

## Third Sunday of Advent ❖ December 13, 2020

***WELCOME!** Rejoice always," begins the second reading for today from First Thessalonians. The prophet Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy.*



### THE PASTORAL GREETING

### THE OPENING HYMN – “Jesus Came, the Heavens Adoring” (Vss. 1-3) LSB 353

- 1 Jesus came, the heav’ns adoring, Came with peace from realms on high;  
Jesus came to win redemption, Lowly came on earth to die;  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Came in deep humility.
  
- 2 Jesus comes again in mercy When our hearts are worn with care;  
Jesus comes again in answer To an earnest, heartfelt prayer;  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Comes to save us from despair.
  
- 3 Jesus comes to hearts rejoicing, Bringing news of sins forgiv’n;  
Jesus comes with words of gladness, Leading souls redeemed to heav’n.  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Hope to all the world is giv’n.

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### THE INVOCATION AND CONFESSION

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

P: 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.

**C: Amen.**

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

**C: Most merciful God, we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in our thoughts, our words, and our behavior—through things we have done and things we have failed to do. We have not loved you with our whole heart. We have not loved those around us as we ought. Turn us again to you and uphold us by your Holy Spirit, so that we may live and serve you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.**

P: God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

**C: Amen.**

### THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

P: Let us pray. Stir up the will of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets. Anointed by your Holy Spirit, may we testify to your light and your life. We pray through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

**THE HYMN OF PRAISE – “Jesus Came, the Heavens Adoring”** (Vs. 4)

**LSB 353**

- 4 Jesus comes in joy and sorrow, Shares alike our hopes and fears;  
Jesus comes, whate'er befalls us, Cheers our hearts and dries our tears;  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Comforts us in failing years.

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**✠ THE WORD ✠**

**THE FIRST READING – Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11, NIV**

*Though the people had returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, they continued to face hardship and oppression. In the language of the Jubilee Year, described in Leviticus 25, the prophet—moved by the Holy Spirit—announces deliverance for those who are oppressed and comfort for those who mourn.*

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor. They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations. [...]

“For I, the Lord, love justice; I hate robbery and wrongdoing. In my faithfulness I will reward my people and make an everlasting covenant with them. Their descendants will be known among the nations and their offspring among the peoples. All who see them will acknowledge that they are a people the Lord has blessed.”

I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**THE EPISTLE READING – 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24, NIV**

*Paul concludes this letter to the Thessalonians by encouraging them to live lives of continual joy, prayer, and thanksgiving. The closing blessing is grounded in the hope of Christ's coming.*

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil.

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**THE HYMN – “O Sing of Christ”***(Vs. 4)***LSB 362**

- 4 Lord Jesus Christ, You deigned to dwell Among us here on earth  
 As God with us, Emmanuel, To bring this holy birth.  
 Though rich, You willingly became One with our poverty,  
 That we might share Your wealth and name For all eternity!

Text: © 1996 Stephen P. Starke, admin. Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110001627**THE HOLY GOSPEL READING – John 1:6-8, 19-28 NIV**

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. [...]

Now this was John’s testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, “I am not the Messiah.”

They asked him, “Then who are you? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.”

“Are you the Prophet?” He answered, “No.”

Finally they said, “Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, “I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way for the Lord.’” Now the Pharisees who had been sent questioned him, “Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?”

“I baptize with water,” John replied, “but among you stands one you do not know. He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.” This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to You, O Christ.**

**THE HYMN – “The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns”****LSB 348**

- 1 The King shall come when morning dawns And light triumphant breaks,  
 When beauty gilds the eastern hills And life to joy awakes.
- 2 Not as of old a little child, To bear and fight and die,  
 But crowned with glory like the sun That lights the morning sky.
- 3 Oh, brighter than the rising morn When Christ, victorious, rose  
 And left the lonesome place of death Despite the rage of foes.
- 4 Oh, brighter than that glorious morn Shall dawn upon our race  
 The day when Christ in splendor comes And we shall see His face.
- 5 The King shall come when morning dawns And light and beauty brings.  
 Hail, Christ the Lord! Your people pray: Come quickly, King of kings!

Text: Public domain**THE MESSAGE****✻ THE RESPONSE ✻****THE HYMN – “Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding”***(Vss. 1-4)***LSB 345**

- 1 Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding! “Christ is near,” we hear it say.  
 “Cast away the works of darkness, All you children of the day!”

- 2 Startled at the solemn warning, Let the earthbound soul arise;  
Christ, its sun, all sloth dispelling, Shines upon the morning skies.
- 3 See, the Lamb, so long expected, Comes with pardon down from heav'n.  
Let us haste, with tears of sorrow, One and all, to be forgiv'n;
- 4 So, when next He comes in glory And the world is wrapped in fear,  
He will shield us with His mercy And with words of love draw near.

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## THE APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, his 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 into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Each petition will end with the words: Lord, in Your mercy, **C: hear our prayer.**

Hear us Heavenly Father, as we pray the prayer that Christ gave us:

**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.**

## THE BLESSING

**P: May almighty God: Father, Son ✠ and Holy Spirit, bless you and keep you.**

**C: Amen.**

## THE HYMN – “Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding”

(*V.s. 5*)

**LSB 345**

- 5 Honor, glory, might, dominion To the Father and the Son  
With the ever-living Spirit While eternal ages run!

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**✠ May God bless you and yours. ✠**

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