

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent

12/17/2023

Greg Fetzner, Pastor

J.V. Trautwein, Pastor Emeritus

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## PRELUDE and ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Please stand, as you are able.*

**P** In the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** **Amen**

**P** Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C** **Amen**

**P** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

*Silence for reflection and self-examination.*

**P** Most merciful God,

**C** **we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen**

**P** Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake, forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**C Amen**

**GATHERING HYMN** [ELW#259 "Fling Wide the Door"](#)

**P** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C And also with you.**

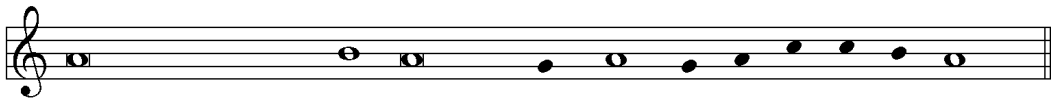
*The first three candles of the Advent Wreath are lit as the following prayer is offered.*

**P** Let us pray. Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe. Your prophets spoke of a day when the desert would blossom and waters would break forth in the wilderness. Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath. Strengthen our hearts as we prepare for the coming of the Lord. May he give water to all who thirst, for he is our light and our salvation. Blessed be God forever.

**C Amen**



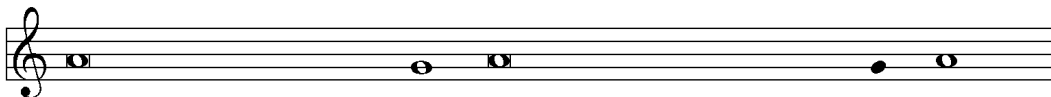
**A** In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **C** Lord, have mer - cy.



**A** For the peace from a-bove, and for our sal-va-tion, let us pray to the Lord.



**C** Lord, have mer - cy.



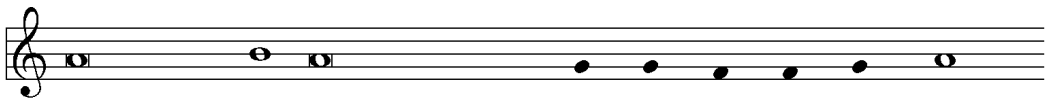
**A** For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



and for the u - ni - ty of all, let us pray to the Lord.



**C** Lord, have mer - cy.



**A** For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor - ship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. **C** Lord, have mer - cy.



**A** Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra-cious Lord. **C** A - men

**HYMN OF PRAISE** [Glory to God in the Highest](#)

Assisting minister



Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.

All



Lord God, heav-en-ly King, al - might-y God and Fa - ther, we



wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.



Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,



you take a-way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us;



you are seat-ed at the right hand of the Fa-ther: re - ceive our prayer.



For you a-lone are the Ho - ly One, you a-lone are the Lord,



you a-lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir-it,



in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** **And also with you.**

**P** Let us pray. Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** **Amen**

*Please be seated.*

**PSALM 126**

- L <sup>1</sup>When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, then were we like those who dream.
- C <sup>2</sup>**Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy.  
Then they said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them."**
- L <sup>3</sup>The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.
- C <sup>4</sup>**Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like the watercourses of the Negeb.**
- L <sup>5</sup>Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy.
- C <sup>6</sup>**Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed,  
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.**

**EZRA 1:1-4; 3:1-4, 10-13**

L A reading from Ezra: <sup>1:1</sup>In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, to fulfill the word of the Lord from the mouth of Jeremiah, the Lord stirred up the spirit of King Cyrus of Persia so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also in writing, saying:

<sup>2</sup>"Thus says King Cyrus of Persia: The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. <sup>3</sup>Let any of those among you who are of his people—may their God be with them!—go up to Jerusalem in Judah and rebuild the house of the Lord, the God of Israel; he is the God who is in Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup>And let all survivors in whatever place they reside be assisted by the people of their place with silver and gold, with goods, and with livestock, besides freewill offerings for the house of God in Jerusalem."

