**Ante Communion Service: December 12, 2021, Advent 3C**

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*Celebrant:* “Today we light the first, second and third candles of the Advent wreath. Each candle has a meaning. The first candle is HOPE, the second candle is PEACE, and the third candle is JOY.

*The candles are lit.*

“Isaiah 55:12 – You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.”

Let us pray: “Gracious God, you came to us in human flesh and you abide with us in the Holy Spirit. Fill us with your joy, and help us shine as a light to the world. Through Jesus Christ, who makes our joy complete. Amen.”

*Hymn:* **O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**

*O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.*

*[Refrain:] Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel, shall come to thee, O Israel.  
  
O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free, thine own from Satan's tyranny;  
from depths of hell thy people save, and give them victory o'er the grave: [Refrain]  
  
O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer, our spirits by thine advent here;  
O drive away the shades of night, and pierce the clouds and bring us light. [Refrain]*

*Celebrant* Blessed be the Holy Trinity, one God, who creates, redeems, and sustains us and all creation. **Amen.**

*Celebrant* Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom

no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,

that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*A moment of silence for self-reflection*

*Celebrant* Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*People* **Gracious God, have mercy on us.**

**We confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,**

**by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.**

**We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved**

**our neighbors as ourselves; we have not loved all Creation with the love of the Creator. We are truly sorry, and we humbly repent.**

**For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us;**

**that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways**

**to the glory of your name. Amen.**

*Celebrant* Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God’s mercy and forgiveness. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

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

*People* **And also with you.**

In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God, and for the unity of all,

let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For our holy house, and for all who offer their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray together: **Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and**

**for ever. Amen.**

**First Reading Zephaniah 3:14-20**

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel!

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

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.

On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak.

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 as on a day of festival.

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

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. 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.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**Canticle 9   The First Song of Isaiah***Ecce Deus**Isaiah 12:2-6*

Surely, it is God who saves me; \*  
**I will trust in him and not be afraid.**

For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense, \*  
**and he will be my Savior.**

Therefore you shall draw water with rejoicing \*  
**from the springs of salvation.**

And on that day you shall say, \*  
**Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his Name;**

Make his deeds known among the peoples; \*  
**see that they remember that his Name is exalted.**

Sing the praises of the Lord, for he has done great things, \*  
**and this is known in all the world.**

Cry aloud, inhabitants of Zion, ring out your joy, \* **for the great one in the midst of you is the Holy One of Israel.**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

**As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. World without end. Amen.**

**Second Reading Philippians 4:4-7**

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone.

The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication

with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses

all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel Luke 3:7-18**

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke. **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

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? 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. 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."

And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" In reply he said to them,

"Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise."

Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?"

He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." 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."

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, 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. 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."

So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

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

**Sermon**

**Hymn Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus [***Hyfrydol]*

*Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;  
from our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.  
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;  
dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.*

*Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King,  
born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.  
By thine own eternal spirit, rule in all our hearts alone;  
by thine all sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne. Amen.*

**Apostles’ Creed *Said by all.***

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,**

**born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried;**

**he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,**

**he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints,**

**the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

**Prayers of the People**

*Celebrant* With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church,

those in need, and all of God’s creation. In peace, we pray to you, Lord God. S*ilence*

For this community, the nation, and the world; **For all who work for justice, freedom, and peace.**

For the peace and unity of the world; **That a spirit of respect may grow among nations and peoples.**

For the just and proper use of your creation; **For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression.**

For all bishops and other ministers; **For all who serve God in his Church.**

For all who love and trust in God, that divisions may cease;

**And that all may be one, as you and the Father are one.**

For all who are in danger, sorrow, or any kind of trouble;

**For those who minister to the sick, the friendless, and the needy.**

For wisdom in this time of pandemic; **That our actions may protect the health of ourselves and others.**

For the special needs and concerns of this congregation.

*Silence. The People may add their own petitions.*

Hear us, Lord; **For your mercy is great.**

We thank you, Lord, for all the blessings of this life. *Silence.*

We will exalt you, O God our King; **And praise your Name for ever and ever.**

We pray for all who have died, that they may have a place in your eternal kingdom.

*Silence.* Lord, let your loving kindness be upon them. **May they rest in your peace eternally.**

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we pray together:

**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, for ever and ever. Amen.**

We pray together for Christ’s presence:

**My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the bread and wine.**

**I love you above all things, and long for you in my soul.**

**Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come spiritually into my heart. I embrace you**

**and unite myself entirely to you; never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.**

*Celebrant:* While we long to receive the sacrament of Christ's Body,  
*People:* **We become the sacrament of Christ's Body.** *Celebrant:* Let your lives be manna to feed our hunger for communion. *People:* **The love we share becomes bread for the world**.

**Blessing** May the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain

with you always. **Amen.**

**Dismissal**Go in peace and hope and joy to love and serve God’s creation. Alleluia. Alleluia.

**Thanks be to God. Alleluia. Alleluia.**

***The Lord Bless You and Keep You [Lutkin]***

*The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord lift his countenance upon you and give you peace.*

*The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. Amen….*