



Risen Christ Lutheran Church
3rd Sunday in Advent Worship
December 12, 2021



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ABOUT HOLY COMMUNION – (2nd & 4th Sundays) We believe: that Christ’s body and blood are truly present for forgiveness and spiritual strength, that God desires our sincere confession, continuous seeking and giving forgiveness and, that being genuine in taking Communion so that we not harm ourselves by taking it in an unworthy manner. If you believe the above, are a baptized believer who trusts in the death and resurrection of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins, and have examined yourself, you are welcome to commune with us. Please talk to Pastor if you have any questions. The bread is offered before the “individual” and “common” cups of wine. (Note: White Grape Juice is in the center of the tray.)

OFFERING – Through the offerings of His faithful people, our Lord provides for the ongoing work of His Church. If you are a visitor, we are glad that you came to be served by the Lord this day. If you choose to contribute to the ongoing work of the Gospel, we give thanks that God has moved you to contribute toward the work of sharing the Gospel here in Plymouth and around the world! You can also take advantage of Online Giving by visiting www.RisenChrist.info

A WORD TO OUR GUESTS – Welcome and thank you for coming. Brochures can be found at each door. Please complete a Worship Card and place it in the offering plate. Pastor will send you a welcome card. Please indicate that you "desire" a call for any further contact.

Large Print Bulletins – Available from an usher.

Listening Assistance Devices – Available at the Sound Booth.

Parent Room – A row of seating and plenty of area for standing or walking is available in the Welcome Area/Lobby (“Narthex”)

For Children – Children’s Book Cart for Worship: Available in the Welcome Area.

As We Gather – Some Advent wreaths have a pink candle for this Third Sunday in Advent. The festive, joyful pink candle reflects today’s Readings, which begin to anticipate the unbridled joy that Jesus’ birth brings. We do many joyful things during Advent. We sing Christmas carols, bake cookies, decorate our homes inside and out, and travel far and wide to visit those we love. Yet all these joyful things point to an even greater joy—the joy that comes by the Creator of the universe, the Lord almighty, who loves you, forgives you in Jesus, and cares about you beyond human measure! “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!”

Pre-service Advent and Christmas Music

Welcome and Announcements

Invocation and Opening Sentences

Zephaniah 3:14a, 15b; 16b–17, 20

P In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

P Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart.

C **The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil.**

P “Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak.

C **The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save;**

P He will rejoice over you with gladness; He will quiet you by His love;

C **He will exult over you with loud singing.**

P I will bring you in, at the time when I gather you together; 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.

G **We worship You, O Lord!**

Hark the Glad Sound



1 Hark the glad sound! The Sav - ior comes, The Sav - ior
2 He comes the pris - 'ners to re - lease, In Sa - tan's
3 He comes the bro - ken heart to bind, The bleed - ing
4 Our glad ho - san - nas, Prince of Peace, Thy wel - come



prom - ised long; Let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare a
bond - age held. The gates of brass be - fore Him
soul to cure, And with the trea - sures of His
shall pro - claim, And heav'n's e - ter - nal arch - es



throne And ev - 'ry voice a song.
burst, The i - ron fet - ters yield.
grace To en - rich the hum - ble poor.
ring With Thy be - lov - ed name.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath *Three Advent candles are lit.*

P Let us pray.

O Lord, let the lighting of these candles signify that You are the light that shines in all the darkness of our lives. As we wait, watch, hope, and pray, guide us all to reflect Your light and let it shine; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

G **Amen.**

Confession and Absolution

Psalm 25:6-7

P Having emerged from the waters of Baptism as God's new creation in Christ, we confess our sins to God and one another.

A time of silence is observed.

P We confess to You, O Lord, that we are captive to sin in thought, word, and deed. We have wandered from You. Our wonderings have at times turned into doubts that drew us away from You.

G **Remember Your mercy, O LORD, and Your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.**

P Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions;

G **according to Your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of Your goodness, O LORD!**

**Forgive us, Lord, for times when joy was lost,
And moments when we never thought to laugh,
For times when we obsess and despair
And all forget Your steadfast love and care.
Forgive, forgive, forgive us all our sins
And help us live in joy that never ends.**

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P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Introit

Psalm 146:5–8; antiphon: Philippians 4:4

P Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

C **Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God,**

P who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever;

C **who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry.**

P The LORD sets the prisoners free; the LORD opens the eyes of the blind. The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous.

