

INTRODUCTION

"Rejoice always," begins the reading from First Thessalonians. Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. "All God's children got a robe," go the words of the spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes that make us feel happy just to put on. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God's party.

Congregational Responses in Bold Print

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE *Of the Father's Love Begotten* HELD

CONFESSION OF SINS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who comes to wake us from sleep, who leads us into the light of grace. Amen.

*Let us prepare the way of the Lord by confessing our sin against God and neighbor.
Silence for reflection and self-examination.*

God of all time, we confess that we have not prepared for your merciful reign among us. We ignore our neighbors in need and fail in the labor of justice and peace. In your mercy forgive us. Grant us wisdom to welcome your light and to seek the things that will endure until Christ comes again in glory. Amen.

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. In ☩ Jesus Christ your sins are forgiven and all things are made new. Rejoice in this good news! Amen

GATHERING HYMN #248 *People Look East* BESANÇON

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.

KYRIE

Ⓐ Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: Ⓞ Lord, have mer - cy.
 Lord, have mer - cy:

Ⓐ Chri - ste e - le - i - son: Ⓞ Christ, have mer - cy.
 Christ, have mer - cy:

Ⓐ Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: Ⓞ Lord, have mer - cy.
 Lord, have mer - cy:

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray together. Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11

Though the people had returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, they continued to face hardship and oppression. In the language of the jubilee year described in Leviticus 25, the prophet, moved by the spirit of the Lord, announces deliverance for those who are oppressed and comfort for those who mourn.

¹The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; ²to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory. ⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

⁸For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed. ¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

LIGHTING OF THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe.

*Your prophets spoke of a day when the desert would blossom
and waters would break forth in the wilderness.*

Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath.

Strengthen our hearts as we prepare for the coming of the Lord.

May he give water to all who thirst, for he is our light and our salvation.

Blessed be God forever. Amen.

(the third Advent candle is lit)

HYMN: #257 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (stanza 5)

**O come, O key of David, come, and open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you O Israel.**

SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 5: 16-24

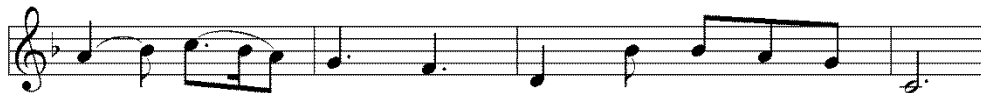
Paul concludes his letter to the Thessalonians by encouraging them to live lives of continual joy, prayer, and thanksgiving. The closing blessing is grounded in the hope of Christ's coming.

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise the words of prophets, ²¹but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil.

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

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

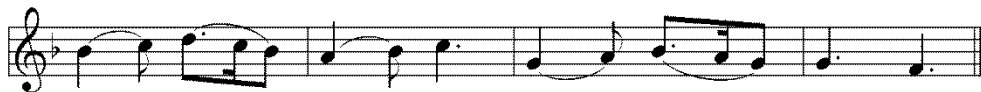
GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



Al - le - lu - ia. You have the words of e - ter - nal life.



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

HOLY GOSPEL

The Holy Gospel according to John the 1st Chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

GOSPEL John 1: 6-8, 19-28

John's gospel describes Jesus as the "light of the world." John the Baptist is presented as a witness to Jesus, one who directs attention away from himself to Christ, the true light.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ²²Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,

'Make straight the way of the Lord,' "

as the prophet Isaiah said.

²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON *Rev. Robert Cochran*

HYMN OF THE DAY #267 *Joy to the World* ANTIOCH

APOSTLES' CREED

God has made us his people through our baptism into Christ. Living together in trust, hope, and love we confess our faith:

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.

THE PRAYERS

Guided by the light of Christ, let us pray for the coming dawn of joy, healing, and comfort for all God's people. (A brief silence.)

... Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We raise our prayers to you, O God, in the name of the one who is, who was, and who is to come, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

MEAL

INTRODUCTION TO THE PEACE

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

Share the peace with one another!

OFFERING Miriam Gibson (8:15) *In Dulci Jubilo* J.S.BACH
Senior Choir (10:45) *Thou Shalt Know Him*

OFFERTORY # 692 *We Are an Offering*

We lift our voices, we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to you; we are an offering.

Lord use our voices, Lord use our hands, Lord use our lives, they are yours:

we are an offering.

All that we have, all that we are, all that we hope to be, we give to you, we give to you.

