



3rd Sunday of Advent

December 13, 2020



1105 N. Washington Blvd.  
Ogden, UT 84404  
801.782.2810

## Introduction

“Rejoice always,” begins the reading from 1 Thessalonians. Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. “All God’s children got a robe,” go the words of a spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes we are happy to wear. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God’s party.

## The Advent Wreath

*The Advent wreath has its roots in the pre-Christian practices of northern Europe. People sought the return of the sun in the dark time of the year (at the winter solstice) by lighting candles and fires. As early as the Middle Ages, Christians used fire and light to represent Christ's coming into the world. Using this same symbolism, the Advent wreath developed a few centuries ago in Germany as a sign of the waiting and hopeful expectation of the return in glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. The wreath, a circle, came to represent the eternal victory over death through Jesus Christ. The evergreens were a sign of the faithfulness of God to God’s people, even in death, and the lighted candles were a reminder of the light of Christ brought into the world.*

## *Welcome to Worship*

### Call to worship

P A Light has been given for us to welcome us home.  
Praise God for the lantern of hope and welcome.  
Today open your hearts, take courage. God is with us!  
We come this day, continuing our journey toward our true home.

**All Amen.**

## *It's All About the Light*

### Lighting the Candle of *Joy*

P Today we light the candle of HOPE,  
the candle of PEACE,  
and the pink candle - the candle of JOY.

This candle is also known as the Mary candle.

Mary demonstrates for us the grace, humility, and determination of the woman who carried the Incarnate *Joy of the world - Christ Jesus*.

Mary reminds us that we, too, carry this same Joy in our lives as we live in a world that lifts up the powerful over the lowly, the prideful over the humble, and the strong over the weak. As we light this candle of joy, we acknowledge how hard it is to feel joy this year. We acknowledge Mary as a teacher of how to carry the weight of the world on her shoulders. We acknowledge our shared Incarnate Joy of Christ within us as we continue our journey of Advent.

Let us pray,

Holy God, we thank you for the gift of joy that is found in Christ Jesus. Remind us of this Incarnate Joy within us as we enter into another week ahead.

**All Amen.**

### Confession and Forgiveness

P Blessed be God, Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit,  
whose forgiveness is sure  
and whose steadfast love endures forever.

**All Amen.**

*P* Together let us honestly and humbly confess  
that we have not lived as God desires.

*Silence is kept for reflection*

Loving and forgiving God,

***All* we confess that we are held captive by sin.  
In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray. We have not  
welcomed the stranger;  
we have not loved our neighbor;  
we have not been Christ to one another.**

**Restore us, O God.**

**Wake us up and turn us from our sin.**

**Renew us each day in the light of Christ. Amen.**

*P* People of God, hear this glad news:  
by God's endless grace your sins are forgiven, and you are free—  
free from all that holds you back  
and free to live in the peaceable realm of God.  
May you be strengthened in God's love,  
✚ comforted by Christ's peace,  
and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit.

***All* Amen.**

## Opening Song

### The Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38)

An angel went from God to a town called Nazareth,  
to a woman whose name was Mary.

The angel said to her,

“Rejoice, O highly favored, for God is with you.

You shall bear a child, and his name shall be Jesus,  
the Chosen One of God Most High.”

And Mary said,

“I am the servant of my God, I live to do His will.

### **The Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55)**

My soul proclaims your greatness, O God, and my spirit rejoices in you,  
You have looked with love on your servant here,  
and blessed me all my life through.

Great and mighty are you, O Holy One, strong is your kindness evermore.  
How your favor the weak and lowly one, humbling the proud of heart.

You have cast the mighty down from their thrones,  
and up lifted the humble of heart,

You have filled the hungry with wondrous things,  
and left the wealthy no part.

Great and mighty are you, O Faithful One,  
strong is your justice strong your love,

As you promised to Sarah and Abraham, kindness for evermore.

My soul proclaims your greatness, O God, and my spirit rejoices in you,  
You have looked with love on your servant here,  
and blessed me all my life through.

