



SOTC Worship
December 12, 2021
Third Sunday of Advent

————— GATHERING —————

PRELUDE

WELCOME

GATHERING SONG

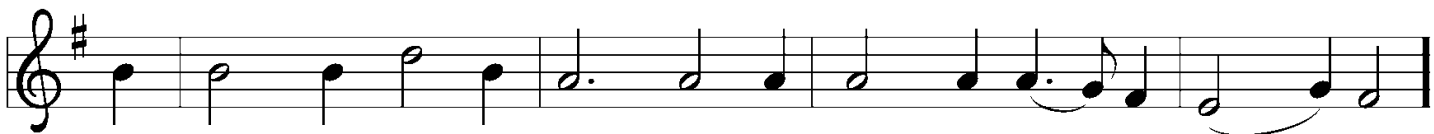
PREPARE THE ROYAL HIGHWAY



1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!
2 God's peo - ple, see him com - ing: your own e - ter - nal king!
3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised king!
4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heav'n a - bove.



Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley a lev - el road ap - pear!
Palm branch - es strew be - fore him! Spread gar - ments! Shout and sing!
Your king, yet ev - 'ry na - tion its trib - ute too may bring.
His rule is peace and free - dom and jus - tice, truth, and love.



Then greet the King of glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:
God's prom - ise will not fail you! No more shall doubt as - sail you!
All lands will bow be - fore him; their voic - es join your sing - ing:
So let your praise be sound - ing for kind - ness so a - bound - ing:

Refrain



Ho - san - na to the Lord, for he ful - fills God's word!

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

After Pastor Aleese calls the congregation to confession, the congregation prays together:

Expansive God,

We know that the church is your house, and your house has room for everyone. Yet, too often, instead of setting the table for our neighbors, we block the door. Instead of welcoming all, we judge others by our own standards. Instead of sharing our second coat, we hide it in the attic, holding on to fear instead of letting go with love. Remind us that your home is a home for all, that truth requires hard work, that truth requires uncomfortable justice. Help us to be bold enough to see it and brave enough to live it. With hope we pray, Amen.

Family of faith, God sent prophets like John the Baptist to us because this work is not easy. Helping create a world where all might have a home, and all might be loved, and all might know peace, is an audacious goal. And yet, when we mess up—when we lose our way or forget our call—we are met with grace. God could not love us any more or any less than God already does. So rest in this good news: You are at home with God—forgiven, claimed, and loved. The door is always open for you.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

GREETING

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

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING/CHILDREN'S SERMON

A: Joy is seeing people you love after months apart.

B: Joy is hearing, "Come on over, it has been too long!"

A: Joy is the stretches and giggles of a newborn child.

B: Joy is making it home when the journey is long.

A: Joy is your dog sliding to meet you at the door.

B: Joy is the energy of a new season.

A: Joy is feeling found when you thought you were lost.

C: So today we light the candle of joy, because the welcome God has for us is nothing short of joyful.

B: Rest in that good news. Let it wash over you.

C: We are close to home. May we carry joy with us. Amen.

READING: ZEPHANIAH 3:14-20

- ¹⁴Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;
shout, O Israel!
Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem!
- ¹⁵The Lord has taken away the judgments against you,
he has turned away your enemies.
The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;
you shall fear disaster no more.
- ¹⁶On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
Do not fear, O Zion;
do not let your hands grow weak.
- ¹⁷The Lord, your God, is in your midst,
a warrior who gives victory;
he will rejoice over you with gladness,
he will renew you in his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing
¹⁸as on a day of festival.
- I will remove disaster from you,
so that you will not bear reproach for it.
- ¹⁹I will deal with all your oppressors
at that time.
And I will save the lame
and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise
and renown in all the earth.
- ²⁰At that time I will bring you home,
at the time when I gather you;
for I will make you renowned and praised
among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes
before your eyes, says the Lord.

