

Holy Eucharist

December 15, 2024

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85887946777?pwd=eig4MEdsMUh6cIV6b2dUblFOQ3I2Zz09>

Meeting ID: 858 8794 6777

Passcode: 782611

Advent 3C

Prelude



All stand as they are able

Opening Hymn

Hark! the glad sound!

Hymnal 72

1 Hark, the glad sound! The Sav - ior comes, the Sav - ior
2 He comes the pris - oners to re - lease, in Sa - tan's
3 He comes the bro - ken heart to bind, the wound - ed
4 Our glad ho - san - nas, Prince of Peace, your wel - come

prom - ised long! Let ev - ery heart pre -
bond - age held; the gates of brass be -
soul to cure, and with the trea - sures
shall pro - claim; and heaven's e - ter - nal

pare a throne, and ev - ery voice a song,
fore him burst, the i - ron fet - ters yield,
of his grace to en - rich the hum - bled poor.
arch - es ring with your be - lov - ed name.

Presider Blessed are you, + holy and living One.

People **You come to your people and set them free.**

The Presider begins the Collect for Purity

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you 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; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ky - ri - e e - lei - son.

Chris - te e - lei - son. Ky - ri - e e - lei - son.

Collect of the Day

Presider The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you.**
Presider Let us pray.

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.**

All sit.

First Reading

Zephaniah 3:14-20

A Reading from the book of the prophet Zephaniah.

- ¹⁴Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;
shout, O Israel!
Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem!
- ¹⁵The LORD has taken away the judgments against you,
he has turned away your enemies.
The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;
you shall fear disaster no more.
- ¹⁶On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:

Do not fear, O Zion;
do not let your hands grow weak.
¹⁷The LORD, your God, is in your midst,
a warrior who gives victory;
he will rejoice over you with gladness,
he will renew you in his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing
¹⁸as on a day of festival.
I will remove disaster from you,
so that you will not bear reproach for it.
¹⁹I 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.
²⁰At 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.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Remain seated

Canticle 9

Hymnal 381

Surely it is God who saves me



Sure-ly it is God who saves me; trust-ing him, I
Make his deeds known to the peo-ples; tell out his ex-



shall not fear. For the Lord de-fends and shields me
- alt-ed Name. Praise the Lord, who has done great things;



and his sav- ing help is near. So re- joice as you draw
all his works his might pro-claim. Zion, lift your voice in



wa- ter from sal- va-tion's liv- ing spring; in the day of
sing- ing: for with you has come to dwell, in your ver- y



your de- live- rance thank the Lord, God's mer- cies sing.
midst, the great and Ho- ly One of Is- ra- el.

Second Reading

Philippians 4:4-7

A Reading from Paul's letter to the Church in Philippi.

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

All stand as they are able.

Sequence Hymn

Hymnal 56

O come, O come, Emmanuel



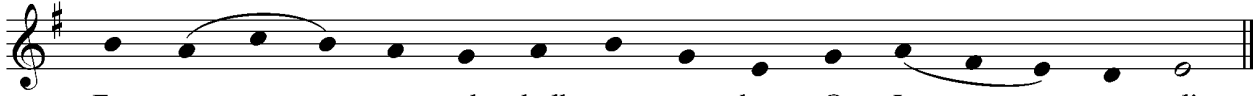
1 O come, O come, Em- man- u- el, and with your
4 O come, O Wis- dom from on high, who brings the
5 O come, In- car- nate Word re- vealed. Your peo- ple



1 peo- ple al- ways dwell, who mourn in mor- tal ex- ile
 4 truth of A- don- ai: to us the path of know- ledge
 5 you both taught and healed. You trust- ed Ab- ba's love would



1 here un- til the Lord of Life ap- pear. Re-joyce! Re-joyce!
 4 show, and teach us in your ways to go. Re-joyce! Re-joyce!
 5 save, and so were raised up from the grave. Re-joyce! Re-joyce!



Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

Holy Gospel

Luke 3:7-18

Gospeller The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to Luke.
People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

⁷John 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? ⁸Bear 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. ⁹Even now the ax 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.”

