

Liturgy

The Third Sunday of Advent (Joy)



GATHERING

Leader: We are gathered in joyful expectation to praise and worship the LORD, Emmanuel, the Coming One.

Sing praises to the LORD,
for He has done glorious things;
Let this be known in all the earth.
*Shout aloud, and sing for joy, O people of Zion,
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.*
When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.
*Then our mouths were filled with laughter,
and our tongues with shouts of joy.*
Then it was said among the nations,
“The LORD has done great things for them.”
**The LORD has done great things for us; we are glad!
We have trusted in Your lovingkindness;
Our hearts shall rejoice in Your salvation.**

Leader: Let all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You;
And let those who love Your salvation say continually:
“The LORD be magnified!”

– Scripture weaving from Isaiah 12:5-6; Psalms 126:1-3, 13:5, 40:16

Holy Is the Lord

We stand and lift up our hands
For the joy of the Lord is our strength.
We bow down and worship Him now:
How great how awesome is He!

And together we sing,
Ev'ryone sing:

Holy is the Lord God Almighty;
The earth is filled with His glory.
Holy is the Lord God Almighty;
The earth is filled with His glory.
The earth is filled with His glory.

CCLI Song #4158039 ©2003 worshiptogether.com songs.
Chris Tomlin and Louie Giglio

*LECTIONARY for the third Sunday of
Advent, Year B:*

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Psalm 126

Luke 1:46b-55

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

John 1:6-8, 19-28

On this third Sunday of Advent, we light the candle of Joy. Traditionally, during Advent the Church has observed a season of watchful preparation and fasting. On this third Sunday, also known as Gaudete Sunday (gaudete is Latin for “rejoice”), fasting gives way to feasting as we rejoice in the hopeful expectation of the promised blessings the Coming One brings with His Advent.

In some churches, you may notice the joyful tone of Gaudete Sunday reflected in the colors used to curate the worship space. The dominant color throughout the season of Advent is purple, which calls to mind the royalty of Christ. Traditionally the liturgical color for today, however, is rose, seen most especially in the color of the candle.

The gathering antiphonal reading is written for a leader and two other readers or groups within the congregation, with the entire congregation reading the text in bold. Based on today’s psalm, with its joyful exclamation that “the LORD has done great things for us,” it weaves in complementary Scriptures that speak of the many reasons for our joy in Him.

You may see a few questioning expressions from those who haven’t thought of this “contemporary classic” as an Advent song. But it can be! Especially when it’s followed, as it is here, by the hymn Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee, based on the final movement of Beethoven’s ninth symphony (“Ode to Joy”). Hint: make sure to sing it in the same key as Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee, so that the medley works smoothly.

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee,
God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee,
Opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;
Drive the dark of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day!

Thou art giving and forgiving,
Ever blessing, ever blessed;
Wellspring of the joy of living,
Ocean depth of happy rest!

Bridge:

Let us rejoice! (I will rejoice!)
Rejoice in Him! (I will rejoice!)
Let us rejoice! (I will rejoice!)
I will rejoice, I will rejoice!

All Thy works with joy surround Thee,
Earth and heav'n reflect Thy rays;
Stars and angels sing around Thee,
Center of unbroken praise.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;
Drive the dark of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day!

We will rejoice! (Rejoice in Him!)
We will rejoice! (Rejoice in Him!)
We will rejoice! (Rejoice in Him!)
We will rejoice, we will rejoice;
We will rejoice.

Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee,
God of glory, Lord of love.

Setting and Bridge: Ellen Koehler. Copyright ©2014 Ellen Koehler. All Rights Reserved.
Words: Henry J. van Dyke, 1907. Hymn tune: HYMN TO JOY, from the Ninth Symphony
of Ludwig van Beethoven, adapted by Edward Hodges, 1824.

INVOCATION

Prayers of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving for God's presence

O Dayspring, Splendor of Eternal Light and Sun of Righteousness:
**Come and enlighten those who sit in darkness
and in the shadow of death.**

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

O come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

Setting: Ellen Koehler. Copyright ©2012 Ellen Koehler. All Rights Reserved.
Text: Latin hymn, 12th century; transl. John M. Neale, 1851.
Hymn tune: VENI EMMANUEL, 15th century plainsong.

This traditional hymn, also one not usually thought of for Advent though sometimes included in Christmas sections of hymnals, is a jubilant expression of gladness and expectant hope. This setting draws from three of the hymn's four verses. The bridge punctuates the exultant lyrics with an antiphonal declaration that, in response to God's great goodness, we will rejoice!

Ellen's arrangement and setting of Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee is available on request. (You may write us at clerestorynotes@gmail.com)

As last week, we have drawn the closing words of our corporate prayers of invocation from one of the O Antiphons. Harkening back at least to the eighth century, if not earlier, that ancient hymn traditionally was sung in Vespers service on each of the last seven days of Advent. The O Antiphons are filled with beautiful biblical imagery and wonderful theology of the hope of Christ's coming. The verses we sing at Invocation each week correspond to and reflect the journey of these Advent weeks: Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace.