C **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.**

P Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

Salutation and Prayer of the Day

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ,

C **we implore You to hear our prayers**

P and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation;

C **for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

Old Testament Reading

Zephaniah 3:14–20

¹⁴Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!

¹⁵The LORD has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies.

The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil.

¹⁶On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak.

¹⁷The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save;

he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love;

he will exult over you with loud singing.

¹⁸I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival, so that you will no longer suffer reproach.

¹⁹Behold, at that time I will deal with all your oppressors.

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 in, at the time when I gather you together;
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.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm

Psalm 85; antiphon: v.2

L You forgave the iniquity of Your people; You covered all their sin.

C **LORD, You were favorable to Your land; You restored the fortunes of Jacob.**

L You forgave the iniquity of Your people; You covered all their sin.

C **You withdrew all Your wrath; You turned from Your hot anger.**

L Restore us again, O God of our salvation, and put away Your indignation toward us!

C **Will You be angry with us forever? Will You prolong Your anger to all generations?**

L Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You?

C **Show us Your steadfast love, O LORD, and grant us Your salvation.**

L Let me hear what God the LORD will speak, for He will speak peace to His people, to His saints;
but let them not turn back to folly.

C **Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him, that glory may dwell in our land.**

L Steadfast love and faithfulness meet; righteousness and peace kiss each other.

C **Faithfulness springs up from the ground, and righteousness looks down from the sky.**

L Yes, the LORD will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase.

C **Righteousness will go before Him and make His footsteps a way.**

L You forgave the iniquity of Your people; You covered all their sin.

Epistle

Philippians 4:4-7

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee



1 Joy - ful, joy - ful we a - dore Thee, God of glo - ry, Lord of love!

2 All Thy works with joy sur-round Thee, Earth and heav'n re - flect Thy rays,

△ 3 Thou art giv - ing and for - giv - ing, Ev - er bless-ing, ev - er blest,



Hearts un - fold like flow'rs be - fore Thee, Prais-ing Thee, their sun a - bove.

Stars and an-gels sing a-round Thee, Cen - ter of un - bro-ken praise.

Well-spring of the joy of liv - ing, O - cean - depth of hap - py rest!



Melt the clouds of sin and sad - ness, Drive the gloom of doubt a - way.

Field and for - est, vale and moun-tain, Flow - 'ry mead-ow, flash-ing sea,

Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Spir - it, Foun - tain - head of love di - vine:



Giv - er of im - mor - tal glad-ness, Fill us with the light of day.

Chant-ing bird, and flow - ing foun-tain Call us to re - joice in Thee.

Joy - ful, we Thy heav'n in - her - it! Joy - ful, we by grace are Thine!

Verse

Matthew 11:10b

P Alleluia! Alleluia! **C** Alleluia! Alleluia!

P Behold, I send My messenger before Your face,

C who will prepare Your way before You. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Holy Gospel

Luke 7:18–28

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the seventh chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

¹⁸The disciples of John reported all these things to him. And John, ¹⁹calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" ²⁰And when the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, 'Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?'" ²¹In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight. ²²And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. ²³And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

²⁴When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ²⁵What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who are dressed in splendid clothing and live in luxury are in kings' courts. ²⁶What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.

²⁷This is he of whom it is written,

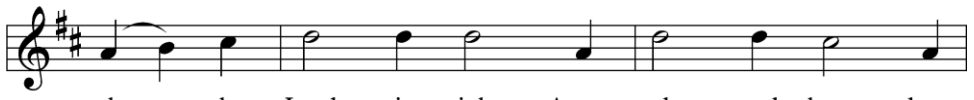
“Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.’
 28) I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord. **G** Praise to You, O Christ.

