

Antecommunion Service: December 31, 2023: Christmas 1B

Hymn

Joy to the World

Acapeldridge

*1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King;
let ev'ry heart prepare him room and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.*

*2 Joy to the world, the Savior reigns! Let men their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains, repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.*

*3 No more let sins and sorrows grow nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.*

*4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love. Amen.*

Celebrant: Blessed are you, holy and living One.

People: **You come to your people and set them free.**

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

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

**God of all mercy, we confess that we have sinned against you, opposing your will in our lives.
We have denied your goodness in each other, in ourselves, and in the world you have created.
We repent of the evil that enslaves us, the evil we have done, and the evil done on our behalf.
Forgive, restore, and strengthen us through our Savior Jesus Christ,
that we may abide in your love and serve only your will. Amen.**

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.**

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

Let us pray together: **Almighty God, you have poured upon us the new light of your incarnate Word:
Grant that this light, enkindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.**

First Reading

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

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.
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.
For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch.
The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory;
and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give.
You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.
The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 147:13-21 *Laudate Dominum*

13 Worship the Lord, O Jerusalem; *
praise your God, O Zion;
14 For he has strengthened the bars of your gates; *
he has blessed your children within you.
15 He has established peace on your borders; *
he satisfies you with the finest wheat.
16 He sends out his command to the earth, *
and his word runs very swiftly.
17 He gives snow like wool; *
he scatters hoarfrost like ashes.
18 He scatters his hail like bread crumbs; *
who can stand against his cold?
19 He sends forth his word and melts them; *
he blows with his wind, and the waters flow.
20 He declares his word to Jacob, *
his statutes and his judgments to Israel.
21 He has not done so to any other nation; *
to them he has not revealed his judgments. Hallelujah!

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 **Galatians 3:23-25; 4:4-7**

Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed.
Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith.
But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian.
But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law,
in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children.
And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"
So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

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

Gospel

John 1:1-18

Celebrant: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Jphn. **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Sermon

Hymn

What Child is This?

Acapeldridge

*1 What Child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?*

Chorus:

*This, this is Christ, the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary!*

*2 Why lies He in such mean estate, where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear: for sinners here, the silent Word is pleading. [Chorus]*

*3 So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh, come rich and poor to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone Him. [Chorus]*

The Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.
Through whom all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Prayers of the People

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. *Silence*

For this community, the nation, and the world;
For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression.

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

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 the just and proper use of your creation;
That we may treat your creation with the love of the Creator.

We honor and pray for our Indigenous neighbors. **That we may dwell together in respectful harmony.**

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 the special needs and concerns of this congregation.
Silence. 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 sins, as we forgive those who sin 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 God, who in the Word made flesh joined heaven to earth and earth to heaven, give you his peace and joy; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be in you, among you, and remain with you always.

Dismissal Go in peace and hope and joy to love and serve the Lord. Alleluia. Alleluia.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia. Alleluia.

The Lord Bless You and Keep You [Lutkin]

Acapeldridge