

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

December 13, 2020

Third Sunday of Advent

We Gather in God's Name . . .

PRELUDE

PRAYER OF PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

(for silent prayer during the prelude)

Eternal God, you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for the coming of your Son. Grant us the wisdom to see your purpose and openness to hear your will, that we too may prepare the way for Christ who is coming in power and glory to establish his kingdom of peace and justice; through Jesus Christ our Judge and our Redeemer, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever.ⁱ Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GREETING

THE LIGHTING OF THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE

*LITANY FOR ADVENTⁱⁱ

One: O Wisdom, coming forth from the mouth of the Most High, pervading and permeating all creation, you order all things with strength and gentleness: Come now and teach us the way to salvation.

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

One: O Adonai, Ruler of the house of Israel, you appeared in the burning bush to Moses and gave him the law on Sinai: Come with outstretched arm to save us.

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

One: O Root of Jesse, rising as a sign for all the peoples, before you earthly rulers will keep silent, and nations give you honor: Come quickly to deliver us.

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

One: O Key of David, Scepter over the house of Israel, you open and no one can close, you close and no one can open: Come

to set free the prisoners who live in darkness and the shadow of death.

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

One: O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light, Sun of justice: Come, shine on those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death.

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

One: O Ruler of the nations, Monarch for whom the people long, you are the Cornerstone uniting all humanity: Come, save us all, whom you formed out of clay.

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

One: O Immanuel, our Sovereign and Lawgiver, desire of the nations and Savior of all: Come and save us, O Lord our God.

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

One: God of grace, ever faithful to your promises, the earth rejoices in hope of our Savior's coming and looks forward with longing to his return at the end of time. Prepare our hearts to receive him when he comes, for he is Lord forever and ever. Amen.

OPENING HYMN: "Rejoice! Rejoice, Believers" #15

Rejoice! Rejoice, believers, And let your lights appear; The evening is advancing And darker night is near. The Bride-groom is arising And soon He will draw nigh; Up, watch with expectation, At midnight comes the cry.

See that your lamps are burning, Replenish them with oil; Look now for your salvation, The end of sin and toil. The marriage feast is waiting, The gates wide open stand; Arise, O heirs of glory, The Bride-groom is at hand!

Our hope and expectation, O Jesus, now appear; Arise, Thou sun so longed for, Above this shadowed sphere! With hearts and hands uplifted, We plead, O Lord, to see The day of earth's redemption, And ever be with Thee!

*CALL TO CONFESSION

John the Baptist cried out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord," as the prophet Isaiah had said. Let us, also, make our ways straight and make way for the coming Messiah. Let us confess where we have wavered from his path.

*SILENT PRAYER OF CONFESSION

*CORPORATE PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious and merciful God, your appointed apostle, Paul, writes that we shall rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and give thanks in all circumstances. We, though, can let circumstances draw us down and from joy to misery and despair. We can forget to pray and to let other things distract us from a conversation with you. We can fail to offer thanks to you for the abundance you provide us or to others for the care they offer us. Forgive our sins, and restore us to wholeness. Do not hide your face from us, but continue to show us favor. Amen.

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

The Apostle Paul also writes that the one who calls us, the God of peace, is faithful and will sanctify us entirely. He will prepare our spirit and soul and body to be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord. Follow him and his ways, and know that you are forgiven. Amen.

THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

. . . to Proclaim God's Word

FIRST READING Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 **p. 691**

EPISTLE READING 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 **p. 205**

***GOSPEL READING** John 1:6-8, 19-28 **p. 91**

SERMON "Finding Joy" Rev. Andy Smothers

PASTORAL PRAYER AND 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

*CONFESSION OF FAITH *Heidelberg Catechism* (Question 65-68)

One: It is through faith alone that we share in Christ and all his benefits: where then does that faith come from?

Many: The Holy Spirit produces it in our hearts by the preaching of the holy gospel, and confirms it by the use of the holy sacraments.

One: What are sacraments?

Many: Sacraments are visible, holy signs and seals. They were instituted by God so that by our use of them he might make us understand more clearly the promise of the gospel, and seal that promise. And this is God's gospel promise: to grant us forgiveness of sins and eternal life by grace because of Christ's one sacrifice accomplished on the cross.

One: Are both the word and the sacraments then intended to focus our faith on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross as the only ground of our salvation?

Many: Yes! In the gospel the Holy Spirit teaches us and by the holy sacraments confirms that our entire salvation rests on Christ's one sacrifice for us on the cross.

One: How many sacraments did Christ institute in the New Testament?

Many: Two: holy baptism and the holy supper.

... to Give Thanks to God ...

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (IN UNISON)

Lord of hosts, you rule over heaven and earth and could choose to focus on those beings you have made perfect, but you have chosen to concern yourself with this broken world and sinful people. You long to bring righteousness and justice to this world and to offer joy and abundance to your people. With thanks for your many blessings, we offer these gifts for your work. Guide your church in using them to your intentions. In the name of the Savior of the World. Amen.

... and to Be Sent in God's Name.

CLOSING HYMN: "Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart!" #145
Rejoice, ye pure in heart! Rejoice, give thanks, and sing! Your festal banner wave on high, The cross of Christ your King. Rejoice! rejoice! Rejoice, give thanks, and sing!
Yes, on through life's long path, Still chanting as ye go; From youth

to age, by night and day, In gladness and in woe. Rejoice! rejoice! Rejoice, give thanks, and sing!

At last the march shall end; The wearied ones shall rest; The pilgrims find their home at last, Jerusalem the blest. Rejoice! rejoice! Rejoice, give thanks, and sing!

Then on, ye pure in heart! Rejoice, give thanks, and sing! Your festal banner wave on high, The cross of Christ your King. Rejoice! rejoice! Rejoice, give thanks, and sing!

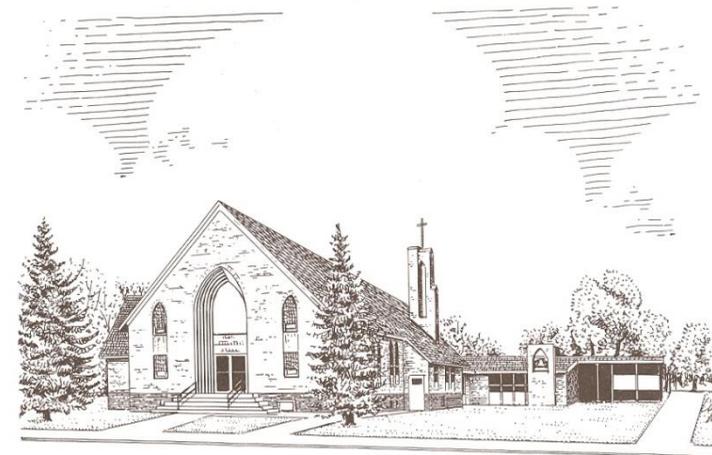
***BENEDICTION**

***POSTLUDE**

ⁱ *Book of Common Worship*, 175.

ⁱⁱ *Book of Common Worship*, 166-167.

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