

**Third Sunday of Advent
December 15, 2024**

Gathering
God invites us to enter His presence

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Preparation for Worship (*Time for Silent Preparation*)

 **Call to Worship** (*Responsively*)

Bonnie Mecaughey

The Lord has done great things for us!
And we are filled with joy!
Our God has turned our weeping into singing,
our tears into songs of joy!
O Christ of God, come anew in our hearts this day,
and remain in us forever.

—based on Psalm 126

 **Invocation**

Bonnie Mecaughey

God of Israel, with expectant hearts we your people await Christ's coming. As once he came in humility, so now may he come in glory, that he may make all things perfect in your everlasting kingdom. For he is Lord for ever and ever. **Amen.**

 **Opening Hymn 145**

O Come All Ye Faithful

Advent Candle Lighting

The Ludt Family

Week 3

Reader: The first candle reminds us our hope we have in the coming of our Lord (Light 1st candle)

The second candle represents the peace that we can experience in God's presence. (Light 2nd Candle)

This morning's candle is all about joy – a joy that triumphs over pain, sadness, suffering, and our broken world.

“The Wilderness and dry land will be glad; the desert will rejoice and blossom like a wildflower. It will blossom abundantly and will rejoice with joy and singing.”

(Isaiah 35:1-2)

We light this candle as a sign of the coming light of Christ (Light 3rd Candle)

All: Advent means coming. We are preparing for the full coming of God's Kingdom.

Response: O Come, O Come Emmanuel (Verse 2)

**O come, Thou Dayspring,
Come and cheer Our spirits by Thine Advent here:
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.**

***Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel!***

**Confessing
God invites us to be honest with Him**

Call to Confession

Bonnie Mecaughey

Prepare the way of the Lord! Let us make our confession to God.

Prayer of Confession

Bonnie Mecaughey

Lord Christ, we confess our willingness to be loved but also our reluctance to love. We confess our readiness to accept your forgiving love but also our refusal to forgive. We confess our eagerness to grasp your offer of redeeming love but also our resistance to follow you without question. In this Advent time, forgive us our failure to respond as we should. Come to us anew, and by your grace, assist us to receive you with joy, as the shepherds; with gratitude, as Simeon; with obedience, as Mary; with love, as you have loved us. Even so: come, Lord Jesus. **Amen.**

Time for Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon

Bonnie Mecaughey

Surely God's salvation is at hand for those who fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land.
Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.
Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky.
The Lord will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.
Righteousness will go before him
and will make a path for his steps.
In Christ, God's salvation is at hand, and righteousness has come.

—based on Psalm 85:9-13, NRSV

Leader: *This is the Promise of the Lord*

All: *Thanks be to God!*

! Passing of the Peace

Leader: The Peace of the Lord be with You

All: And also with you

Offering

Thankful of the gifts God has given us, we offer ourselves to Him

Invitation Do good and share what you have, for such sacrifices
are pleasing to God.
—from Hebrews 13:16, NRSV

Offering

Offertory *Joy Has Dawned* *Getty*
Kelly Fox

! Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. A-men.

! Prayer of Dedication

What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.
If I were a wise man, I would do my part.
Yet what I can, I give him, give him my heart.

Proclaiming

God speaks to us through His Word

! Preparation Hymn 144 *How Great Our Joy!*

Scripture Reading *Zephaniah 3:14-17*

¹⁴ Sing for joy, Daughter Zion;
shout loudly, Israel!
Be glad and celebrate with all your heart,
Daughter Jerusalem!
¹⁵ The Lord has removed your punishment;
he has turned back your enemy.
The King of Israel, the LORD, is among you;
you need no longer fear harm.
¹⁶ On that day it will be said to Jerusalem:
"Do not fear;
Zion, do not let your hands grow weak.

¹⁷ The Lord your God is among you,
a warrior who saves.
He will rejoice over you with gladness.
He will be quiet in his love.
He will delight in you with singing.”

Sermon

“Songs of Joy”
Rev. Tim Latham

 **Hymn of Response 125** *Joy to the World!*

Responding
We respond to God's Word

 **Profession of Faith** (*In Unison*)

**In love you came to a stable in Bethlehem
to become one with us.
In love you walked the plains and hills of Galilee and Judea
to teach us how to live.
In love you were nailed on a cross on Calvary
to bear away our sin.
In love you rose from a tomb in Joseph's garden
to defeat death's power over us.
In love you ascended beyond the clouds
to be our reigning Lord.
You came to love us so that we need never feel
unloved, deserted, alone, condemned.**

Prayers of the People (*Responsively*)

Remember your church, O Christ;
send your Spirit of unity, courage, and holiness.
Come to us in power, O Christ.
By shedding your blood, you have purified us;
keep us ready to welcome the Day of your coming.
Come to us in power, O Christ.
Call from among us bearers of your presence;
may they go to the far ends of the earth
as tokens of your friendship and signs of your light.
Come to us in power, O Christ.
Give joy to all your faithful servants;
may they follow you all the days of their life.
Come to us in power, O Christ.
Nurture within us your Spirit of love;
may we never close our hearts to any of our sisters and brothers.
Come to us in power, O Christ.
Bring to an end the divisions between Christians;
gather us in one visible communion.
Come to us in power, O Christ.
Have mercy on all who suffer persecution for your name's sake;

uphold them by your strong Spirit,
that they may remain true to you in all their trials.

Come to us in power, O Christ.

Comfort all who are suffering in their hearts or in their bodies;
give them health and peace to sing of your power.

Come to us in power, O Christ.

We pray for all who are leading the nations;
give them a sense of what is right,
that they may work toward peace and fullness of life for all.

Come to us in power, O Christ.

Give eternal rest to all who are dying;
may the light that never sets shine upon them.

Come to us in power, O Christ. Amen.

Commissioning

God sends us out into the world as His witnesses

 **Commission Hymn 133** *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

 **Benediction & Blessing**

 **Postlude**