¹⁰And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” ¹¹In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” ¹²Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” ¹³He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” ¹⁴Soldiers 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.”

¹⁵As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶John 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 thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His 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.”

¹⁸So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.



Gospeller The Gospel of the Lord.
People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

Sermon

Cynthia Wentworth

Nicene Creed

All stand as they are able.

Presider Let us affirm the faith of the Church using the words of the Nicene Creed:

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father [and the Son],
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Prayers of the People

All remain standing as they are able.

Presider: Brothers and sisters, siblings in Christ, rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Surely, it is God who saves us; therefore, we joyfully pray to the Lord, “God our salvation: we thank you.”

Intercessor Though hindered by our sins, and in need of your bountiful grace and mercy, you never leave us. You are ever in our midst. We pray for those who come to our Labyrinth that, as they walk, they may find peace and renewal. Renew your Church in love. God our salvation: **we thank you.**

Silence is kept.

Make your deeds known among the people, O God. Save the lame; gather the outcast. May the exiles know home, and all people know your peace. May your springs of salvation renew the earth. Heal our planet and restore in us a sense of responsibility and gratitude. God our salvation: **we thank you.**

Silence is kept.

Merciful God, give us grace to heed the warnings of those calling us to be better stewards of your creation. We thank you for all you have made, especially those things that sustain and better our lives. God our salvation: **we thank you.**

Silence is kept.

Merciful God, in this month of great excess and consumerism, call the financial and business communities to act justly and generously. Grant that those without coats be clothed, and those without food be fed. God our salvation: **we thank you.**

Silence is kept.

Merciful God, you lead us with joy; you delight in our joy. We give you thanks for [_____and] all your boundless blessings.

O God, you have done great things. With love in our hearts we pray to you for those burdened by illness, shame, grief, or weakness [especially _____]. Be for them a stronghold and a sure defense.

God our salvation, gather us, with all those who have died, into your sacred heart [especially for _____]. Grant us to sing your praises for all eternity. God our salvation: **we thank you.**

Silence is kept.

Presider: O Ruler of all the nations, only joy of every heart, keystone of the mighty arch who makes us one, come and save the creatures you fashioned from clay. Glory to you for ever.
Amen.

Confession of Sin

A Minister says

Let us confess our sins to God.

Silence is kept.

Minister and People

**Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

A Priest stands and says

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

Peace

All stand as they are able.

Presider The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

The Ministers and the People may offer God's peace to one another in the name of the Lord.

The People then are seated.

Announcements

Holy Communion

Representatives of the congregation bring the people's offerings of bread and wine, and money or other gifts, to the Presider.

The people stand as they are able when the offerings are presented and placed on the Altar.

O Lord our God, you are worthy to receive glory and honor and power; because you have created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being. *Revelation 4:11*

Offertory Hymn

Doxology

**Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, you heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

The people remain standing as they are able.

Great Thanksgiving

Presider The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider Lift up your hearts.

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

Presider Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Because you sent your beloved Son to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us heirs in him of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may without shame or fear rejoice to behold his appearing.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Sanctus

Hymnal S-129



might, hea - ven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
 san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who
 comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est. _____

The people continue to stand, or kneel, as they are able.

The Presider continues

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son.

For in these last days, you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

**We remember his death,
 We proclaim his resurrection,
 We await his coming in glory;**

The Presider continues

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your + Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant.

Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being + sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with Mary the Virgin, Joseph, Barnabas, and all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **AMEN**

The Presider then continues

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

A period of silence is kept.

The Presider says

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

These are the Gifts of God.
And we are the people of God.

All are welcome to receive Holy Communion.

When all who desire have received, the Presider says

Let us pray.

Presider and People

**Eternal God, heavenly Father,
you have graciously accepted us as living members
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ,
and you have fed us with spiritual food
in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.
Send us now into the world in peace,
and grant us strength and courage
to love and serve you
with gladness and singleness of heart;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Blessing

A priest blesses the people, saying

God of hope, when Christ your Son appears, may he not find us asleep or idle,
but active in his service.

