

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sunday 12 December 2021 ♦ 10:00 AM
Grace Episcopal Church, Hinsdale, IL



GATHERING TOGETHER

PRELUDE

WELCOME

ADVENT WREATH BLESSING

Presider We praise you, O God, for this victory wreath
which marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent.
As we light the candles on this wreath,
strengthen our hearts as we await the Lord's coming in glory.
Enlighten us with your grace,
that we may serve our neighbors in need.
Grant this through Christ our Lord,
whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. **Amen.**

THE ACCLAMATION

Presider Blessed are you, ✠ holy and living One:
People **You come to your people and set them free.**

THE COLLECT FOR PURITY

Presider Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known,
and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



1 Hail to the Lord's A - noint - ed, great Da - vid's great - er Son!
 3 He shall come down like show - ers up - on the fruit - ful earth,
 4 Kings shall bow down be - fore him, and gold and in - cense bring;



Hail, in the time ap - point - ed, his reign of earth be - gun!
 and love, joy, hope, like flow - ers, spring in his path to birth:
 all na - tions shall a - dore him, his praise all peo - ple sing;



He comes to break op - pres - sion, to set the cap - tive free;
 be - fore him on the moun - tains shall peace, the her - ald, go;
 to him shall prayer un - ceas - ing and dai - ly vows a - scend;



to take a - way trans - gres - sion, and rule in e - qui - ty.
 and right - eous - ness in foun - tains from hill to val - ley flow.
 his king - dom still in - creas - ing, a king - dom with - out end.

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

Presider The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider Let us pray.

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us;
 and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace
 and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord,
 to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and
 for ever. **Amen.**

THE WORD OF GOD

THE FIRST READING

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;
shout, O Israel!
Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem!
The 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.
On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
Do not fear, O Zion;
do not let your hands grow weak.
The 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
as on a day of festival.
I will remove disaster from you,
so that you will not bear reproach for it.
I 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.
At 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.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Response

Cry out with joy and glad - ness; for a -
 mong you is the great and Ho-ly One of Is - ra - el.

Truly, God is my salvation. I trust, I shall not fear.
 For the Lord is my strength, my song, he became my savior.
 With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. *Response*

Give thanks to the Lord, give praise to his name!
 Make his mighty deeds known to the peoples! Declare the greatness of his name, *Response*
 sing a psalm to the Lord! For he has done glorious deeds, make them known to all the earth!
 People of Zion, sing and shout for joy
 for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel. *Response*

THE SECOND READING

Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry 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 Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SEQUENCE HYMN

“Once He Came in Blessing”

GOTTES SOHN IST KOMMEN

1 Once he came in bless - ing, all our ills re - dress - ing;
 2 Still he comes with - in us, still his voice would win us
 3 Thus, if thou canst name him, not a - shamed to claim him,
 4 One who thus en - dur - eth bright re - ward se - cur - eth.



came in like-ness low - ly, Son of God most ho - ly;
from the sins that hurt us, would to Truth con - vert us:
but wilt trust him bold - ly nor dost love him cold - ly,
Come, then, O Lord Je - sus, from our sins re - lease us;



bore the cross to save us, hope and free - dom gave us.
not in tor - ment hold us, but in love en - fold us.
he will then re - ceive thee, heal thee, and for - give thee.
let us here con - fess thee till in heaven we bless thee.

THE GOSPEL

Luke 3:7-18

Preacher The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Luke.
People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

John 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? Bear 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. Even 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."

And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." Soldiers 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."

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John 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. His 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."

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

Preacher The Gospel of the Lord.
People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

REFLECTION

Chris Pierce

THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

A New Zealand Prayer Book

You, O God, are supreme and holy.
You create our world and give us life.
Your purpose overarches everything we do.
You have always been with us.
You are God.

You, O God, are infinitely generous,
good beyond all measure.
You came to us before we came to you.
You have revealed and proved
your love for us in Jesus Christ,
who lived and died and rose again.
You are with us now.
You are God.

You, O God, are Holy Spirit.
You empower us to be your gospel in the world.
You reconcile and heal; you overcome death.

You are our God. We worship you.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

The people kneel or stand for the Prayers.

Reader In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people
and places that yearn for God's presence.

A brief silence.