Ellen's setting of O Come, O Come, Emmanuel is available in the music catalog as a lead sheet. As we've noted in the past two weeks' comments, the harmonic arrangement varies from verse to verse, which is especially moving when all four verses are sung at one point in a service. Separated week by week, as we are doing throughout this season, they highlight the movement of our Advent watchfulness as the Sundays build toward the celebration of Christ's birth on December 25.

Here's a link to the Music Room:
<https://clerestorynotes.com/live/sheetmusic/o-come-o-come-emmanuel>

PROFESSION OF FAITH

God, who at various times and in various ways
spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,
has in these last days spoken to us by His Son,
whom He appointed heir of all things,
through whom also He made the world,
and who is the radiance of His glory
and the exact representation of His nature.

*When the fullness of time had come,
God sent forth His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,
born a descendant of David according to the flesh;
born of a woman, born under the Law;
in the likeness of sinful flesh, to be an offering for our sin;
so that He might redeem us,
that we might receive adoption as His children.*

**God also highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him
the name that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.**

— from Hebrews 1:1-3; Romans 1:3, 8:3-4; Galatians 4:3-4, Philippians 2:9-11

Gaudete (Rejoice!)

Antiphon:

Gaudete! Gaudete! Christus est natus
Ex Maria virgine, Gaudete!

(Translation: Rejoice, rejoice! Christ is born of the virgin Mary; rejoice!)

Cantor:

Time of Grace has come we've prayed, Time of Grace is on us;
Let us sing our songs of joy, songs of our salvation.

God made man is born today, born while nature wonders;
All is new by Christ the King, King of all the ages.

Darkness that has bound the soul, shattered with this dawning;
Where the light is shining bright salvation is calling.

Therefore let us all rejoice! Purity surrounds us.
Let us bless the Lord, our King; heaven and earth resounding.

Traditional.

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him,
on those who hope in His steadfast love.

*Our soul waits for the LORD;
He is our help and our shield.*

For our heart rejoices in Him,
because we trust in His holy name.

*Let Your steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us,
Even as we hope in You.*

— Psalm 33:18, 20-22

The Profession of Faith is drawn from several Epistle passages that speak of the promise and coming of Christ, the Word of God, who became incarnate "in the fullness of time." These passages, together with the sung Gaudete, are a powerful proclamation of the joy attendant on our faith.

This traditional carol, thought to have been formally composed in the sixteenth century, is based on a medieval chant tune. Try having your congregation sing the refrain ("Antiphon") in Latin. It's best to use an acoustic drum on this song. (We like to use an Irish bodhran.) The last line of the fourth verse is altered slightly for Advent: from "Jesus Christ is born today, heaven's voice resounding!" to "Let us bless the Lord, our King; heaven and earth resounding!"

Most merciful God, always with us, always coming:
You pardon all who truly repent and turn to You.

**We confess with sadness
that we have not always kept watch for You.
We have occupied ourselves with our own concerns.
We have not loved You with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.**

[Silent confessions]

Have mercy on us, O God, in Your loving-kindness.
In Your great compassion, cleanse us from our sin.

**Create in us a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within us.
Restore to us the joy of our salvation
and sustain us with Your bountiful Spirit,
that we may walk in Your ways always,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

– based on Psalm 51:10-12

O Little Town of Bethlehem (verse 4)

O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in,
Be born in us today.

We hear the great glad tidings
The prophets did foretell;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel!

Public domain. Words: Philip Brooks, 1867;
Music: Lewis Redner, 1868.
(Lyric alteration for Advent)

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

The word of the Lord, His faithful and true promise:

Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness,
you who seek the LORD.

For the LORD will comfort His people;
joy and gladness will be found in them,
thanksgiving and the voice of song.

And His justice will be a light to the peoples:
His salvation will be forever,
and His deliverance will never be ended.

– from Isaiah 51:1-6

Thanks be to God! And may the LORD be magnified forever!

For the Mighty One has done great things for us,
and holy is His name.

His mercy is for those who fear Him,
from generation to generation.

– from Luke 1:46-50

Thanks be to God!

This corporate prayer of confession is adapted from the Book of Common Prayer, Morning Prayer, rite two, and from David's prayer of confession recorded in Psalm 51.

TIME OF OFFERING

Words and prayers of thanksgiving and devotion

The Magnificat

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
And my spirit exults in God my Savior.
For He has looked with mercy on my lowliness,
And His name will be forever exalted.

For the mighty God has done great things for me,
And His mercy will reach from age to age.

And holy, holy, holy is His name.

He has mercy in ev'ry generation;
He has revealed His power and His glory.
He has cast down the mighty in their arrogance,
And has lifted up the meek and the lowly.

He has come to help His servant Israel;
He remembers His promise to our fathers.