<sup>3:1</sup>When the seventh month came, and the Israelites were in their towns, the people gathered together as one in Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup>Then Jeshua son of Jozadak with his fellow priests and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel with his kin set out to build the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings on it, as prescribed in the law of Moses the man of God. <sup>3</sup>They set up the altar on its foundation because they were in dread of the people of the lands, and they offered burnt offerings upon it to the Lord, morning and evening. <sup>4</sup>And they kept the Festival of Booths, as prescribed, and

offered the daily burnt offerings by number according to the ordinance, as required for each day,

<sup>10</sup>When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, the priests in their vestments were stationed to praise the Lord with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, according to the directions of King David of Israel; <sup>11</sup>and they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the Lord,  
"For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever toward Israel."

And all the people responded with a great shout when they praised the Lord because the foundation of the house of the Lord had been laid. <sup>12</sup>But many of the priests and Levites and heads of families, old people who had seen the first house on its foundations, wept with a loud voice when they saw this house, though many shouted aloud for joy, <sup>13</sup>so that the people could not distinguish the sound of the joyful shout from the sound of the people's weeping, for the people shouted so loudly that the sound was heard far away.

**L** The word of the Lord.

**C** **Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN OF THE DAY** [ELW#254 "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"](#)

**SERMON:** [\(Sermon Audio Link\)](#)

*Please stand, as you are able.*

**P** Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

**C** **We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day**

he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen**

- L With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration.

*A brief silence.*

- L Fill our mouths with laughter as we bear witness to the great things you have done. Give your church a spirit of gladness as we gather and as we are sent. Merciful God,  
**C receive our prayer.**

- L Let the trees of the field sing your praise. Protect forests, orchards, rainforests, and all wooded areas from disease and deforestation. Keep us grateful for their gifts of oxygen, food, shade, and shelter. Merciful God,  
**C receive our prayer.**

- L You love justice and promise your favor to those who are oppressed, brokenhearted, and incarcerated. Grant wisdom and compassion to those who work for public safety and all who work within prisons, jails, and courts, that mercy may increase and violence wither away. Merciful God,  
**C receive our prayer.**

- L Give us strength to pray for our world without ceasing and provoke us toward love and good deeds for all who are in need. We pray especially for Bob Brackbill, Heidi Brackbill, Parker Brennan, Rebecca Brennan, the Elshafei family, Alexis Erdman, Samantha Erdman, the Fleming family, Jeff Fultz, Mary Goehring, Bob Hardy, Angela Hays, Mark Hughes, the Johnson family, Robert Karner, Charles Larsen, Charlotte Leer, the McNamara family, Donna Mayhew, Wendy Neumann, Julie Obie, Peter



Olsen, Brenda Penyak, Dottie Reitz, Robert Reitz, Claudia Schober, D. J. Singer, Jack Smith, MaKenzie Snyder, the Spiegler family, Chuck Trautwein, Esther Trautwein, Rich Wohkittel, and Pastor Jack. Provide for all without adequate housing, food, employment, or access to health care. Empower us as helpers and advocates.

Merciful God,

**C receive our prayer.**

**L** Open our hearts to those who serve as truth-tellers in our church and in our society. Bless leaders in church and society in their task of proclamation. Amplify voices of peacemakers, advocates, and especially those whose voices are ignored or marginalized. Merciful God,

**C receive our prayer.**

**L** With gratitude we rejoice in the saints who witnessed to your life in all circumstances, in whom your Spirit was not quenched, even in death. Through them, teach us always to hold fast to what is good. Merciful God,

**C receive our prayer.**

**L** Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy.

**C Amen**

**P** The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**C And also with you.**

**OFFERING\*:** ([On-Line giving Link](#))

*The Offering is received and presented at the altar.*



☩ Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re-new a right spir -



it with-in me. Cast me not a-way from your pres-ence, and take

not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re - store to me the  
 joy of your sal - va - tion, and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