Holy God, renew your church and raise up leaders who announce your
good news. Grant peace to congregations and seminarians in the midst

of transition. Guide the work of candidacy and call committees. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Creating God, your Spirit brought forth the earth and all that is in it. Breathe life into us, that we are inspired to live in harmony with one another and the planet. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Shepherding God, you lead your people in paths of righteousness. Raise up prophets in our own day who warn against captivity to greed and point us to the freedom found in generosity. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Nurturing God, you come near in times of worry and need. Cradle us in your arms, that we trust you and are not afraid. Attend to any who are hungry, imprisoned, or ill this day. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Rejoicing God, you exult over us in singing. Enliven the song of this assembly and bless the ministry of the musicians of Grace Church. With instruments and dance, join our voices to the song of all creation. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We give you thanks for your servants who showed us your goodness and grace. By the power of your Spirit, keep us steadfast in faith until we make our home with you. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Presider God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus.
Amen.

CONFESSION OF SIN AND ABSOLUTION

Presider Let us confess our sins to God.

All **God of all mercy,
we confess that we have sinned against you,
opposing your will in our lives.
We have denied your goodness in each other,**

**in ourselves, and in the world you have created.
We repent of the evil that enslaves us,
the evil we have done, and the evil done on our behalf.
Forgive, restore, and strengthen us through our Savior Jesus Christ,
that we may abide in your love and serve only your will. Amen.**

Presider Almighty God have mercy on you,
forgive you all your sins
through the grace of Jesus Christ,
strengthen you in all goodness,
and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

THE PEACE

Presider The peace of Christ be always with you. **And also with you.**

THE HOLY COMMUNION

THE OFFERTORY

Offertory Sentence

*We thank God for every gift which helps continue the mission and ministries of Grace Church.
To give electronically, please scan the QR code or follow the link to our giving platform. Thank you!*



<http://www.gracehinsdale.org/give>

Offertory Anthem “Rejoice in the Lord, Always” Anonymous (16th cent.)

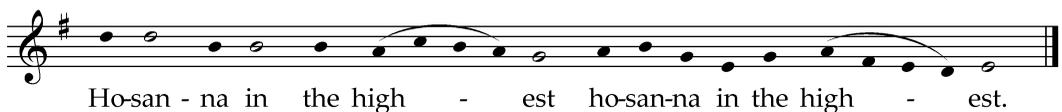
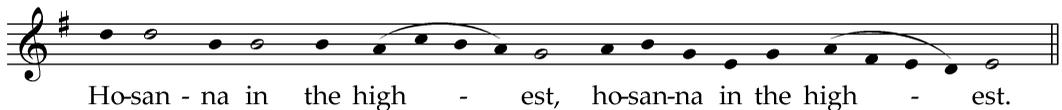
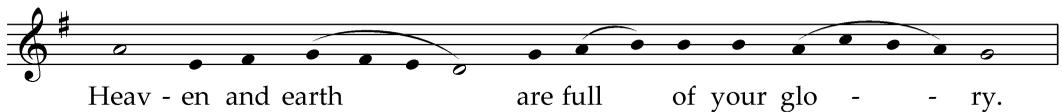
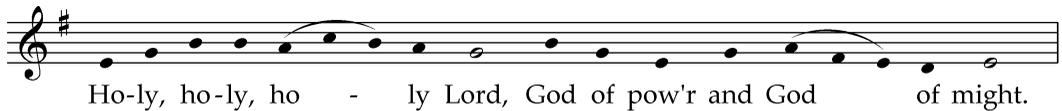
Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice.
Let your softness be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.
Be careful for nothing; but in all prayer and supplication
let your petitions be manifest unto God, with giving of thanks.

And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesu. Amen. (Philippians 4:4-7)

When your creation was captive to sin, you sent your Son to restore your people:
turning us toward you through your Son and through his resurrection
you have become our salvation.

In your love and by your Spirit, you have opened the wells of salvation
to flow through all the earth with the water of rejoicing.

And so we give you thanks with the saints of every age
and exalt you in the company of heaven as we join their unending hymn.



Presider Gathering God, as grain is collected from the fields,
in your Son draw us to yourself; and as that grain is drawn together,
in this holy meal you make us one.

Send your Holy Spirit upon your church
to make us your harvest of righteousness.

