

## THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Rejoice Always

December 12 & 13, 2015

5:00pm & 8:00am

### AS WE GATHER

Today we rejoice. Zephaniah the prophet calls for rejoicing because the Lord is in the midst of His people. In Paul's letter to the Church in Philippi, he repeatedly encourages the Church to rejoice, because the Lord's coming is at hand. Our Lord came to us once, He will return, and even now is with us in Word and Sacrament. Today we also rejoice in the faithful commitments of God's people as we are "Renewed in Christ." So let us rejoice in all God's gifts!

### WELCOME

### STEWARDSHIP STORY

But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman,  
born under law, to redeem those under law,  
that we might receive the full rights of sons. (Galatians 4:4-5 NIV)

### HANDSHAKES & HUGS

✠ PREPARATION ✠

### OPENING HYMN #515 "Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers"

Rejoice, rejoice, believers, And let your lights appear;  
The evening is advancing, And darker night is near.  
The Bridegroom is arising And soon is drawing nigh.  
Up, pray and watch and wrestle; At midnight comes the cry.

The watchers on the mountain Proclaim the Bridegroom near;  
Go forth as He approaches With alleluias clear.

The marriage feast is waiting; The gates wide open stand.  
Arise, O heirs of glory; The Bridegroom is at hand.

The saints, who here in patience Their cross and suff' rings bore,  
Shall live and reign forever When sorrow is no more.  
Around the throne of glory The Lamb they shall behold;  
In triumph cast before Him Their diadems of gold.

Our hope and expectation, O Jesus, now appear;  
Arise, O Sun so longed for, O'er this benighted sphere.  
With hearts and hands uplifted, We plead, O Lord, to see  
The day of earth's redemption That sets Your people free!

(Rise)

### INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People: Amen.**

### CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION *Psalm 85:7, 9*

Pastor: The reason for rejoicing is the good news that our Savior has come. We are nearing the day on which we celebrate His birth. But we do not always rejoice. This is a symptom of our fallen human nature, and it shows our continued need for Christ. But God gives us infinite grace. So, let us confess our sins to God, our heavenly Father. Most merciful God,

**People: we confess that we have often let the cares of this world, the expectations of our neighbors, and our own self-images distract us from you and your Word. We have let the things of this world come between us and your promises, the peace you offer, and even your Son's presence among us now. We have failed to love you with our whole heart; we have failed to love our neighbors as ourselves. Forgive us for Jesus' sake, and restore in us right spirits and joyful hearts. With the psalmist we plead, "Show us your steadfast love, O LORD, and grant us your salvation."**

Pastor: "Surely God's salvation is near to those who fear Him, that glory may dwell in our land." I, a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People: Amen.**

## SALUTATION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray. Lord Jesus Christ, who came in the midst of your people once and are among us even now,

**People: open the eyes of our hearts that we may see you among us, rejoice in your salvation, and celebrate your presence into eternity,**

Pastor: for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

(Be seated)

✠ WORD ✠

**OLD TESTAMENT READING** *Zephaniah 3:14–20* (Rejoice; the Lord is in your midst. He will rejoice over you.) Sing, O Daughter of Zion; shout aloud, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O Daughter of Jerusalem! The LORD has taken away your punishment, he has turned back your enemy. The LORD, the King of Israel, is with you; never again will you fear any harm. On that day they will say to Jerusalem, "Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands hang limp. The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing." "The sorrows for the appointed feasts I will remove from you; they are a burden and a reproach to you. At that time I will deal with all who oppressed you; I will rescue the lame and gather those who have been scattered. I will give them praise and honor in every land where they were put to shame. At that time I will gather you; at that time I will bring you home. I will give you honor and praise among all the peoples of the earth when I restore your fortunes before your very eyes," says the LORD.

**EPISTLE** *Philippians 4:4–7* (Rejoice for the Lord is at hand.)

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

(Rise)

**HOLY GOSPEL** *Luke 7:18–28* (The promised Messiah has indeed come.)

John's disciples told him about all these things. Calling two of them, he sent them to the

Lord to ask, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?" When the men came to Jesus, they said, "John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?' " At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. So he replied to the messengers, "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me." After John's messengers left, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind? If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear expensive clothes and indulge in luxury are in palaces. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written: " 'I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

(Be seated)

## CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

**SERMON HYMN #794 "The Lord, My God, Be Praised"** *(Please rise for last stanza)*

The Lord, my God, be praised, My light, my life from heaven;  
My maker, who to me Has soul and body given;  
My Father, who will shield And keep me day by day  
And make each moment yield New blessings on my way.

The Lord, my God, be praised, My trust, my life from heaven;  
The Father's own dear Son, whose life for me was given,  
Who for my sin atoned With His most precious blood  
And give to me by faith The highest heav'nly good.

