

# Advent Midweek December 20, 2023



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Bible Class/Sunday School 9:30  
Sunday Worship Service 10:45

# The Light of Grace

## Week 3

### The Light of Grace Joy: Elizabeth

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

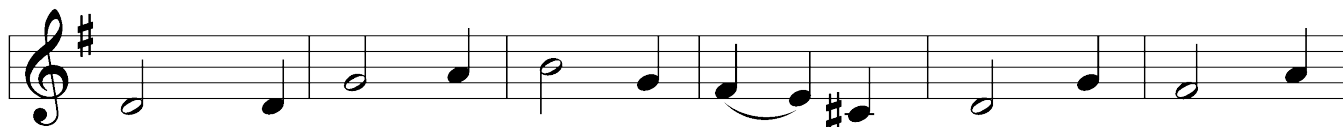
#### OPENING HYMN 341 LIFT UP YOUR HEADS, YE MIGHTY GATES



1 Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates! Behold, the  
 2 A righteous Helper comes to thee; His chariot  
 3 How blest the land, the city blest, Where Christ the  
 4 Flung wide the portals of your heart; Make it a



King of glory waits. The King of kings is drawing  
 is humility, His kingly crown is holi-  
 ruler is confessed! O peaceful hearts and happy  
 temple set apart From earthly use for heav'n's em-



near; The Savior of the world is here. Life and sal-  
 ness, His scepter, pity in distress. The end of  
 homes To whom this King in triumph comes! The cloud-less  
 ploy, Adorned with prayer and love and joy. So shall your



vation He doth bring; Therefore rejoice and gladly sing.  
 all our woe He brings; Therefore the earth is glad and sings.  
 sun of joy is He Who comes to set His people free.  
 Sov'-reign enter in And new and nobler life begin.



To God the Father raise Your joyful songs of praise.  
 To Christ the Savior raise Your grateful hymns of praise.  
 To God the Spirit raise Your happy shouts of praise.  
 To God alone be praise For word and deed and grace!

## **INVOCATION AND LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE**

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

**People Amen.**

Pastor 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.

**People We will rejoice in the Lord, now and forever!**

Pastor 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.

**People We will rejoice in the Lord, now and forever!**

## **CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**

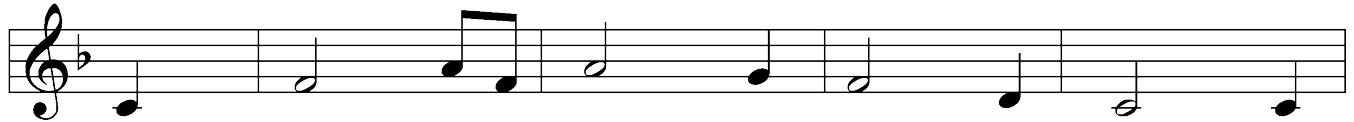
Pastor In the midst of our joy, we are called to repent and acknowledge our need for a Savior. Let us confess our sins to God and ask his forgiveness.

**People 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.**

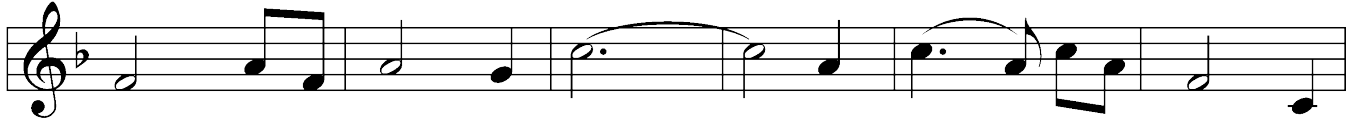
Pastor God had mercy on us and sent his Son to be our Savior. I announce to you that your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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

## HYMN 744 AMAZING GRACE



1 A - maz - ing grace— how sweet the sound— That  
2 The Lord has prom - ised good to me, His  
4 Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail And  
5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, Bright



saved a wretch like me! I once was lost but  
Word my hope se - cures; He will my shield and  
mor - tal life shall cease, A - maz - ing grace shall  
shin - ing as the sun, We've no less days to



now am found, Was blind but now I see!  
por - tion be As long as life en - dures.  
then pre - vail In heav - en's joy and peace.  
sing God's praise Than when we'd first be - gun.

Text (sts. 1–2, 4): John Newton, 1725–1807, alt.; (st. 5): A Collection of Sacred Ballads, 1790, Richmond Tune: Columbian Harmony, 1829, Cincinnati Text and tune: Public domain

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of the universe, who led Your people Israel by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Enlighten our darkness by the light of Your Christ; may His Word be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path; for You are merciful, and You love Your whole creation and we, Your creatures, glorify You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People Amen.

## HYMN 348 THE KING SHALL COME WHEN MORNING DAWNS



1 The King shall come when morn-ing dawns And light tri - um-phant breaks,  
2 Not as of old a lit - tle child, To bear and fight and die,  
4 Oh, bright-er than that glo - rious morn Shall dawn up - on our race  
5 The King shall come when morn-ing dawns And light and beau - ty brings.



