



## Order of worship

3rd Sunday of Advent

**December 13, 2020**

### **Call to worship** *(based on Psalm 126)*

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

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

Then it was said among the nations,  
“The Lord has done great things for them.”

**The Lord has done great things for us,  
and we rejoiced.**

Restore our fortunes, O Lord.  
May those who sow in tears  
reap with shouts of joy.

**Those who go out weeping,  
come home with shouts of joy.**

### **Call to confession**

Our Advent hope is for the restoration of our world, yet we know that we have contributed to its brokenness. We also know that if we confess our sin we can be restored to a right and just standing before God and others. Let us therefore confess our sin, trusting God’s promised mercy.

### **Prayer of confession**

O God, you have called us to participate in your salvific work of rebuilding and repairing your creation. Yet we know we have fallen short of that calling. Indeed, we have contributed to the devastation of our world. We confess our sin, O God. Renew us and help us be discerning and ready partners in your cosmic restoration project. Amen.



### **Assurance of pardon**

God's mercy abounds. God's Advent grace goes before us, after us, through us — sometimes unbeknownst to us, restoring us and empowering us for participation in God's own work in the world. Friends, hear the good news of the gospel: we are forgiven and restored, set on right paths of justice and peace.

### **Prayer of illumination**

O God, send your Spirit to us to open our hearts, so that we may discern your Word in and through the words that we are about to hear.

### **Scripture readings**

### **Sermon**

### **Affirmation of faith** *(from A Brief Statement of Faith)*

**We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God.**

**Jesus proclaimed the reign of God:**

**preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives,  
teaching by word and deed and blessing children,  
healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted,  
eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners,  
and calling all to repent and believe the gospel.**

**Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition,**

**Jesus was crucified,**

**suffering the depths of human pain  
and giving his life for the sins of the world.**

**God raised this Jesus from the dead,**

**vindicating his sinless life,  
breaking the power of sin and evil,  
delivering us from death to life eternal.**

### **Call for the offering**

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. God has given to us many good gifts; in gratitude, let us give in return.



### **Prayer of dedication**

O God, we offer our gifts to you to further the promise of hope, peace, love and justice in our community and in our world. Empower us, O God, to follow these gifts into the world around us so that they, and we, become bearers of your peace, love and justice on the earth. Amen.

### **Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer**

O God, you have called us to follow in the way of the One who was anointed to bring good news to the poor, release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind and to let the oppressed go free. Empower us to be faithful disciples of Jesus. In this season of Advent, help us discern where you are already at work to renew and repair your good but broken creation. Help us to trust that your future, even now, is coming to realization in our midst. Enable us to stand in solidarity with those who have been marginalized in our world. Help us to lift up and listen to voices long silenced. And as we give ear to their hopes and fears, help us to join together to rebuild and restore your world on the foundation of the justice you envision for us in Christ.

Indeed, during these tumultuous days of racial, political and social reckoning, help us to overcome paralyzing fear in our personal lives, in our communities and in our world. Calm the fear in us and animate courage. Make us brave in confronting realities that deform and deface your world, so that we may participate in your reconciling work in our midst.

We pray also for the world of nations, especially for those places where violence is wreaking havoc upon human lives and your good creation. We pray for global solidarity as we continue to grapple with a raging pandemic. We pray for healthcare workers around the world as they tend to the sick, and for all who are desperately ill and their families. We pray for those in our own communities who have lost jobs, revenue, healthcare and loved ones during this relentless public health challenge. Help us to be agents of your love and care to those who are suffering. We pray especially for wise discernment by our nation's elected leadership, that they might work together constructively to find ways to aid those most afflicted.

We prayer all these things in the name of Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray saying, *Our Father...*



**Charge and benediction** *(based on 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24)*

Rejoice always,  
pray without ceasing,  
give thanks in all circumstances;  
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

May the God of peace sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit  
and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming  
of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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Liturgy written by Roger Gench  
and provided for free distribution.

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