And may the blessing of the Holy One who made you,

+ Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be with you today and always. **Amen.**

Concluding Hymn

Hymnal 481

Rejoice, the Lord is King

Re- joice, the Lord is King! The Sov-ereign One a- dore! Mor-
God's king-dom can- not fail; he rules o'er earth and heav'n; the
Re- joice in glor-ious hope! Our Lord the Judge shall come, and

-tals, give thanks and sing, and triumph ever- more. Lift up your
 keys of death and hell to Je-sus Christ are giv'n. Lift up your
 take his child-ren up to their e-ter- nal home. Lift up your
 heart! lift up your voice! Re-joice! A- gain I say, re-joice!

Dismissal

Minister And now, my siblings in Christ, I bid you go out as did St Barnabas, the Encourager. Go out with a good heart, full of hope and peace, to love and serve our Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude

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This week in prayer

Please remember these persons and congregations in your prayers this week:

Our Bishops Bonnie, Sean, Justin, Moises (TEC); Elizabeth, Donald and Craig (ELCA)
and for all priests, deacons, Ministry Teams, and those in formation

Anglican Cycle of Prayer:

December 15 The Anglican Church of Tanzania

Diocese of Michigan Cycle of Prayer:

December 15 St Luke's, Shelby Township; St Mary Full of Grace, Mao, DR

St Barnabas Cycle of Prayer: Kevin, Jessica, Hannah, Bodie

and our continuing prayers for: Jim M, Joan, Mardi, Pat, Robert, Selenah

Faith in Action continues to provide leadership in collecting donations to support households in need in the Chelsea and Dexter areas. They are in need of our continuing help. You may bring your donations to FIA, or to Nancy who will see that they get there. **If you bring food directly to FIA**, please let Nancy know, so she can continue to keep our records of donation. If you write a check, please make it to *Faith In Action*. The **next Food Ingathering is TODAY**. Please contribute as generously as you can.



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Upcoming Commemorations

- December 15 John Horden: Bishop and Missionary in Canada, 1893; and, Robert McDonald: Priest, 1913
- 16 Ralph Adams Cram, 1942, and Richard Upjohn, 1878, Architects; and, John LaFarge, Artist, 1910
- 17 William Lloyd Garrison, 1879, and Maria Stewart, 1879, Prophetic Witnesses
- 19 Lillian Trasher: Missionary in Egypt, 1961

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Advent 3C December 15, 2024

Zephaniah 3:14-20; Canticle 9; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18

Today is the third Sunday of Advent, traditionally known as “Gaudete Sunday.” *Gaudete* is the Latin word meaning “rejoice,” and the origin of this name for the third Sunday of Advent comes from the beginning of our reading from Philippians today: “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.”



Advent is actually a penitential season like Lent, something many people don’t realize. Just like how in Lent we use the time to prepare for Easter and reflect on things like our mortality and sin, we do the same in Advent to prepare for Christmas. Thinking about how much we need Jesus helps us get ready to welcome and greet him. It makes the contrast between the penitential season and the major feast leading to a festal season all the greater, and our joy at Christmas and Easter all the brighter. That’s why we light the pink candle on the Advent wreath on the third Sunday of Advent. Pink says joy and celebration!

So now that you have perhaps a bit of new liturgical knowledge to pull out at cocktail parties, let’s take this concept of Gaudete Sunday to our scriptures. The theme is readily apparent not only in the text for which the Sunday is named, the Philippians “rejoice” text, but also in Zephaniah, which begins, “Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!” In our canticle from Isaiah, we say, “Therefore you shall draw water with rejoicing from the springs of salvation,” and “Cry aloud, inhabitants of Zion, ring out your joy.” So far, so good. We have got this rejoicing thing down. It is all about Gaudete around here.

Until we get to our Gospel, where John the Baptist commits a major party foul: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?... Even now the ax 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.” John!

Don't be such a downer! No wonder no one invites you to parties. Your living in the wilderness by yourself is starting to make more and more sense.

