

Prepare the Way

“Rejoice”

December 17, 2023

As We Gather

Paul writes that it is the Lord’s will that we rejoice always. Jesus told His disciples that He has come to give them a joy that the world cannot take away. But how do we rejoice when there are so many things in the world and within us that seem intent on stealing our joy? What is the joy of the Lord and what does it mean for us as we celebrate His coming?

Welcome

+ Gathering +

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

1 O come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold Him
Born the King of angels;

Refrain:

O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord!

2 Highest, most holy,
Light of Light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes;

Son of the Father
Now in flesh appearing! *Refrain*

3 Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God
In the highest! *Refrain*

4 Yea, Lord, we greet Thee,
Born this happy morning;
Jesus, to Thee be glory giv'n!
Word of the Father
Now in flesh appearing! *Refrain*

Invocation

Lighting of the Advent Wreath – The Joy Candle

Leader: Today we light the third candle of the Advent wreath. The third candle is the candle of Joy

(The HOPE and PEACE and JOY candles are lit.)

Leader: **John 15:11** - *“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”*

Leader: Let us pray. Gracious Lord, fill us with your joy, the joy found only in You, in what You have done, and in Your gifts to us, that is all the changes and challenges of life, we may rejoice in You. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

People: Amen.

Confession and Forgiveness

“Jesus Thy Blood and Righteousness” LBS 563

1 Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.

2 Bold shall I stand in that great day,
Cleansed and redeemed, no debt to pay;
Fully absolved through these I am
From sin and fear, from guilt and shame.

3 Lord, I believe Thy precious blood,
Which at the mercy seat of God
Pleads for the captives' liberty,
Was also shed in love for me.

4 Lord, I believe, were sinners more
Than sands upon the ocean shore,
Thou hast for all a ransom paid,
For all a full atonement made.

5 When from the dust of death I rise
To claim my mansion in the skies,
This then shall be my only plea:
Jesus hath lived and died for me.

6 Jesus, be endless praise to Thee,
Whose boundless mercy hath for me,
For me, and all Thy hands have made,
An everlasting ransom paid.

Prayer

Children Church

+ Service of the Word +

First Reading: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners,^[a]
² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor
and the day of vengeance of our God,
to comfort all who mourn,
³ and provide for those who grieve in Zion—
to bestow on them a crown of beauty
instead of ashes,
the oil of joy
instead of mourning,
and a garment of praise
instead of a spirit of despair.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
a planting of the LORD
for the display of his splendor.

⁴They will rebuild the ancient ruins
and restore the places long devastated;
they will renew the ruined cities
that have been devastated for generations.

“For I, the LORD, love justice;
I hate robbery and wrongdoing.
In my faithfulness I will reward my people
and make an everlasting covenant with them.
⁹Their descendants will be known among the nations
and their offspring among the peoples.
All who see them will acknowledge
that they are a people the LORD has blessed.”
¹⁰I delight greatly in the LORD;
my soul rejoices in my God.
For he has clothed me with garments of salvation
and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness,
as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
¹¹For as the soil makes the sprout come up
and a garden causes seeds to grow,
so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness
and praise spring up before all nations.

This is the Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God!

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray continually, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.

¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not treat prophecies with contempt ²¹ but test them all; hold on to what is good, ²² reject every kind of evil.

²³ May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

This is the Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God!

Holy Gospel: John 1:6-8, 19-28

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

¹⁹ Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. ²⁰ He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Messiah."

²¹ They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?"
He said, "I am not."

"Are you the Prophet?"
He answered, "No."

²² Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

²³ John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'"

²⁴ Now the Pharisees who had been sent ²⁵ questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

²⁶ "I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. ²⁷ He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie."

²⁸ This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to You O Christ!

The Apostles' Creed

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.

Sermon

"Rejoice"

Offering

"Offering"

The sun cannot compare to the glory of
Your love
There is no shadow in Your presence
No mortal man would dare to stand before
Your throne
Before the Holy One of heaven
It's only by Your blood and it's only through
Your mercy
Lord I come

I bring an offering of worship to my King
No one on earth deserves the praises that I
sing
Jesus may You receive the honor that
You're due
O Lord I bring an offering to You
I bring an offering to You

Over the skies of Bethlehem appeared a star
While angels sang to lowly shepherds
Three wise men seeking truth travelled from afar
Hoping to find the Child from heaven
Falling on their knees they bowed before
the humble Prince of Peace

I bring an offering of worship to my King
No one on earth deserves the praises that I sing
Jesus may You receive the honor that You're due
O Lord I bring an offering to You
I bring an offering of worship to my King
No one on earth deserves the praises that I sing
Jesus may You receive the honor that You're due
O Lord I bring an offering to You
O Lord I bring an offering to You
O Lord I bring an offering to You
I bring an offering to You

Prayers

Please add your prayer requests to the chat.

Thanksgivings

Pastor: O Lord, we praise You.
People: **Thanks be to God.**

Petitions

Pastor: Lord, in Your mercy,
People: **Hear our prayer.**

St. John's People and Families

Ian, Daniela, Ezekiel, Kaleb, & Isaac Anderson
Lori and Gabriel Gutierrez
Glen, Melissa, & Bailey Loban
Wayne, Barbara, Wanda, & Robert Miller
Joel & Dawn Wahlers
Michael, Taya, Michael, Leina, & Alex Bonfante
Joe, Sheena, Brynn, Easton, & Thomas Giovannoni
Michael, Claire, & Lydia Holcomb
Brandt, Nicole, Margot, & Maren Mori
Ryan, Nicole, & Lucius Sciandri

The Lord's Prayer

Benediction

“Hark! A Thrilling Voice is Sounding” LSB 345

1 Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding!
"Christ is near," we hear it say.
"Cast away the works of darkness,
All you children of the day!"

2 Startled at the solemn warning,
Let the earth-bound soul arise;
Christ, its sun, all sloth dispelling,
Shines upon the morning skies.

3 See, the Lamb, so long expected,
Comes with pardon down from heav'n.

Let us haste, with tears of sorrow,
One and all, to be forgiv'n:

4 So, when next He comes in glory
And the world is wrapped in fear,
He will shield us with His mercy
And with words of love draw near.

5 Honor, glory, might, dominion
to the Father and the Son
With the ever-living Spirit
While eternal ages run!

Offering

<http://stjohnslutheran.net/give/>

You may also mail your offering to St. John's (3521 Linda Vista, Napa, CA 94558)

Memory Verse for This Week

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!
Philippians 4:4

Serving in Worship Today

Preacher	Rev. Michael A. Schmid
Lay Reader	Dove Bain
Organist	Erin Blackwood
Sound Technician	Brian Schoenfeld
Streaming Technician	Joel Wahlers
Projector Tech	Dawn Wahlers
Worship Preparation Team	Betsy Gewirz, Bob & Doris Klein
Children's Church Leaders	Nina Montes
Ushers	Bob & Lisa De Young
Worship Band	Steve Jeffery, Steve & Judi Rock, Tom Hoff

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