

Prepare Ye

Sing praises to the Lord, O you his faithful ones, and give thanks to his holy name. Psalm 30:4

Invocation and Call to Worship

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

C Amen.

P Prepare the way of the Lord! Make straight in the desert a highway for our God!

C Sing with Moses and the people of Israel, saying—

P I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously.

C The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.

P When Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, she asked,

C Why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

P Rejoice in the Lord always!

C Again I will say, rejoice!

Hymn ... Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising

LSB 375, vv. 1-5

Confession and Absolution

P God our Father, we come to you in sorrow for our sins. For turning away from you, and ignoring your truth and your beauty, Father, forgive us:

C Save us and help us.

P For turning to what is dirty and ugly, beastly and unsightly; Father, forgive us:

C Save us and help us.

P For often approving of what is sinful and dark; Father, forgive us:

C Save us and help us.

P For having no song to sing, no joy in our heart; Father, forgive us:

C Save us and help us.

P For letting ourselves be drawn away from the beauty of the Gospel by temptations in the world around us; Father, forgive us:

C Save us and help us. Lord, have mercy! Christ, have mercy! Lord, have mercy!

P The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus! Jesus is the Prince of Peace and his atoning sacrifice, shed blood and third-day victory over death delivers divine peace to all who are penitent and contrite. Rejoice in the Lord always!

C Again I will say, rejoice.

Prayer of the Day

Old Testament Reading ... Exodus 15:1-3

Epistle Reading ... Philippians 4:4-8

Gospel Reading ... Luke 1:39-45

Hymn ... Hark the Glad Sound LSB 349

Sermon Long, Dark Hallways Luke 1:39-45

Prayers

P Gracious Father, we long to live much less of a driven life and much more of a called life. We long to live with less fear and more freedom, less by frenzy and more by faith, with fewer obsessions and with much more adoration of you, the God of all peace. So we heed the words of St. Paul, "Rejoice in the Lord always!"

C Again I will say, "Rejoice."

P Gracious Father, forgive the times when you call us forward and we do nothing and make excuses. Instead, enable us to be like Mary as we go forward, always forward, forever forward—marching to the words, "Rejoice in the Lord always!"

C Again I will say, "Rejoice."

P Gracious Father, for many of us what hinders most is fear. The fear of not being enough and having enough, the fear of losing face and losing control, the fear of missing the mark and missing out. Only your presence with us in Jesus our Lord can keep us from falling into the pit of worry and anxiety. That's why we decide to, "Rejoice in the Lord always!"

C Again I will say, "Rejoice."

P Gracious Father, drive out everything in our lives that holds us back from full-hearted and all-out devotion to you. Your Son lived a life of perfect obedience for us as the second Adam, fulfilling everything you require of us. Christ's resurrection from the dead on the third day is the firstfruits and guarantee that one Day we will be as lovely as you and as loving as you. What a glorious Day that will be! That's why we say, "Rejoice in the Lord always!"

C Again I will say, "Rejoice."

P Gracious Father, we place ourselves, these prayers and those we love before your throne of grace, trusting in the powerful and priceless name of Jesus.

C Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Benediction

P Prepare the way of the Lord! Make straight in the desert a highway for our God!

C Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand.

P Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

C And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus.

P Rejoice in the Lord always!

C Again I will say, rejoice.

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