The Lord, my God, be praised, My hope, my life from heaven,  
The Spirit, whom the Son In love to me has given.  
His grace revives my heart And gives my spirit pow'r,  
Help, comfort, and support In sorrow's gloomy hour.

(Rise) The Lord, my God, be praised, My God, the everliving,  
To whom the heav'nly host Their laud and praise are giving.  
The Lord, my God, be praised, In whose great name I boast,  
God Father, God the Son, And God the Holy Ghost.

**SERMON**                      *“Sing, Shout, Be Glad, and Rejoice”*                      *Zephaniah 3:14-20*

(Rise)

**NICENE CREED** *(found on the inside back cover of the hymnal)*

(Be seated)

**COMMITMENT CELEBRATION - John Sproul**

Renewed in Christ Commitments are brought forward along with the regular offerings. (Ushers will gather from those unable to walk forward)

**PRAYER OF COMMITMENTS**

Pastor: Lord God,

**People: you have made us new; bless the response we have made to that amazing reality today. Guide those who are still praying about what their commitment might be. Renew in all of us a trust in your promises to always provide for us, and may we see with our own eyes the vision you have for us. In the name of the one who has reconciled us to you, Christ our Lord, we pray it; Amen.**

(Rise)

**PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

Pastor: Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs. God, our Father, your Son bids us to pray with confidence. Give us your Spirit to see you in the person of your Son, who came to bear our sins and be our Savior.

**People: Encourage us in true faith and fill us with joy, knowing He will come again to make all things new.**

Pastor: Father in heaven, send laborers into the harvest — pastors, missionaries, teachers and other servants of the Word — to declare your Law and proclaim your saving Gospel in Christ Jesus.

**People: Bless Pastor Ferry and family as they serve in Indonesia and our Groundwork Guatemala team as they continue to prepare for their mission trip.**

Pastor: Father in heaven, we give you thanks for extending your kingdom among us as Denver Miriam Rudig is baptized into Christ this weekend.

**People: Grant us all to rejoice in your goodness in claiming us as your children and grant us to grow in grace day by day.**

Pastor: Father in heaven, you have promised us in your Word to work in us and among us to accomplish great things for the kingdom of Christ.

**People: Receive and bless our “Renewed in Christ” commitments as offerings of cheerful hearts and use them to bless the ministries of St. Paul’s in accordance with your will.**

Pastor: Father in heaven, you graciously rule your people even as your strong arm keeps evil at bay through right governance in this world. Bless and guide all who are in authority to rule justly, and bless your people to live holy lives.

**People: Sustain the faith of all who suffer mockery, persecution and death for the name of Christ, and keep us in true faith in your kingdom.**

Pastor: Father in heaven, you sent your Son to be born of woman to redeem us and reclaim us as your own. Bless all mothers in their calling to nurture and raise their children.

**People: Bless all parents with wisdom and guidance as they teach their children the path of life.**

Pastor: Wise Father, your will is done without our prayer. Turn our hearts to you, so that we trust your wise counsel in all things and trust your good and gracious providence in our daily lives.

**People: Open our hearts to all your promises, that we may know your will and receive your gifts in true faith.**

Pastor: Kind Father, your Son gave bread to the hungry, sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf; He made the lame to walk, raised the dead and preached Good News to the poor. Help again your suffering people, the sick, the dying, the grieving and all who are anxious of heart especially Rosalie, Judy, Mae, Marion, Debra, Helen, Leonard, Shirley, June, LuEva, Eleanor, Linda, Gladys, Russ, Kathleen, Jack, Shirley, Marion, Gretchen, Lois and Sarah.

**People: Graciously give them all that they need for their well-being; give them ears to hear the Good News of life and salvation; quiet their fears with your love.**

Pastor: Father, forgive us our sins and cleanse us from unrighteousness. Soften the hearts of those who reject your Word, and renew those whose faith is faltering.

**People:** Open our ears to your call of repentance and to your promise of mercy.  
Grant us to come to your table in true faith, gladly receiving Christ's body and blood and the forgiveness He promises.

**Pastor:** Father in heaven, keep far from us Satan and all his wickedness and lies.  
Give us eyes to see evil and to flee from it to your Son, who restores those who have fallen.

**People:** Guide us by your Spirit and in our last hour, bring us to yourself in peace and safety.

**Pastor:** Lord of life, bless all those who grieve as well as those who remember loved ones, especially Phil and Jean as they remember Ruth and Clarence as well as Katie and Phil.

**People:** Grant us also to rejoice with the Graf family as they celebrate Erika's Birthday and the Baxter family celebrating Samantha's birthday.

**Pastor:** Father, into your hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People:** Amen.

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

✠ SACRAMENT ✠

## WORDS OF OUR LORD

### THE PEACE OF THE LORD

**Pastor:** The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**People:** Amen.

## AGNUS DEI

"Lamb of God"

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O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God, You take the sin of the world away;

O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God, Have mercy on us, Lord, we pray.

