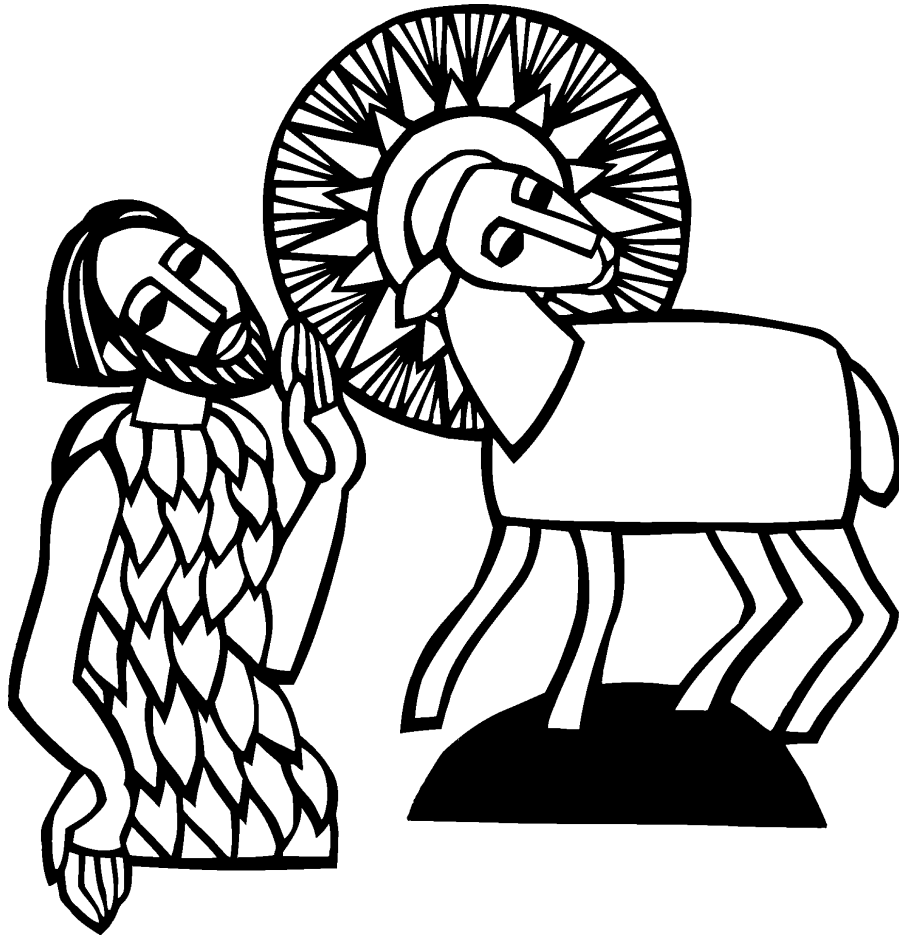


Third Sunday of Advent
December 17, 2023



1812 North Highland Avenue

Clearwater, Florida 33755

Ministers: The People of Grace Lutheran Church

727-446-5026

office@graceclw.com

Pastor: Rev. Jefferson Cox

“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.

Some practical things for you to know:

Children: All children, even those who are noisy, upset, or otherwise discombobulated, are always welcome here!

Restrooms are located to the left out of the doors you entered in to the narthex or lobby; ushers can further direct you.

Holy Communion: All baptized Christians are welcome to the Lord’s Table. Our ushers will guide you.

The Bulletin The congregation’s responses are those in **bold print** or in ALL CAPS.

THE ORDER OF OUR WORSHIP

PRELUDE

Scenes of Advent

by Wendy Roth

WELCOME

We stand.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Pastor: Let us pray. We praise you, O God, for this victory wreath that marks our days of preparation for Christ’s advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, strengthen our hearts as we await the Lord’s coming in glory. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may serve our neighbors in need. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. **Congregation: Amen.**

CANDLELIGHTING CAROL *Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah* ELW 240 vs. 3

3 Light three candles to watch for Messiah:

let the light banish darkness.

Lift your heads and lift high the gateway
for the King of glory.

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **Congregation: And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. 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. **Congregation: Amen.**

We Sit

Sing Noel!