We lift our voices, we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to you; we are an offering,

we are an offering.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Savior of the nations, come. Make your home here in us. Feed us with your love, that our faith shines ever new and our lives reveal your light. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right.....we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and
might, heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry.
Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the
high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

LORD'S PRAYER

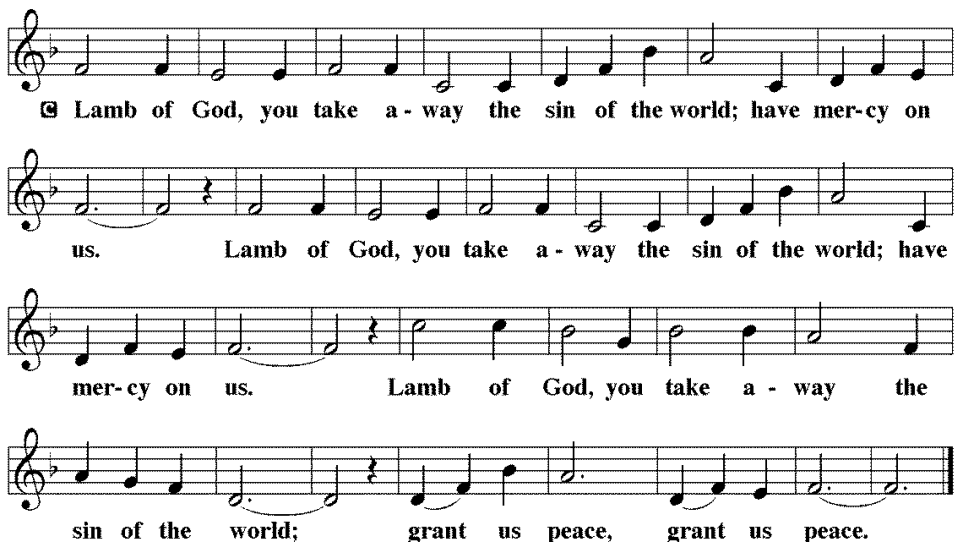
Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you. Share in the feast of salvation.

LAMB OF GOD



☞ Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

SONGS DURING COMMUNION

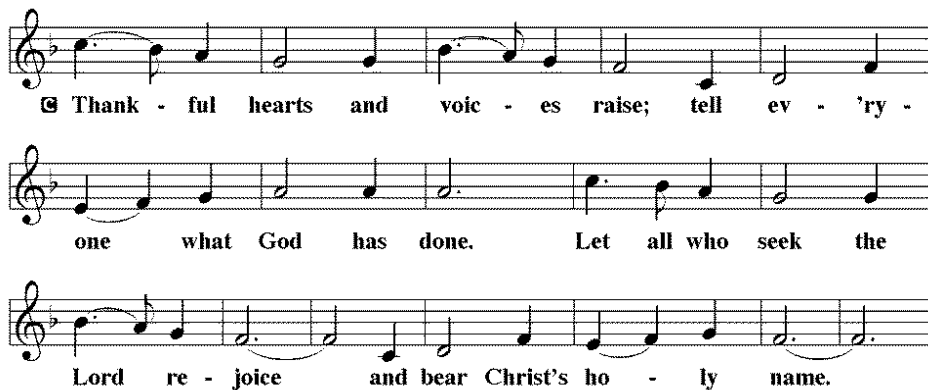
Senior Choir: *After Giving Thanks, Remember Me*

272 *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*

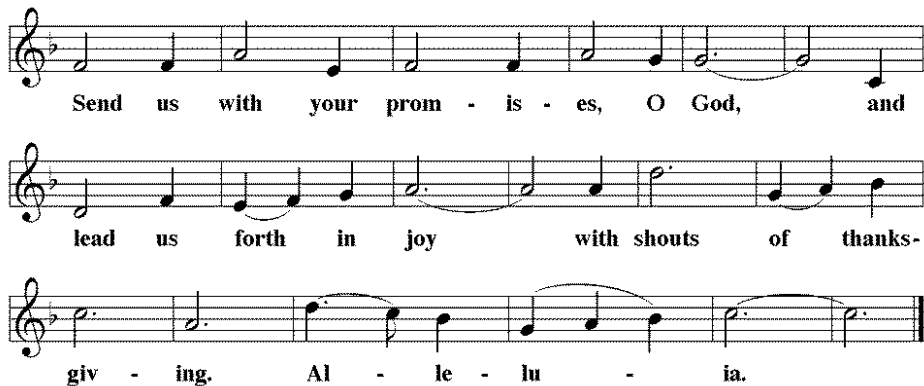
833 *Oh, That I Had a Thousand Voices*

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. Amen.

POST-COMMUNION HYMN



☞ Thank - ful hearts and voic - es raise; tell ev - 'ry -
one what God has done. Let all who seek the
Lord re - joice and bear Christ's ho - ly name.



Send us with your prom - is - es, O God, and
 lead us forth in joy with shouts of thanks-
 giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray. God for whom we wait, you come to us in the broken bread and the cup we share. Make us ready always to welcome Christ into our hearts, and send us forth to be your people in the world, announcing your coming among us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

May Christ, the Sun of righteousness, shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path. Almighty God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. Amen.

SENDING HYMN # 259 *Fling Wide the Door* MACHT HOCH DIE TÜR

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE *Hark the Glad Sound* BLERSCH

Moving One Step Closer to God.

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