When beau - ty gilds the east - ern hills And life to joy a-wakes.  
But crowned with glo - ry like the sun That lights the morn-ing sky.  
The day when Christ in splen-dor comes And we shall see His face.  
Hail, Christ the Lord! Your peo-ple pray: Come quick-ly, King of kings!

Text: John Brownlie, 1859–1925, alt. Tune: Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second, 1813, Harrisburg, ed. John Wyeth Text and tune: Public domain

## OLD TESTAMENT READING ... ISAIAH 35:1-10

<sup>1</sup>The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus;

<sup>2</sup>it shall blossom abundantly  
and rejoice with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,  
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the LORD,  
the majesty of our God.

<sup>3</sup>Strengthen the weak hands,  
and make firm the feeble knees.

<sup>4</sup>Say to those who have an anxious heart,  
“Be strong; fear not!

Behold, your God  
will come with vengeance,  
with the recompense of God.  
He will come and save you.”

<sup>5</sup>Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

<sup>6</sup>then shall the lame man leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.

For waters break forth in the wilderness,  
and streams in the desert;

<sup>7</sup>the burning sand shall become a pool,  
and the thirsty ground springs of water;  
in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down,  
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

<sup>8</sup>And a highway shall be there,  
and it shall be called the Way of Holiness;  
the unclean shall not pass over it.  
It shall belong to those who walk on the way;  
even if they are fools, they shall not go astray.

<sup>9</sup>No lion shall be there,  
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;  
they shall not be found there,  
but the redeemed shall walk there.

<sup>10</sup>And the ransomed of the LORD shall return  
and come to Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;  
they shall obtain gladness and joy,  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Leader O Lord, have mercy on us.

**People Thanks be to God.**

#### **EPISTLE READING ... PHILIPPIANS 4:4-7**

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

Leader O Lord, have mercy on us.

**People Thanks be to God.**

#### **GOSPEL READING LUKE 1:39-45**

<sup>39</sup>In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, <sup>40</sup>and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup>And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary,

the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, <sup>42</sup>and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! <sup>43</sup>And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? <sup>44</sup>For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup>And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

Leader O Lord, have mercy on us.  
 People Thanks be to God.

### HYMN OF THE DAY 344 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  
 that the Lord is nigh; A - wake and hear - ken,  
 way for God with - in, And let us all our  
 for he brings Glad tid - ings of the King of kings!  
 hearts pre - pare For Christ to come and en - ter there.

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676–1749; tr. Composite Tune: adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1571–1621 Text and tune: Public domain

### SERMON Philippians 4:4 “The Light of Grace Joy: Elizabeth

### RESPONSE HYMN 344 ON JORDAN’S BANK THE BAPTIST’S CRY

△ 5 All praise, e - ter - nal Son, to Thee Whose ad - vent  
 sets Thy peo - ple free, Whom with the Fa - ther  
 we a - dore And Ho - ly Spir - it ev - er - more.

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676–1749; tr. Composite Tune: adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1571–1621 Text and tune: Public domain

### APOSTLES’ CREED

People 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.

## **PRAYERS**

Pastor Let us pray. O Lord, who in the past revived Your people, showing them steadfast love, hear us as we pray for ourselves and all the Church: Strengthen our hope and increase faith and love among us and toward the world. Use us as fits Your gracious plans for them.

**People Hear our prayer, O Lord. Revive us again and stir up our hearts to serve You.**

Pastor Show us Your steadfast love now, O Lord. Hear us as we pray for all who have been forgotten by the world's commerce: Surround with faith-filled people all who are hungry and homeless, the many who are migrants and refugees, people dealing with sudden ills and long-term disabilities, and all who are in mourning. Use us as fits Your gracious plans for them.

**People Hear our prayer, O Lord. Revive us again and stir up our hearts to serve You.**

Pastor Give us, O Lord, what we need as we struggle in this dark world: Renew in us true faith and peace, faithfulness in worship, a spiritual vitality, and a confidence in Your promise of eternal life. Grant that many join us in fruitful worship. Use us as fits Your gracious plans for them.

**People Hear our prayer, O Lord. Revive us again and stir up our hearts to serve You.**

Pastor By the blessed coming of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord,



who gave us His own righteousness, grant these our prayers,  
for we pray in His name.

People Amen.

## LORD'S PRAYER

### BENEDICTION (ISAIAH 35:8-10; ROMANS 15:13)

Pastor 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;

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

Pastor 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.

People Amen.

## SENDING HYMN 357 O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, And ran - som  
5 O come, Thou Key of Da - vid, come, And o - pen  
6 O come, Thou Day - spring from on high, And cheer us



cap - tive Is - ra - el, That mourns in lone - ly  
wide our heav'n - ly home; Make safe the way that  
by Thy draw - ing nigh; Dis - perse the gloom - y



ex - ile here Un - til the Son of God ap - pear.  
leads on high, And close the path to mis - er - y.  
clouds of night, And death's dark shad - ows put to flight.

*Refrain*



Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el



Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

Text: Latin, c. 12th cent.; Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum, 1710, Köln; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–66, alt.  
Tune: French, 15th cent. Text and tune: Public domain

