

Third Sunday of Advent

BERGEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

December 12, 2021 – 10:30 a.m.



The Boundless Advent Series:

God offers us so much more than we could ever want or need.

*Love – Joy – **Peace** – Hope – Spirit – Life*

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

Boundless Joy

Today we light the third Advent candle, it's the candle of boundless joy. In Advent we are in anticipation; we are in waiting.

We are waiting for Christmas.

We are excited about the decorations, the gifts, and about Santa. But mostly, we are excited about Jesus being born.

We are excited for Jesus' birth.

It is in all these ordinary things at Christmas; the tree, the lights, the stars, and the gifts that we find Emmanuel. Emmanuel means God with us. We find God in everything around us.

God is with us in the ordinary.

We have boundless peace in God because God continually works to anchor us, comfort us, and give us peace.

God's peace is boundless.

All our lives will be full of boundless peace.

Because of God's boundless love for us, we have boundless peace in our life.

Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

WELCOME

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who alone does wonders, who lifts up the lowly, who fills the hungry with good things.

Amen.

OPENING HYMN

Please stand for the confession and forgiveness.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Let us confess our sin, trusting in the tender mercy of our God.

God for whom we wait,

in the presence of one another, we confess our sin before you. We fail in believing that your good news is for us. We falter in our call to tend your creation. We find our sense of self in material wealth. We fear those different from ourselves. We forget that we are your children and turn away from your love. Forgive us, Blessed One, and assure us again of your saving grace. Amen.

God, in Christ Jesus, has looked upon you with favor! Through the power of the Holy Spirit, † your sins are forgiven. You are children of the Most High, inheritors of the eternal promise, and recipients of divine mercy. God strengthens you once again to follow the way of peace.

Amen.

GREETING

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

And also with you.

Rejoice in the Lord always.

Again, I say "Rejoice!"

Shout aloud and sing for joy!

God is with us. The Lord is near.

Come with joy to the Lord. Come and draw water from the wells of salvation. Give thanks to the Lord, and call on God's name. You are invited to join the joyful dance of discipleship. You are invited to learn the lively song of faith.

We come with joy to the Lord.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Mighty God, make us worthy of the challenge of the gospel. Prune away all that is fruitless and burn away all that is false until nothing is left but the good news of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Please be seated.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: ZEPHANIAH 3:14-20

The prophet Zephaniah's message is mostly one of judgment for sin. This reading, however, which comes from the conclusion of the book, prophesies joy for Judah and Jerusalem. Judgment has led to repentance, and God's salvation is at hand.

¹⁴Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!

¹⁵The LORD has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more.

¹⁶On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak.

¹⁷The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing

¹⁸as on a day of festival. I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it.

¹⁹I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.

²⁰At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the LORD.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: ISAIAH 12:2-6 READ RESPONSIVELY.

²Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid,

for the LORD GOD is my strength and my might, and has become my salvation.

³**With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.**

⁴And you will say in that day: Give thanks to the LORD, call on God's name;

make known the deeds of the LORD among the nations; proclaim that this name is exalted.

⁵**Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be known in all the earth.**

⁶Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

SECOND READING: PHILIPPIANS 4:4-7

Despite being in prison, Paul is remarkably upbeat as he writes this letter. Here, he urges his friends in Philippi to trust God with all their worries and concerns with the hope that they will experience God's joy and peace.

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Please stand.

Alleluia.

I am sending my messenger before you, who will prepare your way before you. Alleluia. (Matt. 11:10)

The Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you O Lord.

GOSPEL: LUKE 3:7-18

John the Baptist heralds the mighty one who is coming. John teaches that preparation for God's reign is not a matter of identity but of bearing fruits of merciful justice, radical generosity, and vocational integrity.

⁷John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ⁹Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

¹⁰And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" ¹¹In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." ¹²Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" ¹³He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." ¹⁴Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

¹⁵As the people were filled with expectation, and all were

questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

¹⁸So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated.

MESSAGE

HYMN OF THE DAY

Please stand for our confession of faith.

CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

As the apostle Paul wrote to the church in Philippi: "Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

In that spirit, let us pray.

God of gentleness, be near us.

Where the earth is groaning for redemption

God of gentleness, be near us.

Where the church is struggling to be faithful

God of gentleness, be near us.

Where the nations are locked in conflict

God of gentleness, be near us.

Where people are yearning for freedom

God of gentleness, be near us.

Where neighbors are living in fear

God of gentleness, be near us.

Where loved ones are sick and suffering

God of gentleness, be near us.

Wrap your peace around us, oh God—the peace that surpasses all understanding—to guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, in whose holy name we pray.

Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

Please share the peace with a wave to your brothers and sisters in Christ.

Please be seated.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

OFFERING PRAYER

God of our waiting and watching,
as you come to gather up the harvest,
separate the wheat from the chaff,
we offer the gifts of our hearts and our lives
to the service of all your people,
through Christ Jesus,
our pathway and our boundless peace.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever.**

Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING

The God of hope
fill us with all joy and peace in believing,
so that we may abound in hope
by the power of the Holy Spirit,
through Christ Jesus † for whom we wait.

Amen.

CHIMES OF BLESSING

SENDING HYMN

DISMISSAL

Rejoice in the Lord always.
Again, I will say, "Rejoice!"
The Lord is near.

Thanks be to God.

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Gathered in Faith ~ Sent to Serve

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