Director: Wendy Roth

Narration written by Richard Duncan

Accompanists: Wendy Roth and Melanie Wyatt

Choir members: Anne Bittner, Cliff Bittner, Pastor Jefferson Cox, Jenny Cox, Gerald Detweiler, Richard Duncan, Ellen DuPaul, Rena Hall, Gloria Holtzclaw, Carol Maultsby, Linda Ossman & Carol Smitley

Narrators: Linda Ossman and Jenny Cox

Sound: Mike Smutko and Karen Kelly

Narration

“Prepare the Way, O Zion” Swedish folk tune, arr. S. Tucker

Prepare the way, O Zion, your Christ is drawing near!
Let every hill and valley a level way appear.
Great one who comes in glory, foretold in sacred story.
O Blest is Christ that came in God’s most holy name.

Christ brings God’s rule, O Zion, he comes from heaven above.
His rule is peace and freedom, and justice, truth, and love.
Lift high your praise resounding, for grace and joy abounding.
O blest, is Christ that came in God’s most holy name.

Fling wide your gates, O Zion! Your Savior’s rule embrace.
And tidings of salvation proclaim in every place.
All lands will bow rejoicing, their adoration voicing.
Blest is Christ that came in God’s most holy name.

Narration

“Advent Grace” Tunes: “New Britain” (1831), “Forest Green” (trad. Eng) Music
Arr. Larson, words by Brooks, adapted by Shafferman

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in;
Be born in us today.
Where meek souls will receive Him still, the dear Christ enters in,
The dark night wakes, God’s glory breaks,
And Christmas comes again.

O Come thou Son of David, come, Your blessed peace proclaim.

O come, Thou bright and morning star, Your people now to save.
O come, Desire of nations, come, assaunts of old have sung.
Your people watch, Your people pay throughout all Christendom.

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, the heav'nly music swells,
O come to us, a bide with us.
Our Lord Emmanuel.

Narration

"Come, Let Us Praise By Zimmerman, Psalm 95 (text by Zimmerman, Grissom)

A Come let us praise the Lord,
and let us sing for joy to our Messiah and Saviour,
Sing, for joy, Hallelujah!

Jesus the Christ is born,
The angels bring good tidings of great joy to all people.
Sing, for joy, Hallelujah!

Glory to God on high!
"And on earth peace, good will t'ward men", the angels are singing.
Sing, for joy, Hallelujah!

Up, make your journey now. T
The Saviour waits for us to join the heavenly chorus.
Sing, for joy, Hallelujah!

Narration

"Come and See the Child" by Mark Patterson

Who Come and see the child of Bethlehem, Come hear the angels sing.
Come and see the child, come honor Him, come and worship the newborn King.

Refrain: Come see the one who was foretold, the blessed Prince of Peace.
Come and see the child, Immanuel, who has come for you and me.

Come and see the child, the holy One, the everlasting King.
Come and see the Savior, Christ the Lord, come and share the joy He brings.
Refrain

Come and see the child, come lift your voice and join the song of praise.
Come and share the Savior's gift of joy this blessed Christmas day!
Refrain

The Cantata continues after Communion

HYMN OF THE DAY

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus


ELW 254

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Each petition ends either “Lord, in your mercy,” OR “Hear us, O Lord,”
and we respond, “Hear our prayer.” OR “Your mercy is great.”

OFFERING

OFFERTORY



Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right
spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your pres - ence, and take
not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re - store to me the joy of
your sal - va - tion, and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

OFFERING PRAYER

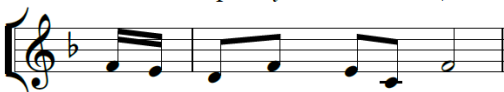
Let us pray. God our provider, by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**


DIALOGUE

PASTOR: 
the Lord be with you,

CONG.: 
AND AL-SO_ WITH YOU

PASTOR: 
Lift up your_ hearts,

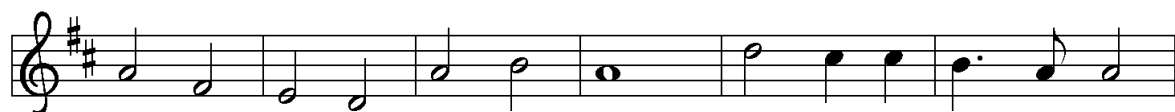
CONG.: 
WE_ LIFT THEM TO THE LORD


PASTOR: 
Let us give thanks, to the Lord_____ our_____ God.