And holy, holy, holy is His name.

CCLI Song # 14497 ©1980 Birdwing Music; John Michael Talbot

There are several wonderful settings of the Cantic of Mary (the Magnificat). We like this one for this Sunday in Year B because it follows closely the text in Luke 1. This text is also included in next week's lectionary, and during years A and C as well. So this is a good opportunity for you to explore, and worshipfully enjoy, some of the other settings of Mary's song of praise.

LIGHTING OF THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE: JOY

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

Lighting of the candle

Prepare the way of the Lord.

We light this candle as a symbol of joy.

**May the joyful promise of Your presence, O God,
make us rejoice in our hope of salvation.
O come, O come, Emmanuel!**

Prepare, then, the way of the Lord.

THE WORD

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Psalm 126

Luke 1:46b-55

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

John 1:6-8, 19-28

THE TABLE

Remembering the Body of Christ

Passing of the Peace

The Lord be with you!

And also with you!

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again!

Our Father in Heaven (sung)

Our Father in heaven, Your name is holy,
Your name is holy, our Father.
Your kingdom come,
And Your will be done
Here on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us, we pray, our bread for today,
Our debts forgive and in turn we will live,
Forgiving of what others owe.
Keep us from trials;
Save us from our ancient foe!

As we sing the kingdom,
We sing the power,
We sing the glory be Yours –
Forever. Amen. Amen. Amen!

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Jesus, I am Resting

Jesus, I am resting, resting \
In the joy of what Thou art.
I am finding out the greatness
Of Thy loving heart.
Thou hast bid me gaze upon Thee,
And Thy beauty fills my soul.
For by Thy transforming power,
Thou hast made me whole.

Chorus:

Jesus, I am resting, resting in the joy of what Thou art.
I am finding out the greatness of Thy loving heart.

Oh, how great Thy loving kindness,
Vaster, broader than the sea.
Oh, how marvelous Thy goodness
Lavished all on me.
Yes, I rest in Thee, Beloved,
Know what wealth of grace is Thine;
Know Thy certainty of promise
And have made it mine.

Chorus

Music for this setting of the Lord's Prayer, Our Father in Heaven, is available in the sheet music catalog as a lead sheet, and as a solo/melody line with piano accompaniment on request.

Here's a link to the Music Room:

<https://clerestorynotes.com/live/sheetmusic/our-father-heaven>

We sing three verses of this updated hymn here, at Table, and close the service with the fourth verse as a sung prayer of joyful celebration in His promises.

Here's a note for you to ponder: We often think of resting in God's love, and so we should. But these lyrics encourage us to rest in the joy of who Jesus is, and in His trustworthy character. How might this contemplation add to your rejoicing on this Gaudete Sunday?

Simply trusting Thee, Lord Jesus,
I behold Thee as Thou art.
And Thy love so pure, so changeless,
Satisfies my heart;
Satisfies its deepest longings,
Meets, supplies its ev'ry need,
Compasseth me 'round with blessings,
This is love indeed.

Chorus

CCLI Song #2697066; ©1998 New Spring;
Words by Jean Sophia Pigott; Music by David Hampton.

SENDING FORTH

The Life of the Body

Jesus, I am Resting (verse 4)

Ever lift Thy face upon me as I work and wait for Thee;
Resting 'neath Thy smile, Lord Jesus, earth's dark shadows flee.
Brightness of the Father's glory, sunshine of my Father's face,
Keep me ever trusting, resting, fill me with Thy grace.

Jesus, I am resting, resting in the joy of what Thou art.
I am finding out the greatness of Thy loving heart.

CCLI Song #2697066; ©1998 New Spring; Words by Jean Sophia Pigott; Music by David Hampton.

Benediction:

Beloved, hear and take these words of blessing and exhortation into your hearts,
as you watch and wait with eager anticipation the coming of Christ:

Rejoice in the Lord always.

Let your gentleness be known to everyone.

The Lord is near.

So may the peace of God,

which surpasses all understanding,

guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. – from Philippians 4:4-7

Amen.

Now, may our Lord Jesus Christ, who came once in humility and will come
again in triumph and glory, fill your hearts with joyful expectation at all times,
as you go forth into the world to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Come quickly Lord Jesus. Maranatha!

A thought about worship...—“Advent is the time when God breaks in on us with new
surprises and touches us with a renewing and restoring power.... We should use the
Advent season as a period to identify the matters from which we need to be redeemed.
Identify whatever it is that seems to be holding you in its power.... Commit it to the
One who comes to set the prisoners free, turn it over to Christ in prayer, and ask the
one who has come into your life to take this problem up into Himself.” (Robert E.
Webber, *Ancient-Future Time: Forming Spirituality through the Christian Year* [Grand
Rapids: Baker Books, 2004], 38, 51).

Lectionary for next week: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26
Romans 16: 25-27
Luke 1:26-38, 46b-55

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