

The Third Sunday of Advent

December 12, 2021 at 10:30 AM

We welcome you to worship today. It is a privilege to have you as our guest.

As you join us today, begin to worship quietly with personal prayer.

Please turn off your cell phone and turn your hearts and minds toward God.

We prepare for worship

Take a moment and meditate on this as you prepare for worship...

O LORD Jesus Christ, who at thy first coming didst send thy messenger to prepare thy way before thee; Grant that the ministers and stewards of thy mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready thy way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at thy second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in thy sight, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit ever, one God, world without end. Amen.

The Third Sunday in Advent, The Book of Common Prayer

Prelude

In The Bleak Midwinter

C. Rossetti

Dr. Kenneth Dean, Director of Music

Aisquith Life and Opportunities

Pastor Ceselsky

We praise our great God

Lighting of the Advent Candle

The Christian life is full of ordinary things that together work for the extraordinary purpose of glorifying God. We rejoice in the promise of God and yet at times our hearts are sad. Even David, Israel's great king, at times was downcast and disturbed within his soul.

Why so downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God!

Despite the problems we face in this world we are called to be a people of rejoicing. The Scriptures call us to "rejoice in the Lord always."

We light this third Advent Candle with rejoicing, knowing that Christ will surely come again and make all things new.

Hymn No. 196

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 ev'ry nation, joy of ev'ry longing heart.

Joy to those who long to see thee, Dayspring from on high, appear;
Come, thou promised Rod of Jesse, of thy birth we long to hear!
O'er the hills the angels singing news, glad tidings of a birth:
"Go to him, your praises bringing; Christ the Lord has come to earth."

Come to earth to taste our sadness, he whose glories knew no end;
By his life he brings us gladness, our Redeemer, Shepherd, Friend.
Leaving riches without number, born within a cattle stall;
This the everlasting wonder, Christ was born the Lord of all.

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.

Invocation

We embrace Christ our Savior

Psalter Reading

Psalm 107:1-19 (ESV)

Oh give thanks to the LORD,

for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!

Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he has redeemed from trouble and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

Some wandered in desert wastes, finding no way to a city to dwell in; hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them.

Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.

He led them by a straight way till they reached a city to dwell in.

Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man!

For he satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul he fills with good things.

Some sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, prisoners in affliction and in irons, for they had rebelled against the words of God, and spurned the counsel of the Most High.

So he bowed their hearts down with hard labor; they fell down, with none to help.

Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.

He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and burst their bonds apart.

Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man!

For he shatters the doors of bronze and cuts in two the bars of iron.

Some were fools through their sinful ways, and because of their iniquities suffered affliction; they loathed any kind of food, and they drew near to the gates of death.

Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.

Assurance of Pardon (**responsive**)

Hebrews 12:1-3 (ESV)

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.

Looking unto Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith,

who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross despising the shame,

and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.

Confession of Faith (**unison**)

The Heidelberg Catechism, Qs 27, 28

What do you mean by the providence of God?

The almighty and everywhere present power of God; whereby, as it were by His hand, He upholds and governs heaven, earth, and all creatures; so that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, and all things come, not by chance, but by His fatherly hand.

What advantage is it to us to know that God has created, and by His providence still upholds all things?

That we may be patient in adversity; thankful in prosperity; and that in all things, which may hereafter befall us, we place our firm trust in our faithful God and Father, that nothing shall separate us from His love; since all creatures are so in His hand, that without His will they cannot so much as move.

Hymn No. 199

See, amid the Winter's Snow

Gloss

See, amid the winter's snow, born for us on earth below,
See the tender Lamb appears, promised from eternal years.

***Hail, thou ever blessed morn! Hail, redemption's happy dawn!
Sing through all Jerusalem, Christ is born in Bethlehem.***

Lo, within a manger lies he who built the starry skies:
He who, throned in height sublime, sits amid the cherubim.

Say, ye holy shepherds, say—what's your joyful news today?
Wherefore have ye left your sheep on the lonely mountain steep?

“As we watched at dead of night, lo, we saw a wondrous light;
angels singing, ‘Peace on earth,’ told us of the Savior's birth.”

Sacred infant, all divine, what a tender love was thine,
Thus to come from highest bliss down to such a world as this!

Teach, O teach us, holy child, by thy face so meek and mild,
Teach us to resemble thee, in thy sweet humility.

The Prayers of God's People and the Lord's Prayer (**in unison**)

We respond in gratitude for God's blessing

The Doxology (Hymnal, pg. 731) and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory

We Shall Behold Him

D. Rambo

We hear God speak

Scripture Reading

Ruth 1:1-19a (**ESV**)

1 In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. ²The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion.

They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. ³ But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. ⁴ These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years, ⁵ and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.

⁶ Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the fields of Moab that the LORD had visited his people and given them food. ⁷ So she set out from the place where she was with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. ⁸ But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. ⁹ The LORD grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband!" Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. ¹⁰ And they said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." ¹¹ But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? ¹² Turn back, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, ¹³ would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me." ¹⁴ Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

¹⁵ And she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." ¹⁶ But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. ¹⁷ Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you." ¹⁸ And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more.

¹⁹ So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem.

Sermon

"The Triumph of Faith over a Frustrating Providence"

Pastor Bell

We respond to God's grace

Hymn No. 201

O Little Town of Bethlehem

St. Louis

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie;
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by:
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary; and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.

O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.

Benediction and Three-Fold Amen (**Hymnal, pg 740**)

Danish

Postlude

Improvisation on: CHAPMAN: *One Day He's Coming.*

Arr. K. Dean

We will have a Christmas Eve Service on Friday, December 24 at 7 PM! A time of fellowship and cookies will be held following the service!

The Christmas Offering this year will again be given to the PCA's *Ministerial Relief Fund*.

The Women's Bible Study will meet for this Wednesday, December 15 at 11:30 AM. This last gathering of the year will be a Christmas party with a catered lunch (a free-will donation can be made), an optional White Elephant gift exchange, and optional Cookie exchange. ALL women are welcome to come for the food and fellowship!

Funds are Needed for the Tiemann Music Fund: With the holidays coming and the mask mandate likely to remain in place, we cannot have a choir. Dr. Dean would therefore like to enhance our worship with soloists and musicians. If you are able to give to this fund, please use one of the pink envelopes and label it "Tiemann Music Fund."

We are still collecting used inkjet cartridges. There is a box in the kitchen labeled for the donations.