

Prelude

We Gather + Begin

Call to Gather and Worship

P: We gather together seeking hope, peace, and joy.

A: We gather seeking joyful water to quench our thirst, wanting to rejoice, exult, and sing with all our hearts.

P: As we enter this third week of Advent, we gather as we are in all of our fullness, present to you and one another in this moment.

A: Whether anxious, grieving, or worn-out by the weeks gone by, or disappointed with what this season is thus far, we choose to come together to nourish and sustain one another– keeping ourselves away from fear or allowing our working hands to grow weak.

P: Despite a world that might encourage us to remain fearful, attempt to control us through shame, and loathe our commitment to lives of joy, justice, and peace– we choose one another and gather now to worship God.

A: We gather knowing we're made in God's image, ready to let our gentleness be known to all. We gather knowing to care for one another is to let Christ be near. We gather, and we worship the joyful, loving God of eternity, who brings everlasting joy, and makes all things new.

Opening Hymn

Greeting

P: The grace of Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all

A: And also with you

Confession & Forgiveness

P: Blessed be the holy trinity, one God, who draws near to us with good news.

A: Amen

P: Even as we say Emmanuel is near; even as we sing of rejoicing, let us acknowledge that salvation is not complete. Much is still lacking. We ourselves can and do fail. In some sense, the coming of Emmanuel is both now, and still a thing of the future. We seek signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars– we worry about heaven and earth passing away, rather than remaining faithful to your words.

God of mercy,

A: We confess that we have sinned. We grow fearful. We clench on to short-lived comforts. We trust earthly powers and human authority. We push ourselves and others too hard, and forget that everyone is inherently beloved and a member of your creation, worthy of receiving your grace and mercy.

P: God of might,

A: We confess that we have sinned. We turn away from neighbors who we disagree with. We trust false promises, and make false equivalencies to try and maintain the status quo, blocking your ever-present invitation to more love, more solidarity, more hope, more joy. Forgive us for being impatient with ourselves and our neighbors. Remind us that all relationships, all growth and all healing require both time, and effort.

P: God in our midst,

A: We confess that we have sinned. At the change of rhythms and seasons, we try to cling to what was, though we know we must choose the sometimes awkward dance of transformation that you invite us into. We are sorry for our failures to stick beside you, and we ask you to forgive us. Wrap us in your grace. Bring your mercy to birth in each of us. Remind us that your good news knows no bounds.

P: Through the power of the Holy Spirit your sins are forgiven. No matter how fearful, no matter the times we cling to the wrong thing, no matter how often we get lost in distractions, no matter how impatient we may be, God's love keeps showing up for us, strengthening us to follow in the way of Jesus.

A: Amen

Kyrie

Ky - ri - e e - lei - son. Lord, have mer - cy.

Chris - te e - lei - son. Christ, have mer - cy.

Ky - ri - e e - lei - son. Lord, have mer - cy.

Prayer of the Day

P: Loving God, source of joy, as we turn ourselves toward you we ask that you soften the callouses on our hearts. Weave yourself into the cracks in our ways and help us let our gentleness be known, so that all may know you are near. Plant hope in the crevices of our brokenness so that we might bear worthy fruits rooted in our daily returning to you and your way. We ask these things with gratitude, joy, and faith in your sacred word made flesh.

A: Amen.

Liturgy of the Word

Hebrew Bible

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 judgements 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 your 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.

Psalm

Isaiah 12:2-6

Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid, for the Lord God is my strength and my might, and has become my salvation.

With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

And you will say in that day: Give thanks for the Lord, call on God's name; make known the deeds of the Lord among the nations; proclaim that his name is exalted.

Sing praises to the Lord for he has done gloriously; let this be known in all the earth.

Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

Epistle

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.

Gospel Acclamation



Gospel

Luke 3:7-18

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 axe 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 thing 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."

And so, with many other exhortations, John proclaimed the good news to the people.,

Choir Anthem

Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord | William Rowan

Sermon

Hymn of the Day

To the tune of In the Bleak Midwinter:

The people asked, "what should we do?" John gave them answers fair:
Share with the poor, be just, be true- bear fruit beyond compare.
Return to God with all your heart, live justly now and see
This life is holy, now's the time to live with dignity.

Rejoice in God, O hearts, rejoice! Be gentle, kind, and free;
In prayer, make known your deep desire, trust Christ's peace will be.
The peace of God, beyond all bounds, will guard your hearts and minds;
In gentleness God's love will grow, in Christ, new voice joy finds.

Candle Lighting/Advent Wreath Lighting

Light candles while the choir sings This Holy Light, Ricky Manalo (GIA)

P: How does a stretched, weary world find hope and peace, and joy?

A: By Lighting candles in the night times. By planting seeds in the winter times which, under the cover of God's holy darkness, grow and sprout. By remembering and telling ancient stories of hope, of the experience of peace, by making sure we do not postpone joy.

P: By praying for one another as we grow, by simple acts to prove the existence and vitality of justice, we joyfully practice hope and peace.

A: By insisting that small acts make a big difference, we root ourselves in joy and hope, always working toward peace.

P: Today we light this candle focusing on joy, as both a reminder, and charge for daily living.

Offering of Peace

P: The peace of Christ be with you

A: and also with you

P: In a world that is filled with fear and questioning, where we look for rough ways to be made smooth and God's promises to be fulfilled, may the peace of Christ center our work and our hearts, starting right now among one another.

Apostle's Creed

**We believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator 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;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

We believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.

Prayers of the Faithful

Assisting Minister:

We sing our response this season.. The tune is the same as the refrain for O Come O Come Emmanuel:

**Your presence, God, our heart's true desire
Please hear our prayer, and kindle love's pure fire**

Gracious God,
You sustain us throughout our days. You know every word on our tongue, every hair on our head.
You know the dreams in our hearts, and the weight carried in our bones.

You also know the weariness that clings to us in the morning and appears even in this holy place.
So, with honesty we come before you, with hearts full of gratitude, and prayer requests on our lips.

**A: Your presence, God, our heart's true desire
Please hear our prayer, and kindle love's pure fire**

We thank you, holy God, for the gifts of this life that give us energy, joy, and hope. For sunrises, and candles at sunset, for handwritten cards, and jobs that we are passionate about. For stories that can make us laugh until we cry. For friends that feel like family, for family that feel like friends. For what other gifts do we thank God for, today?

(Pause for contributions)

We sing:

**A: Your presence, God, our heart's true desire
Please hear our prayer, and kindle love's pure fire**

Loving God, we also bring you the things that weigh heavy on our hearts. Violence and war. Family and friends in the midst of illness, seasons of transition and grief that won't let us go. Leadership and government and legal systems that harm more than help. What other burdens do we bring to God, today?

(Pause for contributions)

We ask for your love, and your care. Wrap your arms around the places where we feel most tender, where our neighbors are visited with pain and suffering beyond our comprehension. We sing:

**A: Your presence, God, our heart's true desire
Please hear our prayer, and kindle love's pure fire**

As we continue in this new season – a season marked by words like joy, hope, and peace. A season filled with anticipation of that which is still lacking– we ask that you would remind us that our full humanity is welcome here. There is room for our frustration, our joy, our righteous anger, our grief. There is room for weariness, and room for awe. There is room for faith, and room for doubt. Nothing is too big or too far gone for your love to reach it. So, with hope in our hearts, we lift all of these up to you, and await your divine inspiration to guide us in our daily lives. Together, we unite our voices and sing:

**A: Your presence, God, our heart's true desire
Please hear our prayer, and kindle love's pure fire**

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Gathering of Gifts + Song

O Lord, How Shall I Meet You



1 O Lord, how shall I meet you, how wel - come you a - right?
 2 I lay in fet - ters, groan - ing; you came to set me free.
 3 Love caused your in - car - na - tion; love brought you down to me.
 4 Re - joice, then, you sad - heart - ed, who sit in deep - est gloom,



Your peo - ple long to greet you, my hope, my heart's de - light!
 I stood, my shame be - moan - ing; you came to hon - or me.
 Your thirst for my sal - va - tion pro - cured my lib - er - ty.
 who mourn your joys de - part - ed and trem - ble at your doom.



