



# Third Sunday of Advent

DECEMBER 15, 2024

WELCOME TO ZION

**PRELUDE** — Jill Sousek

**WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

CALL TO WORSHIP

We come with wonder in our hearts at the mystery that God's grace is for us.  
**We wonder if God can really do all the work.**

We come with wonder in our hearts at the mystery that God is for us.  
**We are focused on getting everything accomplished by a deadline.**

During this season of Wonder, let us remember that God, in love, brought salvation to us. **God's grace is for us.**

**HYMN #242** — *Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn*

ADVENT WREATH

The Lord, your God, is in your Midst.  
**God grace pulls us together.**

At that time God will bring you home, at the time when God gathers you.  
**God grace pulls us together.**

God proclaims good news of grace.  
**God grace pulls us together. Prepare us even now.**

We light the third candle to declare to everyone that grace pulls us together.

**HYMN #239** — *Hark, The Glad Sound* [VERSE 3]

**CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Holy God, you gather us together as your people. Help us! Remind us of your grace and mercy. Help us each day to see your grace-filled beginnings. Hear us as we confess you:

*A time for silent reflection and self-examination.*

For times when we fail to recognize that your grace is for us.

**Forgive us.**

For days when we forget that you not only love us, but also that you love all people.

**Forgive us.**

For the days when we fail to share your love and grace.

**Forgive us.**

For the times we are afraid to tell our own story or listen to someone tell theirs.

**Forgive us.**

For the times we exclude people from the community into which you draw us.

**Forgive us.**

For the times we are afraid to follow you.

**Forgive us.**

Dear friends, God is at work in our lives though it might be difficult to see some days. God's grace will continually claim, restore, and remind us once again that we are loved. In the name of Jesus  $\dagger$  your sins are forgiven, and you are set free to love. **Thanks be to God! Amen.**

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

## **W O R D**

### **FIRST READING — *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 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. 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 you 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.

## **SECOND READING — *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.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

The Holy Gospel, according to St. Luke, the 3rd chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord!**

## **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 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.”

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

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

## **CHILDREN’S SERMON**

### **THE SERMON — Pastor Scott Ludford**

**HYMN #257 — *Ō Come, Ō Come, Emmanuel* [vs. 1-4]**

## **APOSTLES’ CREED**

# PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Lord, in your mercy, receive our prayer.

## THE OFFERING

### OFFERING PRAYER

Creator God, you made the whole world, even the farthest stars, and you draw near to feed us. We praise you for these gifts of bread and wine. Strengthen us with this food that we may live in expectation for the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## COMMUNION

### THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

### LORD'S PRAYER [TRADITIONAL]

### COMMUNION VOLUNTARY — Jill Sousek

### BLESSING

### POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Generous God, we thank you for the gift of life, for the bread of salvation. We thank you for coming among us, for leading us into peace. We thank you for showering us with mercy, for sending us into the world. Come, Lord Jesus, and go with us as we feed the hungry in your name. Amen.

## SENDING

### BENEDICTION

### HYMN #264 — *Prepare the Royal Highway*

### DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.

Thanks be to God.

### POSTLUDE — Jill Sousek

*Christ  
IS Coming!*



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