

Order of Worship

3rd Sunday of Advent

December 12th, 2021

Call to worship (*From Philippians 4:4 and Isaiah 12:2*)

Leader: Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

**People: Surely God is my salvation; I will trust,
and will not be afraid.**

Leader: The Lord God is my strength and my might.

People: He has become my salvation.

Call to confession:

God promises forgiveness through Jesus Christ. On this third Sunday of Advent, let us approach God in humility and faith.

Prayer of confession

Eternal God, John the Baptist prepares the way by calling upon us to repent. We have failed to share as we should. We have failed to honor the poor and the oppressed. We have failed to bear fruit worthy of your salvation. Have mercy upon us, God. Heal and forgive us so we can welcome Christ with pure and genuine hearts. Amen.

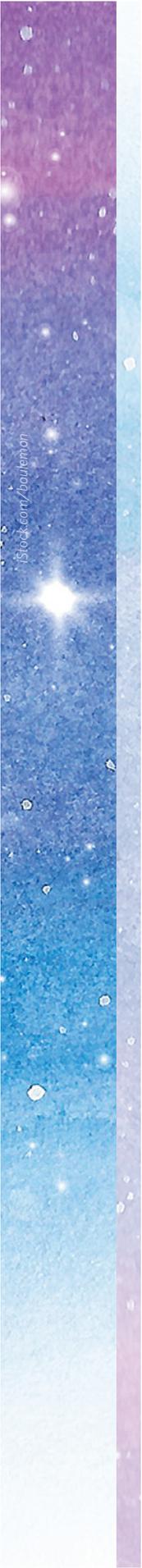
Assurance of pardon (*Isaiah 12:3-4*)

With joy, let us draw water from the springs of salvation. Give thanks to the Lord! Call on God's name.

Prayer for illumination

Open us, Holy One, to your Word and your Way. Clear our minds of holiday distractions and busy tasks. Fill our hearts with the humility we need to hear and receive the message you intend for us today. Amen.

Scripture readings



Sermon

Affirmation of faith *(From the "Book of Common Worship")*

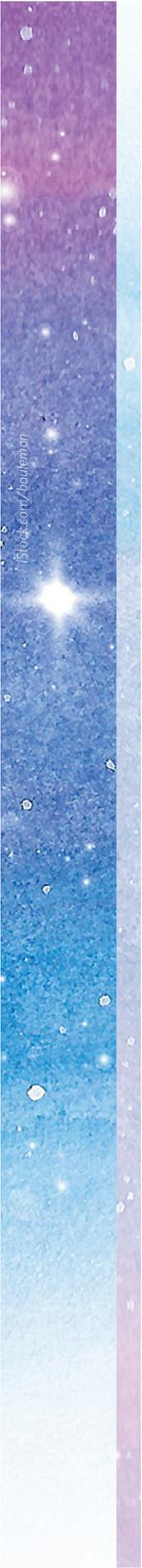
We believe there is no condemnation *Rom. 8:1, 28, 38, 39*
for those who are in Christ Jesus;
for we know that all things work together for good
for those who love God,
who are called according to God's purpose.
We are convinced that neither death, nor life,
nor angels, nor rulers,
nor things present, nor things to come,
nor powers, nor height, nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Call for the offering *(2 Peter 3:8-15)*

"All things in heaven and earth belong to God, who is coming in glory to reveal a new creation." Let us present our tithes and offerings to the Lord.

Prayer of dedication

Christ calls us to live generous and grateful lives. Take these gifts we offer today, O God, and use them to the fulfillment of Christ's ministry. May these gifts help to heal the sick, comfort the lonely, feed the hungry, house the homeless. As Christ's hands and feet, use us too, in service to building your beloved community. Amen.



Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer:

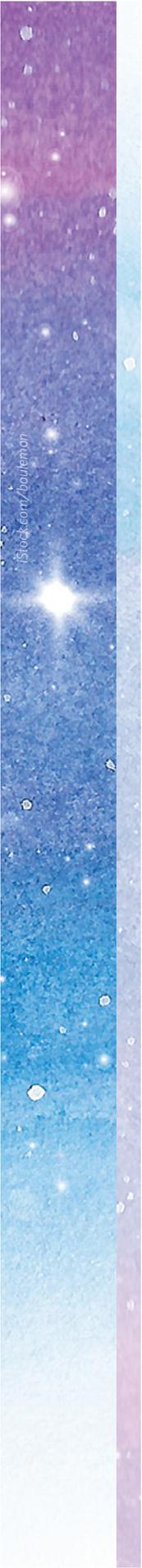
A voice cries out in the wilderness: we must prepare the way of the Lord. During this season of Advent, we prepare the way of Christ with our prayers of thanksgiving and intercession. God of our salvation, **hear our prayers.**

As the days grow short and the nights loom long, we praise you for these seasonal reminders that there is time for work and time for rest. For those of us who know warm homes and soft places to sleep, we thank you for these precious gifts. We pray for those who are homeless, or those whose home is unsafe or financially insecure. May all your children get the rest they need to thrive. God of our salvation, **hear our prayers.**

As divisiveness and conflict continue to plague us, Holy God, we thank you for the generosity, kindness and care this season encourages within us. As we contemplate the vulnerability of Christ, born a fragile infant in a violent world, let us drop our facades and the masks of strength we hide behind. May this season of Advent prepare us to celebrate the strength that can be found in weakness and the power held in humility and love. God of our salvation, **hear our prayers.**

As your people gather in homes and churches to celebrate this season, let us be reminded of all the reasons we have to rejoice in you. Let us be reminded of your protective presence, of your gentleness and love, of your peace which passes all understanding. Guard our hearts and minds this Advent, Savior God, so we can rejoice over your faithfulness through Jesus Christ our Lord. God of our salvation, **hear our prayers.**

As a people of faith, we lift these prayers to you, trusting you hear us and receive us. Finally, hear us now, as we pray the prayer Christ taught us by saying together, **"Our Father..."**



Charge and benediction (*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.

Amen.

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Liturgy written by Teri McDowell Ott
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