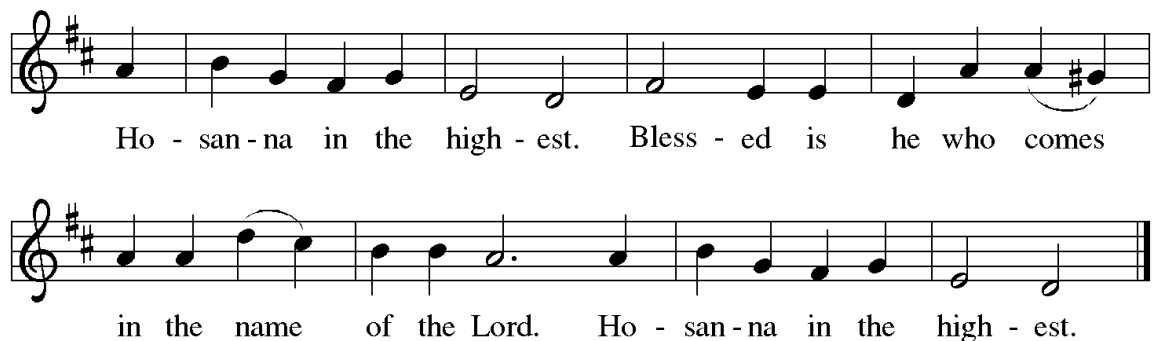
CONG.: 
IT IS RIGHT TO GIVE HIM THANKS AND_____ PRAISE!

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:


Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,


heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.

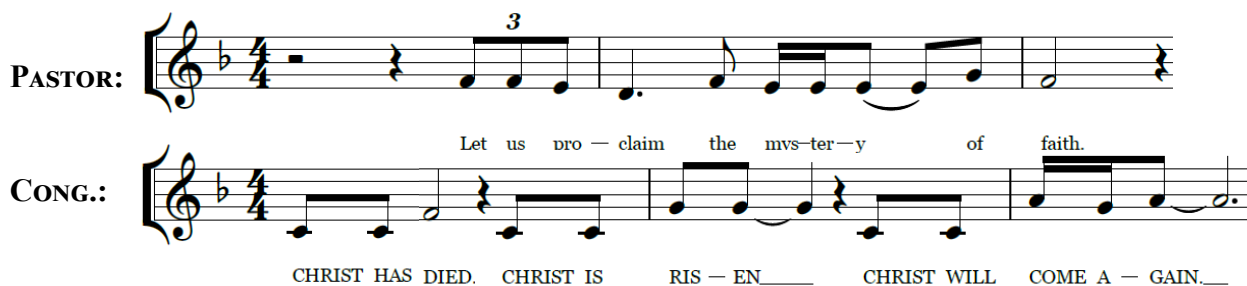


THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life: Blessed are you for the birth of creation. Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light. Blessed are you for your promise to your people. Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams. Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will. Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

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.

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 for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.



Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.
Come, Holy Spirit.

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.



LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray in whichever language is closest to our hearts:

**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.**

**Padre nuestro, que estás en el cielo,
santificado sea tu Nombre;
venga a nosotros tu reino;
hágase tu voluntad
en la tierra como en el cielo.
Danos hoy nuestro pan de cada día;
perdona nuestras ofensas, como también**

**Vater unser, der du bist im Himmel,
Geheiligt werde dein Name,
Dein Reich komme,
Dein Wille geschehe,
Auf Erden, wie im Himmel.
Gib uns heute unser tägliches Brot;
Und vergib uns unsere Schuld,
Wie wir vergeben unserem
Schuldigern;
Und führe uns nicht in
Versuchung, sondern erlöse
uns Von dem Bösen.
Denn dein ist das Reich, Und die Kraft,
und die Herrlichkeit in Ewigkeit. Amen.**

**nosotros perdonamos
a los que nos ofenden;
no nos dejes caer en la tentación,
y líbranos del mal.
Porque tuyo es el reino, el Poder,
y la gloria por los siglos de los siglos.
Amén.**

We Sit

COMMUNION SONG

(Sung Twice)



Je - sus, re - mem-ber me when you come in-to your king - dom.

Je - sus, re - mem-ber me when you come in-to your king - dom.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Generous God, in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

SENDING OF COMMUNION

God for whom we wait, you come to us in the broken bread and the cup we share. Make us ready always to welcome Christ into our hearts, and send us forth to be your people in the world, announcing your coming among us in Jesus Christ our Lord. In his love and care, nourish and sustain all those who will receive this sacrament. **Amen.**

Sing Noel! continues...