O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God, You take the sin of the world away;

Have mercy on us, Jesus Christ, And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.

(Be seated)

**DISTRIBUTION** Those guests who desire to commune who are members of another LCMS congregation may do so; if you are coming from another church background, please see the pastor or an elder first.

## HYMN #618 "I Come, O Savior, to Thy Table"

I come, O Savior, to Thy table, For weak and weary is my soul;  
Thou, Bread of Life, alone art able To satisfy and make me whole:

**Refrain: Lord, May Thy body and Thy blood Be for my soul the highest good!**

Thy heart is filled with fervent yearning That sinners may salvation see Who, Lord, to Thee in faith are turning; So I, a sinner, come to Thee. *Refrain*

Unworthy though I am, O Savior, Because I have a sinful heart,  
Yet Thou Thy lamb wilt banish never, For Thou my faithful shepherd art: *Refrain*

Weary am I and heavy laden; With sin my soul is sore oppressed;  
Receive me graciously and gladden my heart, for I am now Thy guest. *Refrain*

What higher gift can we inherit? It is faith's bond and solid base;  
It is the strength of heart and Spirit, The covenant of hope and grace. *Refrain*

## HYMN #700 "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"

Love divine, all loves excelling, Joy of heav'n to earth come down!  
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling, All Thy faithful mercies crown.  
Jesus, Thou art all compassion, Pure, unbounded love Thou art;  
Visit us with Thy salvation, Enter ev'ry trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit Into ev'ry troubled breast;  
Let us all in Thee inherit; Let us find Thy promised rest.  
Take away the love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be;  
End of faith, as its beginning, Set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty, to deliver; Let us all Thy life receive;  
Suddenly return, and never, Nevermore Thy temples leave.  
Thee we would be always blessing, Serve Thee as Thy hosts above,  
Pray and praise Thee without ceasing, Glory in Thy perfect love.

Finish then Thy new creation, Pure and spotless let us be;  
Let us see Thy great salvation Perfectly restored in Thee,  
Changed from glory into glory, Till in heav'n we take our place  
Till we cast our crowns before Thee, Lost in wonder, love, and praise!

### HYMN #643 "Sent Forth by God's Blessing"

Sent forth by God's blessing, Our true faith confessing,  
 The people of God from His dwelling take leave.  
 The Supper is ended. O now be extended  
 The fruits of this service in all who believe.  
 The seed of His teaching, Receptive souls reaching,  
 Shall blossom in action for God and for all. His grace did invite us,  
 His love shall unite us To work for God's kingdom and answer His call.

With praise and thanksgiving To God ever living,  
 The tasks of our ev'ry day life we will face.  
 Our faith ever sharing, In love ever caring,  
 Embracing His children of each tribe and race.  
 With Your feast You feed us, With Your light now lead us;  
 Unite us as one in this life that we share. Then may all the living  
 With praise and thanksgiving Give honor to Christ and His name that we bear.

### COMMON DISMISSAL

(Rise)

### POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Let us pray. We give thanks, almighty God, that in this Sacrament you have bestowed on us your peace which surpasses all understanding. Guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus, and accompany us throughout our daily lives with rejoicing and celebration; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

### BENEDICTION *Psalm 85:8*

Pastor: "Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,

People: **for He will speak peace to His people, to His saints."**

Pastor: 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.

People: Amen.

### CLOSING HYMN #813 "Rejoice, O Pilgrim Throng"

*Stanzas 1, 3, 5-7*

Rejoice, O pilgrim Throng! Rejoice, give thanks and sing;  
 Your festal banner wave on high, The cross of Christ your king.

**Refrain Rejoice! Rejoice! Rejoice, give thanks, and sing!**

With all the angel choirs, With all the saints on earth  
 Pour out the strains of joy and bliss, True rapture, noblest mirth. **Refrain**

Still lift your standard high, Still march in firm array,  
 As pilgrims through the darkness wend Till dawns the golden day. **Refrain**

At last the march shall end; The wearied ones shall rest;  
 The pilgrims find their home at last, Jerusalem the blest. **Refrain**

Praise Him who reigns on high, The Lord whom we adore:  
 The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, One God forevermore. **Refrain**

Preacher

Liturgist

Lectors

Acolytes

Children's Ministry

Organist

Music Coordinator

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Pastor Harold Bender

Pastor Gregg Stanton

Dan Vaclav, Laurel Privatt

Macky Wessler, Sabrina Lutz

Laurel Privatt

Roger Gottschalk

Kim Woller

## Christmas Worship Opportunities

December 24<sup>th</sup> - Christmas Eve 4:00, 6:00pm

Christmas Candlelight Service 11:00pm

December 25<sup>th</sup> - Christmas Day - 9:00am

December 26<sup>th</sup> - 5:00pm

December 27<sup>th</sup> - 8:00 & 10:30am

December 31<sup>st</sup> - New Year's Eve - 6:00pm

