

The Light of Grace

A Series of Special Services for Advent

Week 3

Joy: Elizabeth

Order of Service

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Philippians 4:4

Opening Hymn ... Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates LSB#341

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates! Behold, the King of glory waits.
The King of kings is drawing near; The Savior of the world is here.
Life and salvation he doth bring; Therefore rejoice and gladly sing.
To God the Father raise Your joyful songs of praise.

A righteous Helper comes to thee; His chariot is humility,
His kingly crown is holiness, His scepter, pity in distress.
The end of all our woe he brings; Therefore the earth is glad and sings.
To Christ the Savior raise Your grateful hymns of praise.

How blest the land, the city blest, Where Christ the ruler is confessed!
O peaceful hearts and happy homes To whom this King in triumph comes!
The cloudless sun of joy is he Who comes to set his people free.
To God the Spirit raise Your happy shouts of praise.

Fling wide the portals of your heart; Make it a temple set apart
From earthly use for heav'n's employ, Adorned with prayer and love and joy.
So shall your Sov'reign enter in And new and nobler life begin.
To God alone be praise For word and deed and grace!

Invocation and Lighting of the Advent Candle

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

C Amen. *(Two purple candles and one pink candle are lit on the Advent wreath.)*

P Today we light the third Advent candle, the candle of joy. When Mary, the mother of our Lord, visited her kinswoman Elizabeth, Elizabeth's unborn son John leaped for joy at the sound of Mary's greeting. Elizabeth was filled with joy, knowing that the promised Messiah would soon

be born. We, too, rejoice as we prepare to celebrate our Savior's birth.

C We will rejoice in the Lord, now and forever!

P The prophet Isaiah foretold a highway, the Way of Holiness, a place where the redeemed would walk. Following that holy Way, the redeemed would live in the presence of God and know everlasting joy. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

C We will rejoice in the Lord, now and forever!

Confession and Absolution

P In the midst of our joy, we are called to repent and acknowledge our need for a Savior. Let us confess our sins to God and ask his forgiveness.

C Almighty God, while we rejoice in the birth of our Savior, we do not always find joy in following him. We seek to satisfy ourselves with earthly joy, joy that does not last. We turn away from the guidance of your Word and follow our own selfish desires. We do not walk in love as Jesus walked and instead put our needs ahead of the needs of others. Have mercy on us and forgive our sins for Jesus' sake. Lead us to find joy in following Jesus our Lord.

P God had mercy on us and sent his Son to be our Savior. I announce to you that your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

C Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

Hymn of Response ... Amazing Grace LSB#744

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
Amazing grace shall then prevail
In heaven's joy and peace.

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
The sun forbear to shine;
But God, who called me here below,
Will be forever mine.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun.

Prayer of the Day

Old Testament Reading ... Isaiah 35:1-10

Epistle Reading ... Philippians 4:4-7

Gospel Reading ... Luke 1:39-45

Sermon Hymn ... On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry LSB#344

On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
Announces that the Lord is nigh;
Awake and hearken, for he brings
Glad tidings of the King of kings!

Then cleansed be ev'ry life from sin;
Make straight the way for God within,
And let us all our hearts prepare
For Christ to come and enter there.

Sermon

Hymn of Response ... On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry LSB#344

All praise, eternal Son, to thee
Whose advent sets thy people free,
Whom with the Father we adore
And Holy Spirit evermore.

Apostles' Creed

C I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he will come to judge the living and the dead.

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

Offering

Prayers

Each petition concludes with the following response:

P Jesus, our King and Savior,

C In you, we have eternal joy!

Lord's Prayer

Benediction (Isaiah 35:8-10; Romans 15:13)

P And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness ... the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing;

C Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

P May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

C Amen.

Closing Hymn ... O Come, O Come, Emmanuel LSB#357

O come, O come, Emmanuel, And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, thou Branch of Jesse's tree, Free them from Satan's tyranny
That trust thy mighty pow'r to save, And give them vict'ry o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, thou Dayspring from on high, And cheer us by thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel!