



Morning Prayer
The Third Sunday of Advent
December 13, 2020 9 am
The Lighting of the Advent Wreath
Prayers of Comfort for Christmas during the Pandemic

Comfort, comfort my people, says our God. [Isaiah 43:1]

Ministers of the Liturgy

The Rev. Dr. Judith Lee

Mary Frances Best, Elizabeth Klisiewicz, Touie Jackson, Mary Torian

Musicians: Randolph Bloom, Mary Johnson, Jeff Lukas

Organ Prelude

Lighting the Advent Wreath

Today is the third Sunday of Advent, the Sunday of Joy. Like hope and peace, joy is a gift from God. It overtakes us and fills us when we remember what God has done and what he has promised to do.

We light the pink candle today because joy always has a brightening effect on our hearts and to remind us that Christ came, and is coming, so that all people might have a rich, abundant and joyful life. We thank God for the hope given to us, for the peace bestowed upon us, and for the joy poured into our hearts.

Let us pray.

O God of joy, Emmanuel, send your light into our hearts at this time. Help us to be ready for the time of Christ's appearing. Fix our hearts and our minds upon those things you have done and those you have promised to do so that we may have the joy you have promised. As we worship you, strengthen us so that we may always do your will and so bless you and the world you have made. **Amen.**

Advent Hymn *O come, O come, Emmanuel* Hymnal #56
O come thou Dayspring from on high, and cheer us by thy drawing nigh
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadow put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee O Israel!

Opening Sentence

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.

² *When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you*

³ *For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.* [Isaiah 43:1-3]

The Confession

Ann Rowthorn

Renew in us this day the image of your love, O God; renew in us in the likeness of your mercy. May any refusal to forgive that lingers with us, any bitterness of soul that hardens our hearts, be softened by your graces. Renew us in the image of your love, O God, renew us in the likeness of your mercy. **Amen.**

Absolution

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

The Invitatory and Psalter

Come, come, O Christ, and stand in our midst
Peace to each one who comes in joy.
Peace to the creatures,
Peace in our hearts,

Peace to each one who comes in need.
Peace to each man, woman, and child.
Peace to the nations.
Peace in our world.

Come, come, O Christ, stand in our midst as you did stand in the midst of your disciples, and speak to us words of peace.

Invitatory Psalm 141:1-3,8ab

O LORD, I call to you; come to me quickly; * hear my voice when I cry to you.

Let my prayer be set forth in your sight as incense, *
the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

Set a watch before my mouth, O LORD, and guard the door of my lips; *
let not my heart incline to any evil thing.

My eyes are turned to you, Lord GOD; * in you I take refuge.

Psalm 126

1 When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, * then were we like those who dream.

2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, * and our tongue with shouts of joy.

3 Then they said among the nations, * "The Lord has done great things for them."

4 The Lord has done great things for us, *and we are glad indeed.
5 Restore our fortunes, O Lord, *like the watercourses of the Negev.
6 Those who sowed with tears *will reap with songs of joy.
7 Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, *
 will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.

A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah [61:1-4, 8-11]

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.

They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.
They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. . . .

For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.
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.

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

A Song of the Wilderness *Isaiah 35:1-7,10*

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, * the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
It shall blossom abundantly, * and rejoice with joy and singing.
They shall see the glory of the Lord, * the majesty of our God.
Strengthen the weary hands, * and make firm the feeble knees.
Say to the anxious, "Be strong, do not fear! *

 Here is your God, coming with judgment to save you."

Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, * and the ears of the deaf be unstopped.

Then shall the lame leap like a deer, * and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness * and streams in the desert;
The burning sand shall become a pool * and the thirsty ground, springs of water.
The ransomed of God shall return with singing, * with everlasting joy upon their heads.
Joy and gladness shall be theirs, * and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

A Reading from the Gospel of John [1:6-8, 19-28]

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. . . .

19 This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, 'I am not the Messiah.' ²¹And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the prophet?' He answered, 'No.' ²²Then they said to him, 'Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?' ²³He said, 'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord" ', as the prophet Isaiah said. 24 Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, 'Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?' ²⁶John answered them, 'I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.' ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

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

The Song of Mary *Magnificat* Luke 1:46-55

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; *
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed: *

the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him * in every generation.

He has shown the strength of his arm,* he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, *and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things,* and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel, *

for he has remembered his promise of mercy,

The promise he made to our fathers, * to Abraham and his children forever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *

Musical Meditation

The Apostles' Creed

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He 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, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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.

The Prayers

Hear our cry, O God. **And listen to our prayer.**

Let us pray.

Help us, O God our Savior; **deliver us and forgive us our sins.**

Look upon your congregation; **give to your people the blessing of peace.**

Declare your glory among the nations; **and your wonders among all peoples.**

Do not let the oppressed be shamed and turned away; **never forget the lives of your poor.**

Continue your loving-kindness to those who know you;

and your favor to those who are true of heart.

Satisfy us by your loving-kindness in the morning;

so shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life.

The Lord's Prayer

Collect of the Day

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.**

The Prayers of the People

In the spirit of this season, let us now ask God for the grace to have open our hearts to the joy we have known, that we may participate in this season of peace, love and hope.

Holy and Loving God, you know our deepest longings and sorrows, our hopes and disappointments. Hear our prayer for our families and friends, that they may know the peace of your steadfast love and the assurance of your grace. *Silence*

Wait for the Lord, his day is near. Wait for the Lord, keep watch, take heart.

God of Light and Life, guide all who have lost their way in sadness, anger, and fear. Hear our prayer for those who are struggling with physical or mental health, so that anguish may be minimized and your good purpose fulfilled for all who suffer. *Silence*

Wait for the Lord, his day is near. Wait for the Lord, keep watch, take heart.

God of Abundance, sustain those who have lost their homes and their livelihood. Hear our prayer for those who are struggling financially, that they may use their resources wisely. *Silence*

Wait for the Lord, his day is near. Wait for the Lord, keep watch, take heart.

God of all Sorrows, comfort those who are isolated in their sadness and grief. Hear our prayer for those who regret lost dreams, lost opportunities, a lost future, so that they may see with hope the path that you have opened before them. *Silence*

Wait for the Lord, his day is near. Wait for the Lord, keep watch, take heart.

Steadfast God, stand by those who wrestle with the chains of addiction. Hear our prayer for those who seek deliverance from the demons of self-abuse in all its forms. *Silence*

Wait for the Lord, his day is near. Wait for the Lord, keep watch, take heart.

God of Justice, protect all victims of violence in any of its forms. Hear our prayer for those who seek justice that they may be confident in the future you have planned for us. *Silence*

Wait for the Lord, his day is near. Wait for the Lord, keep watch, take heart.

Compassionate God, heal those who are experiencing the pain of broken relationships with parents, children, spouses, and friends. Hear our prayer for those who seek to overcome estrangement that they may relinquish broken relationships and forgive themselves. *Silence*

Wait for the Lord, his day is near. Wait for the Lord, keep watch, take heart.

God of Peace, guide those who are suffering the consequences of war, famine and unbridled disease. Hear our prayer for those who live in refugee camps, in detention centers on our own

borders, and in countries devastated by war, that they may find alternatives to revenge and may share in your saving work. *Silence*

Wait for the Lord, his day is near. Wait for the Lord, keep watch, take heart.

Eternal God, embrace those whose losses have estranged them from you. Hear our prayer for those who are besieged with doubts that the light of your love lead us all home to you.

Silence

Wait for the Lord, his day is near. Wait for the Lord, keep watch, take heart.

God of abundant mercy, you have given us grace to pray with one heart and one voice, even when our hearts are broken and our voices tremble with grief. Comfort, comfort, Lord, your people. Comfort those of us who sit in darkness, mourning beneath our sorrow's load. Speak to us of the peace that awaits us, restore to us the joy that we have known in love, health, and success, and give us the balm of healing for our weary and wounded souls. We ask this, trusting in the promise you have made to hear the prayers of two or three who have gathered in the Name of your Holy Child, Jesus. **Amen.**

A Stewardship Prayer

Blessed be God who calls us together **Praise to God who makes us one people.**
Blessed be God who has forgiven our sin. **Praise to God who gives hope and freedom**
Blessed be God whose Word is proclaimed. **Praise to God who is revealed as love.**
Blessed be God who alone has called us.

Therefore we offer all that we are and all that we shall become.

Accept, O God, our sacrifice of praise.

Accept our thanks for all you have done.

Our hands were empty, and you filled them. Amen.

A Prayer in Time of Transition

Almighty God, giver of every good gift: Look graciously on your Church, and so guide the minds of those who shall choose a rector for this parish, that we may receive a faithful pastor who will care for your people and for our ministries; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Open our hearts to possibilities we have not yet imagined, through Jesus Christ, our Light, our Center, our Hope. **Amen.**

A Prayer for an End to Racism

Lord, Jesus Christ who reached across the ethnic boundaries between Samaritan, Roman and Jew, who offered fresh sight to the blind and freedom to captives, help us to break down the

barriers in our community and to see the reality of racism and bigotry, and free us to challenge and uproot it from ourselves, our society and our world. **Amen**

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. **Amen.**

Blessing from “A Blessing for the Place Between by Jan Richardson, *The Cure for Sorrow*)

In the name of our Comfort and Strength,

When you come to the place between.

When you have left what you held most dear.

When you are traveling toward the life you know not.

When you arrive at the hardest ground.

May it become for you a place to rest.

May it become for you a place to dream.

May the pain that has pressed itself into you
give way to vision to knowing.

May the morning make of it an altar, a path, a place to begin again.

And may the blessing of God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier be with you always.

Dismissal:

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. **Thanks be to God.**