Narration

“Sing Noel!” By Allen Pote

In a stable lies a baby in a manger bed of hay;
Sent from heaven, infant holy, who is born for us today.

Refrain: Sing noel, sing noel, God has come to earth.
Sing noel, sing noel. Tell all the world of the wonderful news of his birth!

See the mother with the Christ Child. How they shine in radiant light.
Hear the angels singing sweetly as they carol through the night.

Refrain
Bring your gifts, bring honor and praise.
Kneel before the blessed King.
Bow in homage, your voices raise.
With the angels join to sing!

God has spoken through this baby, who is born in lowly stall.
Let us worship and adore him who has come to save us all.
Refrain

Narration

“We Pass this Flame to You” by Vader/Rouse

Light of the world has come, God’s promises are true;
And in His name, and through His love, We pass this flame to you.

Silent night, holy night, Son of God, Love’s pure light.
Radiant beame from Thy holy face.
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth.

Narration

“When the Angel’s Song is Silent”

by Mary Kay Beall

When the angels’ song is silent and the star is not so bright,
When the stable door stands open in the cold mid morning light,
When the angels’ song is silent, and the shepherds have gone home,
Then the promise of Christmas begins.
When the angels’ song is silent, and the prophecy’s fulfilled,
When the swaddling clothes are folded, and the baby’s cry is stilled;
When the angels’ song is silent, and the drama is all done,
Then the promise of Christmas begins.
For the promise is more than a child in they hay,
More than shepherds and kings and a glad Christmas Day.
Yes, the promise is more than a bright star above.
It’s a cross! It’s a tomb! And a Father’s great love!
When the angels’ song is silent and the kings have come and gone,
All the world is changed forever, for the echo lingers on.
When the angels’ song is silent, God is nearer than before,
And the promise of Christmas, the wonder of Christmas, the glory of Christmas begins.

BLESSING

The God of peace bless you, the love of Christ sustain you in hope, and the anointing of the Spirit ✠ remain upon you now and forever. **Congregation: Amen.**

SENDING SONG

On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

ELW 249 vs. 1, 3, & 5

SHARING OF PEACE & DISMISSAL

Together we have heard God’s Word and shared in the Lord’s Supper, we have given and have been forgiven. The peace of the Lord be with you all.

Congregation: And also with you.

Now as this service of worship is ending, this week’s service to the world is beginning! Go in peace. Keep awake.

Congregation: Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

Scenes of Advent

by Wendy Roth

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Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus



1 Come, thou long-ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo-ple free;
2 Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king;



from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king-dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art,
By thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



dear de - sire of ev - 'ry na - tion, joy of ev - 'ry long-ing heart.
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

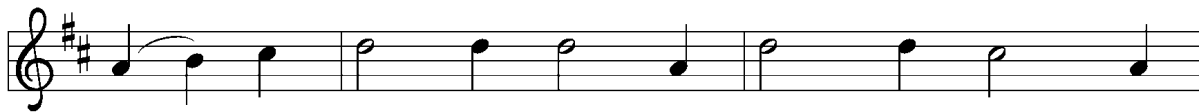
Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788

Music: JEFFERSON, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

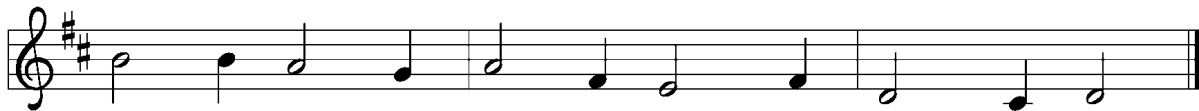
On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry



1 On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry an - nounc - es
 2 Then cleansed be ev - 'ry life from sin; make straight the
 3 We hail you as our Sav - ior, Lord, our ref - uge
 4 Stretch forth your hand, our health re - store, and make us
 5 All praise to you, e - ter - nal Son, whose ad - vent



that the Lord is nigh; a - wake and heark - en,
 way for God with - in, and let us all our
 and our great re - ward; with - out your grace we
 rise to fall no more; oh, let your face up -
 has our free - dom won, whom with the Fa - ther



for he brings glad tid - ings of the King of kings!
 hearts pre - pare for Christ to come and en - ter there.
 waste a - way like flow'rs that with - er and de - cay.
 on us shine and fill the world with love di - vine.
 we a - dore, and Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er - more.

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676–1749; tr. composite

Music: PUER NOBIS, European tune, adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1571–1621