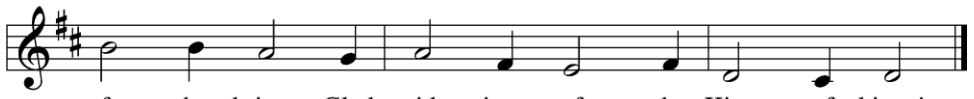
On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry



1 On Jor - dan’s bank the Bap - tist’s cry An - nounc - es
 2 Then cleansed be ev - ’ry life from sin; Make straight the
 3 We hail Thee as our Sav - ior, Lord, Our ref - uge
 4 Lay on the sick Thy heal - ing hand And make the
 △ 5 All praise, e - ter - nal Son, to Thee Whose ad - vent



that the Lord is nigh; A - wake and hear - ken,
 way for God with - in, And let us all our
 and our great re - ward; With - out Thy grace we
 fall - en strong to stand; Show us the glo - ry
 sets Thy peo - ple free, Whom with the Fa - ther



for he brings Glad tid - ings of the King of kings!
 hearts pre - pare For Christ to come and en - ter there.
 waste a - way Like flow’rs that with - er and de - cay.
 of Thy face Till beau - ty springs in ev - ’ry place.
 we a - dore And Ho - ly Spir - it ev - er - more.

Sermon – “The Least Will Be Greatest”

1. There’s a Heavenly Banquet for all Believers, but there are seating arrangements...
2. "I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."
3. Both Matthew and Mark record the same proclamation of God’s Kingdom, but use different words, but mean the same thing – Kingdom of God and Kingdom of Heaven.
4. God’s Heavenly Kingdom is not afar off and doesn’t necessarily come with boundaries and borders. God’s ruling and reigning now! It’s here. It’s at hand!
5. Spoiler Alert – Believers who came after John the Baptist are greater than him... Jesus says so!
 - a. We are now under Jesus’ rule and trust Him as Lord and Saviour.
 - b. We are looking back TO the cross seeing and understanding salvation history more than John did!

- c. Although up until that time in history John was the greatest, he didn't know the reign, rule, majesty, and glory would involve a cross!
 - d. John didn't earn the distinction of being greatest up until that point. He was chosen and given that title, privilege and honour.
 - e. Again, put another way, what John didn't know was there was a cross between the two Advents (Jesus first coming, and His coming at the end of time).
6. John the Baptist struggled with doubt as we all do at times for various reasons, and so Jesus sent messengers back to John with the words from the Prophet Isaiah that the blind were seeing, the deaf hearing, the dead raising and the poor in spirit were having the Good News preached to them! The Messiah was not a hope any longer but was here!
7. Jesus' use of "least" and "greatest":
- a. contrasts the role in history John played with the role believers now live. We rejoice in the facts we've seen and know that all the Old Testament Prophets, priest, and Kings and John longed to see and know!
 - b. By God's grace John was chosen for his role, and now we've been chosen to receive even greater blessing as we have no need to inquire if Jesus is the One. We don't need to look for another!
 - c. Even the least and smallest of Believers are able to verbalize the realities of saving faith that John wasn't totally able to do.

Creed

☩ I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,

the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried.

And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures

and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father.

And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son,

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

who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,

I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,

and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life ☩ of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of the Church

P As we prepare our hearts and minds for Christ's coming, we turn to the Lord in prayer.

A brief time of silence may be observed.

MEN – O Wisdom from on high, lead us by Your Spirit to rejoice in all that You have done to demonstrate Your love for us. Move the leaders, pastors, teachers, and all the people of our Synod to rejoice in the Lord always. We pray,

C **hear us, coming Lord.**

WOMEN – O Desire of nations, bless the leaders of nations, our president and Congress, our governors and local leaders. Move all leaders to cease envy and boastfulness, injustice and corruption. Guide our leaders to be honorable people who do not neglect the poor and who strive toward the flourishing of all human beings. Bless those who serve in our armed forces and lift up refugees and all victims of war. Bring peace between us and our enemies and let Your peace reign over this broken world. We pray,

C **hear us, coming Lord.**

MEN – O Dayspring from on high, come to the aid of all who are in need. As You humbly entered this world as a vulnerable baby, help all of us humbly to enter the lives of those who are sick, facing surgery, or dying, to offer comfort and hope. Bring healing according to Your will and peace to those whose suffering endures. Thank You for the work of doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals who work toward healing and restoration of wholeness. Guide scientists searching for cures for diseases that bring suffering to the world that their work might lead to healing for many. We pray,

C **hear us, coming Lord.**

WOMEN – O Key of David, let Your joy, forgiveness, and peace flow freely in and among the families of this congregation. Empower parents and grandparents to love their children and children to love their parents. Watch over all who travel and comfort families who are separated by many miles. Guide families to be places where Your love is demonstrated to strangers as well as to friends. We pray,