Oh, kin - dle, Lord most ho - ly, your lamp with - in my breast
 A glo - rious crown you give me, a trea - sure safe on high
 Oh, love be - yond all tell - ing, that led you to em - brace
 All hail the Lord's ap - pear - ing! O glo - rious Sun, now come,



to do in spir - it low - ly all that may please you best.
 that will not fail or leave me as earth - ly rich - es fly.
 in love, all love ex - cel - ling, our lost and fall - en race.
 send forth your beams so cheer - ing and guide us safe - ly home.

Text: Paul Gerhardt, 1607–1676; tr. composite
 Music: WIE SOLL ICH DICH EMPFANGEN, Johann Crüger, 1598–1662

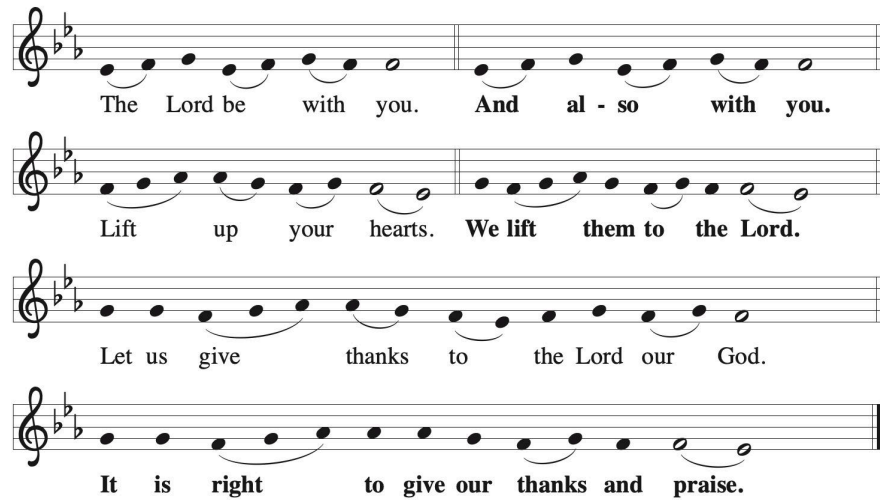
Prayer over Gifts

Assisting Minister: Creating God, you've made the whole universe— even the farthest stars who bathe us in their light— and yet you still choose to draw near to feed each of us. We thank you for these gifts, for bread, for wine. Strengthen us with these offerings, that we may develop the courage to live with our heads raised up, rejoicing in your good words, and always noticing how near your kingdom really is.

A: Amen

Eucharistic Prayer

Dialogue



The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Sanctus/Holy Holy Holy



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

God of might, heav - en and earth are full of your

glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Bless - ed is the one who comes in the name of the

Lord. Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Lord's Prayer

P: Let's pray as Jesus taught us, in the words that are etched into our own hearts:

A: 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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from all evil for yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Invitation to Table

P: A feast of love is offered here. Come! Together with all the saints across time and place, let us eat.

A: Thanks be to God!

Lamb of God/Agnus Dei



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the
world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Communion Hymn

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and with your captive children dwell.

Give comfort to all exiles here, and to the aching heart bid cheer.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come within as Love to dwell.

O come, you Splendor very bright, as joy that never yields to might.

O come, and turn all hearts to peace, that greed and war at last shall cease.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come within as Truth to dwell.

O come, you Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by your presence here.

And dawn in every broken soul as vision that can see the whole.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come within as Light to dwell.

O come, you Wisdom from on high, from depths that hide within a sigh,

to temper knowledge with our care, to render every act a prayer.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come within as Hope to dwell.

Prayer after communion

Assisting Minister: Eternal God— we are in awe, and with gratitude beyond words we thank you that in Christ you give yourself into our hands. May we who have heard the voice crying out in the wilderness, we who have tasted life in its fullness, go into the world proclaiming your justice and peace for all. Accompany us as we feed the hungry in your name.

A: Amen

Benediction

P: May the God who brings heaven close to earth give flame to our longing, that our hopeful hearts might be ready to be born yet again in peace-filled love. May the blessing of God keep you now, and forever.

A: Amen

Dismissal

Assisting Minister: Go in Peace, Prepare the way for Emmanuel—God with us!

A: Thanks be to God!

Sending Hymn

Postlude