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500 Park Avenue
Johnstown, PA 15902
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Third Sunday of Advent

Christ Lutheran 9:00 a.m. ☩ Moxham Lutheran 10:30 a.m.
December 14, 2025

A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom, and Jesus points to the unexpected and transforming signs of God's reign. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love.

Gathering

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

Welcome

Prelude

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ One God,
who comes to wake us from sleep,
who leads us into the light of grace.

Restore us, O God;
let your face shine upon us, that we may know your salvation.

We pause for silent reflection

Our indifference toward your coming,
we confess to you, Lord.

Our desire to control – even time and seasons,
we confess to you, Lord.

Our failure to be alert to the signs of your presence in our midst,
we confess to you, Lord.

Our lack of concern for those who come after us,
we confess to you, Lord.

Our injustices toward all the people you came to serve and save,
we confess to you, Lord.

Isaiah has written: "Comfort, O Comfort my people, says your God,
speak tenderly to her and declare that her penalty is paid."

In Jesus Christ ☩ your sins are forgiven, and all things are made new.
Rejoice in this good news!

Amen.

Gathering Song: "Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn"

ELW No. 242

Advent Greeting

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord.

Today's Second Reading

Jesus answered John's impatient disciples,

Today's Gospel

"Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear... and the poor have good news brought to them."

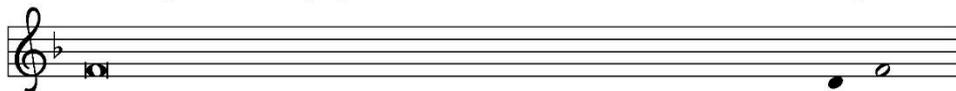
From the One who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty:
grace, light, and peace be with you all.

And also with you.

Kyrie



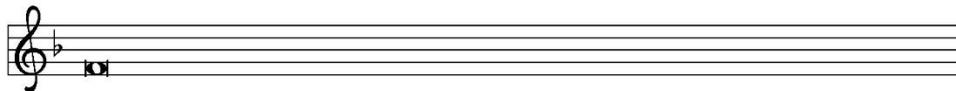
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



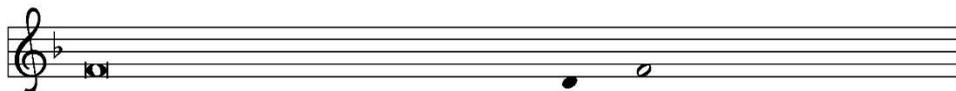
For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.

First Reading: Isaiah 35:1-10

¹ The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus ² it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and shouting.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.

³ Strengthen the weak hands
and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴ Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
“Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God. He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense. He will come and save you.”

⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;

⁶ then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert;

⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp;
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸ A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God’s people;
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

⁹ No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.

¹⁰ And the ransomed of the Lord shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 146:5-10

⁵ Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help,
whose hope is in the Lord their God;

⁶ **who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;
who keeps promises forever;**

⁷ who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger.
The Lord sets the captive free.

⁸ **The Lord opens the eyes of the blind;
the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;
the Lord loves the righteous.**

⁹ The Lord cares for the stranger;
the Lord sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked.

¹⁰ **The Lord shall reign forever,
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!**

Second Reading: James 5:7-10

⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.

⁹ Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

² When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” ⁴ Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹ What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.’

¹¹ “Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Hymn of the Day: “Prepare the Royal Highway”

ELW No. 264

Nicene Creed

Remembering that God’s promises have been fulfilled in Jesus,
we confess the faith into which we were baptized.

**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;
Was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,
and became truly human.**

**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,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who 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**

Prayers of Intercession

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting in your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

A brief silence.

Holy God, we rejoice that your promises take on flesh in Jesus. Grant patience to your church as we await the fulfillment of your reign of justice and peace. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

When lands are parched and dry, bring rain and snow; where wilderness is barren, sow seeds of life. Fill the lands with trees that grow, plants that flower, and creatures that thrive, as nature proclaims the wonder of your works. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

When there is injustice or corruption among nations and leaders, root it out. Turn their attention to inequity and the cries of the poor. Instill a deeper sense of compassion and care in all who govern. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

When bodies weaken and hearts grow fearful, speak your blessing. Gracious God, we rejoice that your healing presence dwells within. Give patience to all the suffering, that they may know and have confidence in your abiding presence. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

When people are imprisoned or held captive, break the chains of unjust captivity and bring release. Strengthen the work of the church in restorative justice, breaking cycles of poverty, and welcoming the immigrant - especially we pray for the work of the ELCA through Global Refuge and Lutheran Social Services. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

As we await your coming, we give thanks for the faithful who have lived and died in faith. May their boldness of faith inspire our witness and work. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.

Amen.

Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

We share a sign of Christ's peace with others.

Meal

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Presentation of Gifts

ELW No. 487



- 1 He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love;
- 2 He came down that we may have light; he came down that we may have light;
- 3 He came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may have peace;
- 4 He came down that we may have joy; he came down that we may have joy;



he came down that we may have love;
he came down that we may have light; hal - le - lu - jah for - ev - er - more.
he came down that we may have peace;
he came down that we may have joy;

Offering Prayer

Nourishing God,
you are water in the wilderness
and streams in the desert.

Through this meal,
satisfy our parched places,
that we may rejoice and be for the world
signs of your kingdom come.

Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The image shows four staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. Each staff contains a melody line with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: 'The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.', 'Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.', 'Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.', and 'It is right to give our thanks and praise.'

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ.

You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer,
through whom you will also make all things new
in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who

The image shows three staves of musical notation in G major and 4/4 time. Each staff contains a melody line with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: 'Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,', 'heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -', and 'san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who'.



comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

Thanksgiving at the Table (For Advent)

Holy Father,
You are the beginning and the end, the giver of all life:
It is You who gave birth to creation,
You, from whom all light has shone,
You, who is faithful to your promises,
You, who opened Mary to your will.
You, from whom your Son proceeds,
Your Word made flesh.

Words of Institution

With this bread and cup, we remember your Word made flesh,
dwelling among us, full of grace and truth
we remember our new birth in his death and resurrection,
we remember to look with hope for his coming.
May your Word now take flesh in us, filling us with your light,
and bringing to us the gift of peace.

Amen

Lord's Prayer

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**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.**

Invitation to Communion

Here is life. God is with us.
Come, receive what God has promised.

Lamb of God



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace.

Prayer after Communion

God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness.
Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger,
and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

Sending

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

Blessing

May God who comes among us, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,
grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness,
and good news to share today and always. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn: “People, Look East”

ELW No. 248

Dismissal

Go in peace. Keep awake.

Thanks be to God.