



Order of Worship

Third Sunday of Advent
December 17, 2023

Call to worship

John the Baptist calls to us,

“Prepare the way of the Lord!”

This Advent, may we turn to the light of Christ.

The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it!

In faith and hope, let us turn and worship God!

Call to confession

When we come to worship God, we must first remember who we are, and we are people who often sin and turn from the ways of God. Relying on God's abundant grace, let us offer our confession together, knowing that we will be offered forgiveness in Christ.

Prayer of confession

Gracious God, long ago you sent Christ to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, and to proclaim liberty to the captives. You then asked us to go and do the same for we are the church of Jesus Christ. Forgive us, we pray, for we have not continued to share the good news. We have focused on ourselves and neglected to help others. Help us to continue to share the healing and loving words of Christ to all the world and to love our neighbors as ourselves. We ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.

Assurance of pardon

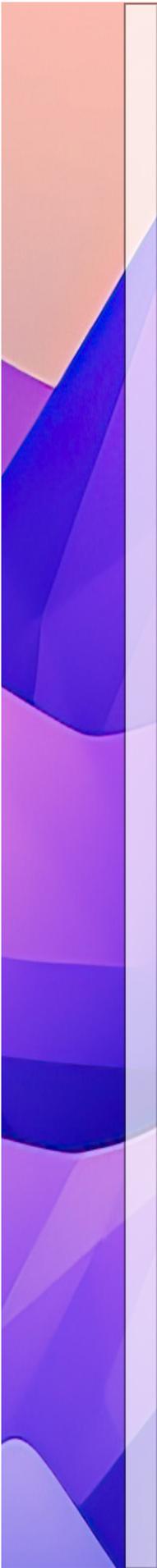
Hear the good news! Through the grace and love of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

Thanks be to God! Amen.

Prayer for illumination

Gracious God, for generations, your Word has brought love and life to your people. Speak to us now; we pray that we may hear, and in hearing, we may be transformed. Amen.





Scripture readings

Sermon

Affirmation of faith (from the PC(USA) Declaration of Faith)

Jesus Christ stands at the center of the biblical record.
The Bible is the account of God's word and action in history, together with his people's response in faith.
It tells how the Lord has moved with Israel and the church towards the kingdom of God,
his just and loving rule over all.
It is the story of the one God,
who is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
That story is still unfolding, and in faith, we make it our own.
It forms our memory and our hope.
It tells us who we are and what we are to do.
To retell it is to declare what we believe.

Call for the offering

In this holiday season, we find many demands made upon our time and resources. Yet in worship we are called to remember who is the author of all that we are and all that we have. In response to God's gracious action in our lives, we are called to give an offering to God.

Prayer of dedication

Thank you, God, for all that we have and all that we are. We take these gifts given today and dedicate them ever and only to you. Amen.

Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

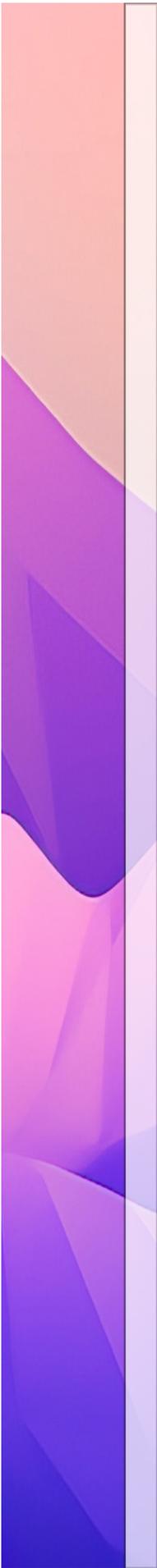
God of Advent, who promises to come again in restoration and wholeness, we acknowledge that our needs are not so different from those peoples of long ago. We too wander in darkness, and we yearn for your light to come into our lives. Trusting in Christ, we bring our prayers for the world.

We pray for the world that is shaped by so much sin. We pray that those oppressed would be set free, that those who are bound by injustice would find new life. We ask that you help us form this world more closely into the image of your kingdom. Help us to be faithful, in things big and small, and be your people in the world.

We pray for our nation. May unity and goodwill have the last word. May we see ourselves not by what divides us but by our identity as your beloved creation. Particularly when it comes to political parties and affiliations, temper our desire to win or be right with a concern for the greater good.

We pray for those who are sick, lonely and without hope. Grant them the sure and certain knowledge of your love and care and may we each, as your people, be a community that cares and heals. For those who grieve, or are near to death, we ask a special blessing.





In all things Lord, may point toward you and your light in the world.
We ask it all in the name of Jesus, and offer together the prayer that he
taught us, saying, **“Our Father....”**

Charge and benediction

May you leave this place remembering that we are witnesses to Christ in
our midst and let us share the ultimate hope we have for his Advent.

And may the peace of God, the love of Christ, and the fellowship of the
Holy Spirit be with you now and always. Amen.

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Liturgy written by Tara Bulger and provided for free
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