

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

The Trees of Christmas

December 13, 2014

5:00 PM

AS WE GATHER

The weeks before Christmas bring a time of joyful preparation to our homes, our communities, and our churches. As people who are waiting to welcome the Lord Jesus once again, we make a priority of making His way straight in our lives. The many competing voices and sounds of the season may seek to distract us, but we know what our priorities are to be. We are listening for a specific sound—the sound of the good news of the coming Savior! With the hymn writer we joyfully say, “Prepare my heart, Lord Jesus; Turn not from me aside, And help me to receive You This blessed Advent-tide.” *LSB 354:4*

PRE-SERVICE

St. Paul's piano students

WELCOME

MINISTRY MOMENT

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God,
"who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."
(Revelation 1:8, NIV)

HANDSHAKES & HUGS

✠ PREPARATION ✠

OPENING HYMN #387 "Joy to the World"

Introduction: Band

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found, Far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love, And wonders, wonders of His love.

(Rise)

INVOCATION

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

People: Amen.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: O God our Father, since you have set forth the way of life for us in your beloved Son, we confess with shame our slowness to learn of Him, our failure to follow Him, and our reluctance to bear the cross.

People: Have mercy on us and forgive us, O Lord.

Pastor: Forgive us for the poverty of our worship, our neglect of fellowship and of the Means of Grace, our hesitating witness for Christ, our evasion of responsibility in your service, and our imperfect stewardship of your gifts.

People: Have mercy on us and forgive us, O God.

Pastor: Forgive us that so little of your love has reached others through us, that we have been thoughtless in our judgments, hasty in condemnation, grudging in forgiveness, slow to seek reconciliation, and unwilling to help our neighbors as we ought.

People: Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love. Create in us clean hearts, O God, and put a new and right spirit within us.

Pastor: Upon this your confession and by the command of our Lord, I, a called and ordained servant of Christ, forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

Pastor: May the God of peace sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit, soul, and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, and He will do it.

People: Amen.

Confession adapted from "A Service of Prayer and Preaching III," *Worship Supplement*, © 1969 Concordia Publishing House. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

RESPONSIVE PSALM 96

Pastor: Sing to the Lord a new song.

People: Sing to the Lord a new song.

Pastor: Sing to the Lord, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day.

People: Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.

Pastor: Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth.

People: Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it. Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy;

Pastor: For he comes to judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his truth.

All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

SALUTATION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray. Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come to us with Your presence. Restore to us the joy of Your salvation and grant us a deep and abiding peace for all of our days. By the working of the Holy Spirit, lead us to share the joy that is ours without hesitation. Use our children and the many trees of Christmas to present

your wonderful story of salvation. Keep us in true faith until the coming of Your glorious kingdom, where You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

(Be seated)

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS AND ADULT CONFIRMATION

THE TREES OF CHRISTMAS

"All the trees of the forest will sing for joy." Psalm 96:12

INTRODUCTION

SONG "Gather Around the Christmas Tree" *Students*

Part 1: The Garden Trees

HYMN #561 "The Tree of Life" *stanzas 1-2 Students*

Part 2: The Family Tree

SONG "Baby, What You Goin' to Be?" *Jr. High Choir*

Part 3: The Branching Tree

HYMN "**Behold, a Branch is Growing**" *(TLH #645)*
Students & Congregation

Behold, a Branch is growing Of love-liest form and grace,
As prophets sung, fore-knowing; It springs from Jesse's race
And bears one little Flow'r In midst of coldest winter,
At deepest midnight hour.

Isaiah hath fore-told It In words of promise sure,
And Mary's arms enfold It, A virgin meek and pure.
Thro' God's eternal will This Child to her is given
At midnight calm and still.

The shepherds heard the story, Proclaimed by angels bright,
How Christ, the Lord of Glory, Was born on earth this night.
To Bethlehem they sped And in the manger found Him,
As angel heralds said.

This Flower whose fragrance tender With sweetness fills the air,
Dispels with glorious splendor The darkness everywhere.
True Man, yet very God; From sins and death He saves us
And lightens every load.

O Savior, Child of Mary, Who felt our human woe;
O Savior, King of Glory, Who dost our weakness know,
Bring us at length, we pray, To the bright courts of heaven
And to the endless day.

