

Third Sunday in Advent – December 15, 2012

In Jesus' name welcome! We pray that this morning of worship, study, and fellowship will be a true source of blessing to you. We consider all visitors to be welcome guests and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer Upon Entering

O Father, in this Advent Season help me prepare myself for Jesus. May this be a time to examine my heart, turn from pet sins, and cling in greater faith to Jesus as my Savior. As John the Baptist prepared his countrymen to receive the Messiah, so use me to prepare the hearts of the unsaved and unchurched people around me to accept Christ. Hear and bless me for Jesus' sake. Amen.

A Word of Welcome (and ex corde prayer by a lay Christian)

Opening Hymn: “God Will Give Us the Promised One” (Tune: “I Am Bound for the Promised Land”)

Men: At Nazareth God sent the angel Gabriel to say:

“O Mary, you are full of grace, The Lord's with you today.”

All *God will give us the Promised One, God will give us the Promised*

Chorus: *One; Dear Lord above, send down Your love, And give us the Promised One.*

Women: At Bethlehem a Son was born, God gave the world a King, Yet poor and Humble was that place Where angel hosts did sing. *All Chorus:*

Men: At Cana when the wine ran out, The jars of water came, A miracle of love performed, In Jesus' holy name! *All Chorus:*

Women: At Golgotha He felt the pain, The cruel cross He bare, They took His broken body down, A grave received Him there. *All Chorus:*

Men: At Easter when they heard the news Their hearts rejoiced in song, They hurried out to spread the news That redemption's work was done. *All Chorus:*

All: In heaven bright there is no night, His face in radiance shines – O someday soon I'll live with Him Content there for all time! *Chorus:*

Preface (Tune – “Adeste Fideles”)

P: The Lord be with you.

C: *And with you, His servant.*

P: Oh, come, let us lift our hearts unto the Lord.

C: *With hearts uplifted Thanks to Him we render: With joy we come before Him, In gratefulness implore Him, With thankful hearts adore Him evermore!*

Invocation, Confession, and Assurance of Forgiveness

P: With boldness and wonder and expectation we face our God, the God of our birth, the God of our baptism, and the God of tomorrow.

C: *The God who is the one true God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In His name we come together and in His name we begin.*

P: O God, You are our Creator, and we give You thanks for creating us. We have often denied our humanity and rebelled against Your loving will for us. Forgive us, O Lord, for these our sins:

C: *for the times we cheat, when we try to get away with as little as possible instead of giving everything we can, when we take without thanking, for the times when we speak without love, when we say nothing but should, and when we spread gossip or just listen to it silently and eagerly, for selfishly using other people as objects, our families, our friends, in all this, O God, we recognize that we have often failed to be what You intended us to be, that we fail to love people the way You intended us to love them, and that we fail to love You as You deserve to be loved. For all this we are very sorry. Forgive us for the sake of Jesus, our Savior. Amen.*

P: When we ask God's forgiveness with a sincere heart and believe in Jesus as our personal Savior we may be assured of God's forgiveness.

All Sing During Lighting of Advent Wreath (Tune – “Adeste Fideles”)

O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him,
O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

O holy Lord we praise Thee, O holy Lord we praise Thee,
Forever we adore Thee, Christ the Lord!

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 40:1-9

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. ² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

³ A voice of one calling: “In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴ Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. ⁵ And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

⁶ A voice says, “Cry out.” And I said, “What shall I cry?”

“All people are like grass, and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field. ⁷ The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the LORD blows on them. Surely the people are grass. ⁸ The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.”

⁹ You who bring good news to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good news to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, “Here is your God!”

Responsive Reading

P: When God decided to give His Son to the world, He did so in a way startling different from what the world expected. Of course the world expects kings to arrive in dazzling splendor. But God had other plans. The scene of the Nativity was radiant with simplicity. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways,” says the Lord. The poet, George MacDonald, writes:

C: *They all were looking for a King To slay their foes and lift them high;*

Thou cam'st a little Baby thing That made a woman cry.

P: Men would have given a king a royal reception; yes, but God robed Himself with human flesh, frail humanity, and came as a Baby.

The Gospel: Matthew 3:10-12

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea ² and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” ³ This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: “A voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’”

⁴ John’s clothes were made of camel’s hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. ⁶ Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. ⁹ And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. ¹⁰ The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ “I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

Sermon Hymn: No.

Sermon: Text and theme

The Prayers

The Lord’s Prayer (Tune: “It Came Upon the Midnight...”)

Our Father, Lord, on heav’n’s high throne, Most holy be Your name.
Your Kingdom come, Your will be done On earth—in heaven the same.
Give us this day the food we need: Forgiven may we be;
Into temptation do not lead; From evil set us free.

Your’s is the Kingdom, unto You In grateful love we bow;
And Your’s the pow’r, Lord Let us view Your mighty presence now.
The glory Your’s; Your praise be sung By angel hosts and men
In ev’ry land, by ev’ry tongue Forevermore! Amen.

The Benediction: (Tune: “Angels We Have Heard on High”)

Pastor: May the good Lord bless and keep, Cause His face on you to shine,
Look on you with favor deep, Granting you His peace divine.

People: *Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!*

Silent Prayer