#### **Holden Evening Prayer: Annunciation and The Magnificat**

Type: Words and Music; First Line: My soul proclaims your greatness

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### **The Greeting**

**P** The Lord be with you!

**All** And also with you!

## Prayer of the Day

*P* Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God,  
and open our ears to the words of your prophets,  
that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light;  
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you  
and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**All Amen.**

## A Reading from Isaiah, the 61st chapter

*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 spirit of God, announces deliverance for those who are oppressed and comfort for those who mourn.*

<sup>1</sup>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; <sup>2</sup>to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,  
and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;

<sup>3</sup>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.

<sup>4</sup>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.

<sup>8</sup>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.

<sup>9</sup>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.

<sup>10</sup>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.

<sup>11</sup>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.

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

L The word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God!**

### A Reading from 1 Thessalonians, the 5th chapter

*Paul concludes his 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.*

<sup>16</sup>Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup>pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup>give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. <sup>19</sup>Do not quench the Spirit.

<sup>20</sup>Do not despise the words of prophets, <sup>21</sup>but test everything; hold fast to what is good; <sup>22</sup>abstain from every form of evil.

<sup>23</sup>May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup>The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

L The word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God!**



## Gospel Reading

*P* The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 1st chapter.

**All** **Glory to you, O Lord.**

*John's gospel describes Jesus as the "light of the world." John the Baptist is presented as a witness to Jesus, one who directs attention away from himself to Christ, the true light.*

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

<sup>19</sup>This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" <sup>20</sup>He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." <sup>21</sup>And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." <sup>22</sup>Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" <sup>23</sup>He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' " as the prophet Isaiah said.

<sup>24</sup>Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. <sup>25</sup>They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" <sup>26</sup>John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, <sup>27</sup>the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." <sup>28</sup>This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

*John 1:6-8, 19-28*

*P* The Gospel of our Lord.

**All** **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Sermon**

**Pr. Debra Jimenez**



## Apostles' Creed

*P* Let us join together with the saints across the ages confessing our faith with the words of the Apostles' Creed.

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come 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.**

## Prayers of Intercession

*L* God of power and might, shine your radiance and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

*(each prayer petition ends with)*

*L:* Hear us, O God.      *All:* **Your mercy is great.**

Or

*L:* Lord, in your mercy,      *All:* **hear our prayer.**

## The Great Thanksgiving and Words of Institution

*P* The Lord be with you

**All And also with you.**

*P* Lift up your hearts.

**All We lift them to the Lord.**

*P* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

*P* In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup,  
We proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

**All Amen! Come Lord Jesus!**

## The Lord's Prayer

*P* Gathered together In hope, let us pray the prayer Jesus taught us.

**All 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 Invitation and The Meal

*P* Even as we watch and wait, Christ is here.  
Come, eat and drink.

## Sharing the Meal

## Post Communion Blessing and Prayer

*P* The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

**All Amen**

*P* Let us pray,

Gracious and abundant God,  
you have done great things for us, and we rejoice.

**All In this bread and cup you give us life forever.  
In your boundless mercy, strengthen us  
and open our hearts to the world's needs,  
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

## Stewardship of Life & Ministry Announcements

## Benediction

*P* The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting,  
the long-expected Savior fill you with love,  
the unexpected Spirit guide your journey,  
✝ now and forever.

**All Amen.**

## Sending Song

### Shine on Us

#### Verse 2

Lord let Your grace, Grace from Your hand fall on us  
Lord let Your grace, Grace from Your hand fall on us  
That we may be saved, That we may have life,  
To find our way in the darkest night.  
Let Your grace fall on us.

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## Dismissal

*P* Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong.  
Let all that you do be done in love.

*1 Corinthians 16:13-14*

Beloved of God, go in peace.  
Prepare the way of the Lord.

**All Thanks be to God.**

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## Advent Wreath Reflections

Candle Liturgies — LiturgyLink.net – a community creating for the relentless return of Sunday

*Submitted by Meredith Menius, Ardmore United Methodist Church, Winston-Salem, NC*

Readings for next Sunday,  
December 20th

**First Reading:** 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

**Psalm:** Luke 1:46b-55

**Second Reading:** Romans 16:25-27

**Gospel:** Luke 1:26-38

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