

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Rejoicing Always

Rejoicing in Holiness

December 13, 2020



AS WE GATHER

We hear John the Baptist coming to prepare the way for the Lord, whose earthly birth we are preparing to celebrate and who's coming again on the Last Day is the promise of resurrection and eternal life for all who believe. Between our coming to faith and His coming again, we are called to lives of faith that continue to rejoice, to pray, and to give thanks in every circumstance. We can do that because we have come to the light of our salvation and hope of eternal life. Now certainly it's easier to rejoice, pray, and give thanks when things are going well. It's another thing when we suffer illness or persecution, the reverses, challenges, and disappointments of life. Nevertheless, the Spirit of Christ seeks to enable us to do just that—to rejoice always, to pray always, and to give thanks to God always in all circumstances. This is holy living, constantly keeping the eyes of faith on the sure and certain Word and promises of God for His people, the God who blesses, keeps, comforts, and strengthens us every day. We rejoice with the psalmist, saying, "This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24). In our Advent preparations today, John the apostle and evangelist adds his testimony along with John the Baptist, holding before us the joy of Jesus as the light who gives to all who receive Him and believe in His name the right to become children of God. Because of our Lord's continual supply of grace by His Word and Sacraments, we are enabled with Him to "greatly rejoice in the LORD"; for by His Spirit of righteousness we lead lives of holiness of faith. This holiness continually rejoices in the Lord, prays, and give thanks in all circumstances. With John the apostle and John the Baptist, we rejoice, always prepared by faith to welcome and worship our Lord and Savior, who comes to us daily with healing and deliverance.

✠ PREPARATION ✠

Holy God of Joy, we rejoice in the reality of who you are. We live within the joy of your love for us. Our contentment comes and goes. Our happiness ebbs and flows. Our feelings depend upon our circumstances, our physical health, our brain chemistry. Gracious God, send us your grace this Advent Season so that we can prepare for your coming. Touch our hearts with longing so that we can better love and serve you and each other. Fill us with joy and hope that we can be transformed by your Spirit and so help transform the world. Give us the peace of knowing that you came to share our human life and redeem us for the sake of love. Open us that we might hear Your Word today. We pray this in the name of the One who was born where he was welcomed: a lowly manger. Come, Jesus, into our heart. We ask these things in the name of Jesus whose kingdom we seek. Amen.

Welcome to Bethel Lutheran Church! God's Word warns us to stay awake and watchful in our spiritual lives. Jesus Christ will return to bring this world to an end as suddenly as a thief coming in the night! When he appears in his glory, those who believe and trust in him as their Savior will be ushered into the eternal kingdom of heaven. We pray that God's Holy Spirit would keep us ready and waiting for Jesus' return!

SOLO

Ms. Angela Henderson

INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
People: Amen.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: Behold, the true light has come into the world. Let us enter into His presence, confessing our sins and receiving His forgiveness.

People: **Lord God, our heavenly Father, hear us as we confess the darkness of our waywardness and sin, especially our reluctance or refusal to rejoice, pray, or give thanks amid the troubles we have brought upon ourselves. Make us truly repentant, that we may receive the holiness of faith in our Savior Jesus Christ, the forgiveness of our sins. Amen.**

Pastor: The true light has come. To all who receive Him, He makes to be the children of God. Upon this, your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God to all of you. And in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE

Pastor: Jesus Christ is the Light of the world,
People: the light no darkness can overcome.

Pastor: Let Your light scatter the darkness
People: and illumine Your Church.

HYMN“Jesus The Light of the World” TFBF 59 Sts. 2-3

2 Joyful, all you nations, rise, Jesus, the Light of the world; join the triumph of the skies; Jesus, the Light of the world.

Refrain:

We'll walk in the light, beautiful light, come where the dewdrops of mercy are bright. Shine all around us by day and by night, Jesus, the Light of the world.

3 Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Jesus, the Light of the world; Christ, the everlasting Lord! Jesus, the Light of the world. [Refrain]

✠ WORD ✠

SALUTATION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.
People: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ, true Light of the world, abide with us that we may rejoice in Your gracious presence, pray to You in every need, and give thanks for all Your blessing; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Isaiah 61:1–4, 8–11* (The year of the Lord's favor)

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

GRADUAL **SOLO** **Ms. Angela Henderson**
Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:26, alt.

Leader: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. From the house of the Lord we bless you.

EPISTLE *1 Thessalonians 5:16–24* (Rejoice always)

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

VERSE *Matthew 11:10b*

Leader: Alleluia. Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You. Alleluia.

HOLY GOSPEL *John 1:6–8, 19–28* (The testimony of John the Baptist)

Leader: Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

For the Holy Christian Church throughout the world and for all who confess the name of Christ, that God guard and defend us from all temptations of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature, let us pray to the Lord:

People: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: For [Matthew Harrison], our Synod President, [Eric Johnson], our District President, for all pastors and servants of Christ, that they proclaim with faithfulness and clarity the true light of the Gospel in all they do, let us pray to the Lord:

People: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: For the government and all who have been set into positions of leadership, that they use the authority entrusted to them honorably and for the good of all people, let us pray to the Lord:

People: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: For all who suffer from hunger, homelessness, poverty, or unemployment, that God's great mercy and love preserve and relieve them, let us pray to the Lord:

People: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: For those who are sick, [*especially . . .*], that God grant healing to their bodies and strength to bear their infirmities with patience and grace, let us pray to the Lord:

People: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: For those who rejoice in the rich blessings of God, that they always remember the Giver of every gift and give Him heartfelt thanks, let us pray to the Lord:

People: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

People: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER *Matthew 6:9–13*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BENEDICTION

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you.
 The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
 The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.
 Numbers 6:24–26

People: **Amen.**

SOLO

Ms. Angela Henderson

***LISTEN TO THE MESSAGE FROM GOD'S WORD.
USE THIS SHEET TO MAKE SOME PERSONAL NOTES.
GO BACK OVER THEM THROUGH THE WEEK.
THINK AND LET GOD CRYSTALIZE TRUTHS IN YOUR LIFE.***

SERMON TITLE: _____

BIBLICAL TEXT: _____

INTRODUCTION: _____

MAJOR POINTS: _____

WHAT I WILL DO AS A RESULT OF THIS MESSAGE:

“...They received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures everyday.” Acts 17:11 (NIV)