READING OF THE HOLY GOSPEL Luke 2:1-20

HYMN #363 "Silent Night"

Introduction: Band

Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing, Alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior is born!

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

Part 4: The Calvary Tree

HYMN #561 "The Tree of Life" *Students will sing stanza 3*

Congregation please join in singing stanza 4

Now from that tree of Jesus' shame Flows eternal in His name;
For all who trust and will believe, Salvation's living fruit receive.
And of this fruit so pure and sweet
The Lord invites the world to eat, To find within this cross of wood
The tree of life with ev'ry good.

Part 5: The Christmas Tree

SONG "O Christmas Tree"

Introduction: Band

O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,
how sturdy God hath made thee.

O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,
how sturdy God hath made thee.

Thou bids't us all place faithfully
our trust in God, unchangingly.

O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,
how sturdy God hath made thee.

O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,
you come from God, eternal.

O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,
you come from God, eternal.

A symbol of the Lord of Love
whom God to man sent from above.

O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,
you come from God, eternal.

O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,
thou has a wondrous message.

O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,
thou has a wondrous message.

Thou dost proclaim the Savior's birth;
good will to men and peace on earth.

O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,
thou has a wondrous message.

MESSAGE OF JOY

OFFERINGS As your offering is collected, ***please sign our attendance book*** located at the end of the pew. If you are a visitor, please leave your address and phone. After you are finished, please pass the book along to others in your pew, and return the book to the center aisle. You may check the register to see the names of those to greet after the service.

Then raise to Christ a mighty song,
And shout His name, His mercies tell!
Sing, heav'n-ly host, your praise prolong,
And all on earth, your anthem swell!
All hail, O Lamb for sinners slain! Forever let the song ascend!
Worthy the Lamb, enthroned to reign,
All glory, pow'r! Amen, amen.

HYMN #629 "What Is This Bread"

What is this bread? Christ's body risen from the dead:
This bread we break, This life we take,
Was crushed to pay for our release.
O taste and see the Lord is peace.

What is this wine? The blood of Jesus shed for mine;
The cup of grace Brings His embrace
Of life and love until I sing! O taste and see the Lord is King.

So who am I, That I should live and He should die Under the rod?
My God, my God, Why have You not forsaken me?
O taste and see the Lord is free.

Yet is God here? Oh, yes! By Word and promise clear,
In mouth and soul He makes us whole
Christ, truly present in this meal.
O taste and see the Lord is real.

Is this for me? I am forgiven and set free!
I do believe That I receive His very body and His blood.
O taste and see the Lord is good.

COMMON DISMISSAL

(Rise)

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Gracious God, our heavenly Father, we thank you for
having welcomed us at Your Table, giving us a foretaste
of the feast to come in Your eternal kingdom.
Strengthen us through this blessed gift that we may live
in hope-filled anticipation of the end of all earthly things
and may await with joy Your final advent in glory. May
Your Holy Spirit enlighten us with His gifts that we may

be kept in the one true faith until the last and greatest
day of our Lord's return. We ask this in the name of
Jesus, our Savior.

People: Amen.

BENEDICTION

Pastor: The blessing of almighty God, the Father, the ✠ Son, and
the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you
always.

People: Amen.

CLOSING HYMN #349 "Hard the Glad Sound"

Hark the glad sound! The Savior comes,
The Savior promised long;
Let every heart prepare a throne And every voice a song.

He comes the pris'ners to release,
In Satan's bondage held.
The gates of brass before Him burst, The iron fetters yield.

He comes the broken heart to bind,
The bleeding soul to cure,
And with the treasures of His grace To enrich the humble poor.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
Thy welcome shall proclaim,
And heav'ns eternal arches ring With Thy beloved name.

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Preacher	Pastor Harold Bender
Liturgist	Pastor Gregg Stanton
Acolyte	Ryan Murray
5th-8th Grade Teachers	Danielle Jackson, Bob Woller, Jack Burkee, Jim Dittman
Band Director/Music Teacher	Shannon Wiegert
Piano Accompanist	Kim Woller
Band Volunteers	Jim Rundel, Robert Rothwell, Jim Hutchinson, Darlene Land, Emma Bagin
Organist	Roger Gottschalk
Music Coordinator	Kim Woller