C **hear us, coming Lord.**

MEN – O Lord of might, help us to see in the miracles of Jesus a sign pointing forward to that Day when He will come again in great glory to restore all creation. Help us to be instruments by which our wandering world may come to see Jesus as the one who alone brings true joy into our lives. We pray,

C **Hear us, coming Lord.**

WOMEN – O Immanuel, You deliver Your people even from the grip of death. Comfort those who mourn and use us to express the hope that comes from trusting in You. Bring us to be with them on that great day to come, and until that day give us grace to endure life's difficulties, while also abiding in Your love. We pray,

C **hear us, coming Lord.**

P You, O Lord, know the thoughts of our hearts and hear those prayers that come to You in sighs too deep for words. All our prayer we entrust to You in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C **Amen.**

Preface

P The Lord be with you. **C** **And also with you.**

P The Lord be with you. **C** **And also with you.**

P Lift up your hearts.

C **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

The Words of Our Lord

P Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My † body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My † blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Proclamation of Christ

P As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

C **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

P O Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, in giving us Your body and blood to eat and to drink, You lead us to remember and confess Your holy cross and passion, Your blessed death, Your rest in the tomb, Your resurrection from the dead, Your ascension into heaven, and Your coming for the final judgment. So remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

C **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.

Pax Domini

P The peace of the Lord be with you always. **C** **Amen.**

Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness



1 Praise the One who breaks the dark - ness With a lib - er -

2 Praise the One who blessed the chil - dren With a strong, yet

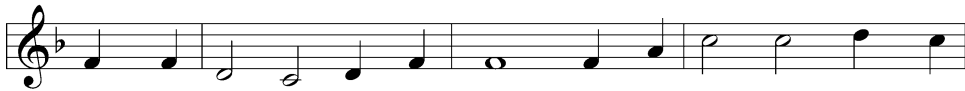
3 Let us praise the Word In - car - nate, Christ, who suf - fered



at - ing light; Praise the One who frees the pris - 'ners,

gen - tle, word; Praise the One who drove out de - mons

in our place. Je - sus died and rose vic - to - rious



Turn - ing blind - ness in - to sight. Praise the One who preached the
 With the pierc - ing, two - edged sword. Praise the One who brings cool
 That we may know God by grace. Let us sing for joy and



Gos - pel, Heal - ing ev - 'ry dread dis - ease, Calm - ing
 wa - ter To the des - ert's burn - ing sand; From this
 glad - ness, See - ing what our God has done; Let us



storms, and feed - ing thou - sands With the ver - y Bread of peace.
 Well comes liv - ing wa - ter, Quench - ing thirst in ev - 'ry land.
 praise the true Re - deem - er, Praise the One who makes us one.

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence



1 Let all mor - tal flesh keep si - lence And with fear and
 2 King of kings yet born of Mar - y, As of old on
 3 Rank on rank the host of heav - en Spreads its van - guard
 4 At His feet the six - winged ser - aph, Cher - u - bim with



trem - bling stand; Pon - der noth - ing earth - ly - mind - ed,
 earth He stood, Lord of lords in hu - man ves - ture,
 on the way As the Light of Light, de - scend - ing
 sleep - less eye, Veil their fac - es to the pres - ence



For with bless - ing in His hand Christ our God to earth de -
 In the bod - y and the blood, He will give to all the
 From the realms of end - less day, Comes the pow'rs of hell to
 As with cease - less voice they cry: "Al - le - lu - ia, al - le -



scend - ing Comes our hom - age to de - mand.
 faith - ful His own self for heav'n - ly food.
 van - quish As the dark - ness clears a - way.
 lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia, Lord Most High!"

Post-Communion Thanksgiving

P Let us pray.

We rejoice, O Lord, and thank You that in Christ's body and blood we now receive forgiveness of our sins, life rooted in Christ, and salvation both now and forever; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Offering – DURING THE OFFERING: Whether you are a visitor or a member, please turn in a Worship Card **so we may know whom the Lord has served with His Word.**

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

1. Come, Thou long expected Jesus
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.

2. Born Thy people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever,
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.
By Thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all sufficient merit,
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

ENDING: By Thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all sufficient merit,
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

Benediction

Philippians 4:5–7; Numbers 6:24–26

P The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

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.

C Amen.

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