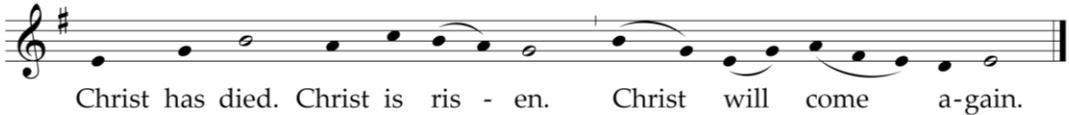
Sanctify this bread and cup that they may be for us
the body and blood of Christ our Lord;

who, at supper with his disciples, took bread, gave you thanks,
broke the bread, and gave it to them, saying,

“Take, eat: this is my body which is given for you;

do this in remembrance of me.”
After supper he took the cup.
Again he gave you thanks, and gave it to his disciples, saying,
“Drink this, all of you: this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

Great is the mystery of faith.



Presider Holy One of Israel, you are the great one in our midst.
Come and dwell among those who long to know you amid toil and strife.
Where your loved ones have been exiled by judgments against them,
remove every fear from their hearts and give them hope.
Where your daughters and sons face the threat of enemies,
show them how to best love their persecutors.
Where oppression has turned your children into outcasts,
gather them in your arms and carry them home.
Bring us to that day when shame turns to praise
and all creation resounds with rejoicing in your midst,
Holy One, eternal Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.



THE LORD'S PRAYER

Presider And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,
All **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,
 for ever and ever. Amen.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

The bread is broken. Silence is kept.

The Fraction Anthem

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

The Invitation

From a sermon by St. Augustine

Presider Behold what you are;
People **May we become what we receive.**

THE COMMUNION

THE POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Presider Let us pray.

All

Almighty and ever living God,
we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food
of the most precious Body and Blood
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ;
and for assuring us in these holy mysteries
that we are living members of the Body of your Son,
and heirs of your eternal kingdom.

And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do,
to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord.

To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit,
Be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

THE BLESSING

HYMN

“Prepare the Way, O Zion”

BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN



1 Pre - pare the way, O Zi - on, your Christ is draw - ing near!
2 He brings God's rule, O Zi - on; he comes from heaven a - bove.
3 Fling wide your gates, O Zi - on; your Sa - vior's rule em - brace.



Let ev - ery hill and val - ley a lev - el way ap - pear.
His rule is peace and free - dom, and jus - tice, truth, and love.
His tid - ings of sal - va - tion pro - claim in ev - ery place.



Greet One who comes in glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry.
Lift high your praise re - sound - ing, for grace and joy a - bound - ing.
All lands will bow be - fore him, their voic - es will a - dore him.

Refrain



Oh, blest is Christ that came in God's most ho - ly name.

THE DISMISSAL

The preacher offers a dismissal, and the people respond

Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

POSTLUDE

Toccata in e minor

Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706)

How do we deal with difficult Bible passages when we encounter them?

How do we deal with passages which historically have been used by others to vilify groups of people—passages that may seem to condone exclusion or condemnation of groups we may perceive as “other than us”? Everyone looks at scripture through a lens of some kind—a lens which will subsequently help shape the way they approach a given passage and ultimately interpret it.

We use the Baptismal Covenant as our lens, specifically “to seek and serve Christ in all persons,” and “to strive for justice and peace among all people.” (See the *Book of Common Prayer*, p. 304.) Through the Covenant, we understand how we are called to follow Christ and approach the difficult biblical passages with this knowledge in mind.

Why use incense in worship?

Incense has a long history in Christianity, Judaism and other religions. It adds our noses to the multi-sensory experience of worship. The psalmist expresses the symbolism of incense and prayer: “Let my prayer rise like incense before you; the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.”

The clouds of incense represent cleansing and purification. The sweet smell suggests Christ's righteousness that covers sin. In some traditions, incense is used to honor holy things and holy people (the gathered people, that is, the body of Christ). The altar/table, the bread and wine, the ministers and the assembly may be “censed” as a way of showing their importance in the liturgy. Incense adds a festive accompaniment to processions, creating “holy clouds” and “holy smells” in the air.

The sweet smell of incense is a doorway to the holy in the same way that beautiful music, flowers, stained glass, or a room/building can lead us to ponder the mystery of God's presence. Incense in worship is an ancient practice that connects us to the Church around the world and through the ages.

Acknowledgements

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*Welcome to the transformative power
of Christ's love;
if you're here, you belong!*



GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND ACADEMY

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