

December 14, 2025 + Third Sunday of Advent

We are called to let our light shine as instruments of the Holy Spirit so all may know God's love.

Call to Worship

We gather together in this place:

prophets and dreamers, singers and poets,

we who dare to imagine a world renewed;

we who dare to dream God's dream.

We proclaim expectation with Isaiah!

God's redemption is near!

Through tears and through trials,

we hold fast to our hope.

Do not fear, for God is faithful.

Our redemption rises with the dawn.

Come and worship, all you who dream and wait.

We have come to wonder and praise.

Confession & Forgiveness

Answering the invitation of God, who loves justice and promises us mercy, let us confess our sin.

God of joy, **you created this world for joy. We**

confess that we construct barriers to protect our happiness, even at the expense of others.

We fill ourselves with good things, taking no heed of those who are left empty.

We ignore oppression when it benefits our interests.

We dismiss the brokenhearted when we feel

inconvenienced. We crave power over liberation.

Remember us in compassion and come to our aid. Tear down our dividing walls.

Scatter our pride and reawaken our imagination.

Lead us again in the work of repair and restoration.

We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

God clothes us in salvation and covers us in

righteousness. Rejoice and take heart:

in grace, we are forgiven, through the saving love of

Jesus Christ. **Thanks be to God! Amen!**

Opening Hymn

“People, Look East”

1. People, look east. The time is near
of the crowning of the year.

Make your house fair as you are able,
trim the hearth and set the table.

People, look east and sing today:

Love, the Guest, is on the way.

2. Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,
one more seed is planted there:

Give up your strength the seed to nourish,
that in course the flower may flourish.

People, look east and sing today:

Love, the Rose, is on the way.

3. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim,
one more light the bowl shall brim,
shining beyond the frosty weather,
bright as sun and moon together.

People, look east and sing today:

Love, the Star, is on the way.

4. Angels, announce with shouts of mirth
he who brings new life to earth.

Set every peak and valley humming
with the word, the Lord is coming.

People, look east and sing today:

Love, the Lord, is on the way.

Greeting

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

Prayer of the Day

God of surprises, **you interrupt our world with hope beyond our wildest dreams. When we feel forgotten or despairing, bless us with your holy joy. When our world feels barren, bless us with the gift of possibility. We pray as people of deep faith, entrusting ourselves and our world to the holy unknown, brought to birth in Jesus, our light and life. Amen.**

Advent Wreath Blessing

First Reading – Isaiah 35:1-7

Response: Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Reading – Luke 1:39-55

Before: The holy Gospel according to . . . **Glory to you, O Lord.**

After: The Gospel of our Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Message

Pastor Liz Rossing

Hymn of the Day

“Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming”

1. Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath
sprung! Of Jesse's lineage coming as seers of old
have sung, it came, a flow'r so bright, amid the cold
of winter, when half-spent was the night.

2. Isaiah had foretold it, the rose I have in mind; with
Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind. To show
God's love aright, she bore to us a Savior, when
half-spent was the night.

3. This flow'r, whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air, dispels with glorious splendor the darkness ev'rywhere. True man, yet very God, from sin and death he saves us and lightens ev'ry load.
4. 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 into endless day.

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Gracious God, may we be bearers of joy.

Offering & Giving Prayer

Holy God, we bring our gifts and offerings to you because the voices of the prophets remind us of something bigger, something greater than any system this world offers us. We believe when we trust you with our resources, the kin(g)d(om of God comes much closer to reality on earth. Help us steward these gifts to create abundant life and love. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen

Litany of Joy

Let us affirm God's gift of life-giving and justice-seeking joy.

We believe "joy is the justice we give ourselves."

We believe joy grows through blessing others and fostering authentic relationships.

We believe joy is more than a feeling or the things we possess. Joy is our faith made visible and something we share by choosing connection.

We believe joy is truth and truth-telling. We believe joy is active resistance, Spirit-filled solidarity, and the bringing of God's dream.

We believe true joy is not the opposite of heartache, but lives within our grief and hardest emotions. We celebrate the depth of God's joy and how it can hold our pain.

When we are filled with this kind of joy, we celebrate what God is birthing now, even amid a world where so much appears to be ending.

We believe joy is freedom and healing, redemption and return.

We believe joy comes from knowing God is close, even when life is hard.

We choose justice. We choose love. We choose each other. We choose joy.

Blessing

Go forth from this place ✠ with ears to hear, and believe the cries of all who are vulnerable and silenced. May we be strengthened not just to hear and believe, but to act, for there is no greater joy than ensuring that all God's children need not cry out any longer. **Amen.**

Closing Hymn

"What Child Is This"

1. What Child is this, who, laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
while shepherds watch are keeping?

Refrain

This, this is Christ, the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
haste, haste to bring him laud,
the Babe, the Son of Mary!

2. Why lies he in such mean estate,
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear: for sinners here
the silent Word is pleading. *Refrain*

3. So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh,
come, peasant, king to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
let loving hearts enthron him. *Refrain*

Dismissal

Go forth in joy! Dream of creation renewed!
Thanks be to God!