So, at first glance, it's hard to understand why this is our gospel for Gaudete Sunday. But let's look at it another way. Who else might want to celebrate Gaudete Sunday besides us? How about God? Maybe God would like the chance to be joyful once in a while. If we take that as a possibility, we have to ask ourselves: what makes God joyful?

And there is where our text from Luke starts to make sense. In this gospel, John the Baptist is functioning as a sort of ethical consultant. People are coming to him and asking him for advice on how they should live their lives. The crowds ask him what they should do, and he says that if they have two coats, they should give one away to someone who needs it. Tax collectors, notorious as a group for being unscrupulous and exploiting the people they collected from, ask him what to do, and he tells them to collect only what is owed and no more.

Even Roman soldiers go to John for advice. That is a remarkable thought, that members of the occupying army are seeking out this fringe Judean prophet on the very margins of society and religious acceptability, and asking him for direction in their lives. And John provides it, freely and very specifically. He tells them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

So, what can we learn from John's words? What principle is John demonstrating to these seekers that they must embody if they are to do God's will? Justice. John's words are all about justice. They are all tailored specifically to the situation of the people asking for guidance. John doesn't issue vague, general pronouncements like, "Try to be a decent person," and "Don't be awful to other people." He speaks right into the lives and contexts and specific circumstances of these people and tells them how to live ethically. John tells them how to do justice right where they are, now, in their own lives.

Often, we think justice is something huge and sweeping, accomplished only with massive movements of people and charismatic leaders and negotiations between heads of state. Justice does often require forces that big to move us past our prejudices and habits of oppression. But justice starts very small, one act at a time, just as John the Baptist is preaching. How do you treat your waiter? How do you treat your boss? How do you treat the cashier at the grocery store? How you treat these people is how you treat Jesus.

People tend to get antsy when "God" and "justice" come into the same conversation. We think of justice as the opposite of mercy, and as full of wrath and condemnation of us and our sin. John the Baptist is certainly not helping our discomfort with his preaching this morning. "Even now the ax 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." That sounds kind of scary, doesn't it?

But we've already learned that justice and joy are partners in God's kingdom. God is not out to get us. God is not waiting for us to trip up on some silly sin and then cackling with glee and hanging us over an abyss. God's will is our growing up into the full stature of Christ, becoming capable of partnering with God in bringing God's justice to fruition on the earth. So how does God do that?

Well, consider John's words about Jesus: "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." We often think of the wheat and the chaff as two different groups of people. The wheat are the virtuous people we wish we could emulate, and the chaff are the poor clueless sinners that we're all too certain we're lumped in with. It's not a very hopeful message. But what if they're not two different groups of people? What if we're all the wheat *and* the chaff? We're all wheat, brought in as part of God's harvest, and Jesus in his love for us will cleanse and purify us with his holy fire and burn away those useless things that hold us down and hold us back from fulfilling God's will. It may not be particularly comfortable, but it will be liberating. That puts rather a more hopeful spin on it, doesn't it? We're all a little chaffy, but there is good wheat underneath those obscuring, besetting sins, and Jesus' love can burn away all the obstacles that prevent us from following him faithfully.

This is news worth celebrating on Gaudete Sunday. This is news worth rejoicing over. This is the knowledge and the truth that we have the ability to make God rejoice every time we act for justice—

every time we repent of racism, every time we stand in solidarity with the oppressed, every time we refuse to doggedly hang on to our own ill-gotten power. And, as John the Baptist tells us, these grand ideas are brought to life one interaction at a time, one conversation at a time, one relationship at a time. We might wonder if we have what it takes to live out God’s justice in the world. Well, Jesus comes to us and burns our chaff away so that our wheat might be gathered into the granary, to be used to make the Body of Christ, the Bread of Heaven.

So, the next time you set aside your own preferences and your own self-interest and act with justice and kindness, remember that you are making God joyful. No matter how small the action you are offering of your heart, you are saying to God, “Gaudete! Rejoice!” And God hears you.

This study was written by Whitney Rice.

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Our Mission:

We seek to grow as diverse disciples of Jesus Christ, and to serve Jesus by serving others in the world, guided by the values of Ancient Rites, Open Minds, and Affirming Hearts.



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