PSALM: ISAIAH 12:2-6

- ²Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid,
for the Lord God is my strength and my might, and has become my salvation.
- ³**With joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation.**
- ⁴And you will say in that day: Give thanks to the Lord, call on God's name;
make known the deeds of the Lord among the nations; proclaim that this name is exalted.
- ⁵**Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously;
let this be known in all the earth.**

⁶ Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion,
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

Readings conclude:

Word of God, Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL: LUKE 3:1-18

The Holy Gospel according to Luke, the 3rd chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, ²during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.

⁵Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth;

⁶and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’ ”

⁷John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ⁹Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

¹⁰And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” ¹¹In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” ¹²Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” ¹³He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” ¹⁴Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”

¹⁵As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

¹⁸So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

The Gospel of our Lord.

Praise to you O Christ.

Refrain


And God will de - light_ when we are crea - tors of
 justice and joy, — yes, God will de - light_ when we are crea -
 - tors of justice, _____ justice and joy! _____

For everyone born, a place at the table,
 for everyone born, clean water and bread,
 a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,
 for everyone born, a star over head.

Refrain

For young and for old, a place at the table,
 a voice to be heard, a part in the song,
 the hands of a child in hands that are wrinkled,
 for young and for old, the right to belong.

Refrain

For everyone born, a place at the table,
 to live without fear, and simply to be,
 to work, to speak out, to witness and worship,
 for everyone born, the right to be free.

Refrain

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Response to "Lord in your mercy" is "hear our prayer." If you would like to add a prayer petition, email it to Pastor Aleese at pastor@shepherdofthecross.org

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always!
And also with you!

Congregation is invited to share a sign of peace with others. Pull out your cell phones and send a text and/or a picture to someone, sharing the peace of Christ with them as well!

MEAL

OFFERING

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.
And also 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 God thanks and praise.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:
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 THE TABLE

SHARING GOD'S MEAL TOGETHER

Together we receive God's gift of love given to us in the sacrament of communion. All are welcome at the table, where Christ is our host.

Following the directions of the ushers, the congregation will be invited forward in groups. Each group will stand before the altar to receive the bread and wine/juice. After receiving both bread and wine, remain with your group until Pastor Aleese offers a short blessing, dismissing each group to return to their seats. Those not desiring to receive communion may come forward for a blessing.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

— SENDING —

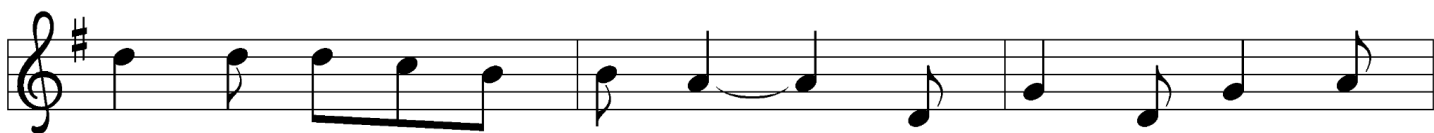
BLESSING

SENDING SONG

AWAKE! AWAKE, AND GREET THE NEW MORN



1 A - wake! A - wake, and greet the new morn, for
 2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em -
 3 In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, when
 4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night, though



an - gels her - ald its dawn - ing. Sing out your joy, for
 man - u - el comes a - sing - ing, his hum - ble song is
 all the world is de - spair - ing, as morn - ing light so
 dark the win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall



soon he is born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing.
 qui - et and near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing;
 qui - et and free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing.
 crown you with light, be strong and lov - ing and fear - less.



Come as a ba - by weak and poor, to bring all hearts to -
 mu - sic to heal the bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing -
 Then shall the mute break forth in song, the lame shall leap in
 Love be our song and love our prayer and love our end - less



geth - er, he o - pens wide the heav'n - ly door and
 kind - ness, the thun - der of his an - thems roll to
 won - der, the weak be raised a - bove the strong, and
 sto - ry; may God fill ev - 'ry day we share and



lives now in - side us for - ev - er.
shat - ter all ha - tred and blind - ness.
weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - der.
bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God!

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Prayers written by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org. Adapted Rev. A. Kenitzer