**P** Let us pray. Merciful Father,  
**C** we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us - ourselves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

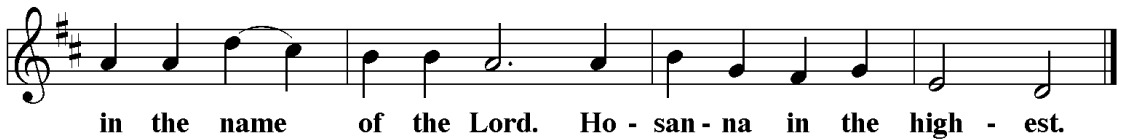
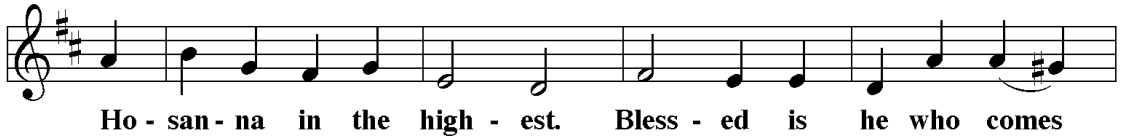
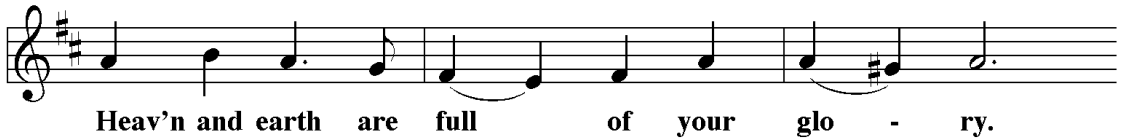
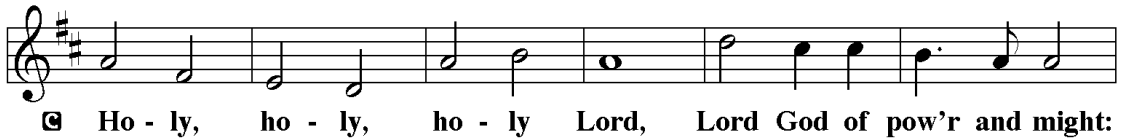
**P** The Lord be with you. **C** And al - so with you.

**P** Lift up your hearts. **C** We lift them to the Lord.

**P** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C** It is right to give him thanks and praise.

*The thanksgiving continues with the preface; the congregation responds:*



**P** Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.

**C Amen**





**C** Thank the Lord and sing his praise; tell ev-'ry-one what he has done.



Let ev-'ry-one who seeks the Lord re-joice and proud-ly bear his name.



He re-calls his prom-is-es and leads his peo-ple forth in joy



with shouts of thanks - giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

**P** Let us pray. Almighty God, you gave your Son both as a sacrifice for sin and a model of the godly life. Enable us to receive him always with thanksgiving, and to conform our lives to his; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C** Amen

**P** The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and † give you peace.

**C** Amen

**SENDING HYMN** [ELW#260 "The King Shall Come"](#)

**P** Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

# Upcoming Events!

- **December 17** – TONIGHT! 6:00 pm Chocolate and Carols with the Community and Scouts
- **December 24** – 9:30 am Regular Service, 7 pm Christmas Eve Service
- **January 6** – Saturday, 10 am – Taking down the greens
- **February 18** – Lady Terps Basketball Game, 1 pm (contact Bob Hardy for tickets)

\*Offering to be sent to

Robert Brackbill

10274 Raleigh Tavern Lane

Ellicott City, MD 21042

Epiphany Lutheran Church

9122 Sybert Drive

Columbia Hills

Ellicott City, MD 21043

<https://www.epiphanylutherancolumbia.org>

Please note that you now have the opportunity of online giving with the link found after the

offering designation or here: [https://tithe.ly/give\\_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291](https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291)

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