶ And Mary remained with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned to her home.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

1. My soul proclaims your greatness, Lord;
I sing my Saviour's praise!
You looked upon my lowliness, and I am full of grace.
Now ev'ry land and ev'ry age this blessing shall proclaim:
Great wonders you have done for me, and Holy is your name.

2. To all who live in holy fear your mercy ever flows.
With mighty arm you dash the proud,
their scheming hearts expose.
The ruthless you have cast aside, the lowly throned instead;
the hungry filled with all good things, the rich sent off unfed.

3. To Israel, your servant blest, your help is ever sure;
The promise to our parents made their children will secure.
Sing glory to the Holy One, give honour to the Word,
and praise the power of the Most High, one God, by all adored.

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Prayers

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

P: Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord who teaches us to pray:

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

Sharing of the Peace

Sending

Announcements may be made.

Benediction

(Written by Pastor Katharine Gohm)

P: May God, for whom nothing is impossible
restore you and bless you.

May Christ, in whom is the dawning of grace,
carry you and gently lead you.

May the Spirit, whose song is gladness,
fill you with peace and comfort. **Amen**

Sending Hymn

“All Earth is Hopeful”

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1. All earth is hopeful, the Saviour comes at last!
Furrows lie open for God’s creative task:
this, the labour of people who struggle to see
how God’s truth and justice set everybody free.
2. People of Israel, you heard the prophet tell:
“A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel”;
she conceived him, “God with us,” our brother, who birth
restores hope and courage to children of the earth.
3. Mountains and valleys will have to be prepared;
New highways opened, new protocols declared.
Almost here! God is nearing, in beauty and grace!
All clear every gateway, in haste, come out in haste!
4. We first saw Jesus a baby in a crib.
This same Lord Jesus today has come to live
in our world; he is present, in neighbours we see
our Jesus is with us, and ever sets us free.

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Dismissal

A: Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God!**