



# Order of Worship

Third Sunday of Advent

**December 11, 2022**

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## **Call to worship** (*Isaiah 35:10*)

Leader: The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing

**People: Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.**

Leader: Let us worship our God with joy!

## **Call to confession**

As we continue to prepare our hearts for the birth of Christ, let us confess the sins that keep us from glorifying and enjoying our God.

## **Prayer of confession**

**Gracious God, our doubt and despair lead us to low and long-suffering places. Our eyes downcast, we find nothing for which to give thanks, we find no reason to rejoice. Yet, you call us to resist the overwhelming forces that drag us down. You call us to rejoice in a babe about to be born. You call us to lift our eyes in hopeful anticipation of your kin-dom to come. Forgive us. Help us. Save us. Amen.**

## **Assurance of pardon**

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning" (*Lamentations 3:22-23*). Know that you are forgiven and be at peace. Amen.

## **Prayer for illumination**

Savior God, liberate us from the sins which distort our vision and alter our hearing as we approach your Word today. Let us not manipulate your Word to receive the message we desire. But, standing firm in your love, let us open ourselves to the truth you lay before us today. Amen.

## **Scripture readings**

## **Sermon**



**Affirmation of faith** (*Apostles' Creed*)

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord;  
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, dead, and buried;  
he descended into hell;  
the third day he rose again from the dead;  
he ascended into heaven,  
and sitteth on the right hand  
of God the Father Almighty;  
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost;  
the holy catholic church;  
the communion of saints;  
the forgiveness of sins;  
the resurrection of the body;  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

**Call for the offering**

With joy and gratitude for all we have been given,  
let us offer our tithes and gifts to God.

**Prayer of dedication**

Gracious God, accept these gifts in grateful response for your generosity. May these gifts bring joy to those most in need of Christ's mission and ministry. Amen.

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

On this third Sunday of Advent, we rejoice, Holy God. We rejoice in body, mind and spirit because we recognize your presence among us. As you restored the people of Israel, returning them to the promised land, you also are at work among the wilderness and despair of our lives. May the joy you graciously offer serve as steppingstones through our wilderness experiences. May the joy of love and life surround us when suffering overwhelms.

Merciful God, you know us and love us despite our faults and failings. You look upon our hearts and discern our honest intentions. As we turn to you now in prayer, guide us by your Holy Spirit, that our petitions for others may serve your will and show your steadfast love.

God, hear us as we pray for our world.



We pray for an end to the ongoing war in Ukraine. We pray for an end to nuclear proliferation, for nations to value diplomacy more than saber-rattling. We pray for hearts hardened by violence be healed by love and grace. We pray for evil powers to be overthrown, for wrongs to be made right, for those thirsty for justice to be satisfied.

God, hear us as we pray for the church.

Gracious God, you have called us to be the church of Jesus Christ, yet disagreements and division mar our unity. Hold us together in faith and service, breaking bread together, and proclaiming the good news to the world. May our conversations be faithful and meaningful, taking on the tough topics, open to hearing diverse perspectives and welcoming the disturbance of Christ's counter-cultural call.

God, hear us as we pray for our nation.

God of comfort, stand with those who grieve those lost to senseless violence. Open us to legislative solutions, so we can cease the mass shootings. Overthrow the powerful forces that feed our addiction to guns and profit off of our fear. Help our leaders value the lives of our nation's people over their political positions.

God, hear us as we pray for our loved ones.

God of compassion, bless us and those we love. Heal the sick. Comfort the grieving. Strengthen the weak. Calm the anxious. Renew the weary.

Mighty God, whose Word we trust and whose Spirit enables us to pray, accept our requests and further those which will bring about your purpose for our world.

Finally, hear us as we pray together the prayer Christ taught us,

**"Our Father..."**

### **Charge and benediction**

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice." (*Philippians 4:4*)

May God's joy carry you from this place and inspire you throughout this week, until we meet again.

May the grace, hope, peace and love of God the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer be with us all, now and forever. Amen.

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Liturgy written by Teri McDowell Ott  
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