

Service of Holy Communion
Third Sunday of Advent
December 12, 2021
10:00 a.m.

GATHERING

PRELUDE “Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow” - Joe Utterbuck, *arr.*
 “O Savior, Rend the Heavens Wide” setting/ Robert Lind

WELCOME

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Lord God, we call for help:

Let our prayer come into your presence.

God of love, in this Advent season we seek your wisdom and we ask for your help and strength. Help us to know ourselves and accept our weakness. Give us the will to confess our sins, and strengthen us with your forgiving love, for the sake of Jesus Christ, your Son.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

The congregation may kneel or sit. Silence is kept for reflection.

Most merciful God, **we confess with our whole hearts our neglect and forgetfulness of your commandments, our wrongdoing, thinking, and speaking; the hurts we have done to others, and the good we have left undone. Forgive us, for we have sinned against you. Raise us to newness of life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

During the hymn, the children and their leaders are blessed to go downstairs for the children's church. The children's church returns to the sanctuary at the sharing of the peace.

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.

The word of the Lord.

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.

**³With 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.

**⁵Sing 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.

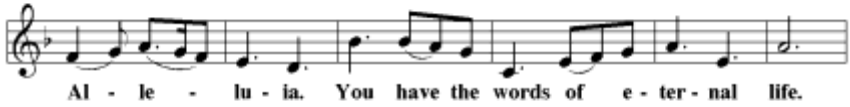
⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,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

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The congregation may stand.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL Luke 3:7-18

The holy gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke the third chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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.

The congregation may be seated.

SERMON

The congregation may stand.

HYMN OF THE DAY

"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence" Red Book #490

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God,

**the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,

**the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

For us and for our salvation

**he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.**

On the third day he rose again

in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the
dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,*
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Keeping awake as we watch for Christ, let us pray for the church, the
world, and all in need.

The congregation may kneel or sit.

That awareness of the Lord's nearness may lead us to gentleness and
generosity, let us pray: **Lord, have mercy.**

That God would open to each of us specific ways to live out our hope as
we prepare for Christ's advent, let us pray: **Lord, have mercy.**

That those who suffer civil war in Ethiopia, Yemen, and Syria be spared
further disaster, let us pray: **Lord, have mercy.**

That the citizens of our nation may discover again the virtues of
tolerance and forbearance, let us pray: **Lord, have mercy.**

That those who shoulder the burdens of irritation and compressed stress
borne of this pandemic find relief, let us pray: **Lord, have mercy.**

That those who are unjustly imprisoned, those who are unfairly shamed,
and all others who have little reason for gladness may experience the joy
Christ can bring even in hard circumstances, let us pray: **Lord, have
mercy.**

That there be healing for those who are sick, comfort for those who sit in grief, and endurance for those who go one day at a time in recovery, let us pray: **Lord, have mercy.**

That God would hear the prayers of our hearts....*(pause)*....Let us pray: **Lord, have mercy.**

That God would receive our thanksgivings for the blessed dead, let us pray: **Lord, have mercy.**

God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

THE MEAL

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

The congregation may share the peace by waving at those around you. Please remain in the pew where you are standing or sitting as you share the peace!

CHOIR ANTHEM

“People of the Night!”

SHEPHERD’S SONG

- David Haas (b. 1957)

Kevin Mathias, *soprano recorder*

OFFERING PRAYER *led by the assisting minister*

God of our waiting and watching, we offer the gifts of our hearts and our lives to the service of all your people. Prepare the way before us as we meet you in this simple meal, through Christ Jesus, our pathway and our peace.

Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also 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 God thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy that we should at all times and in all places...*(The presiding minister continues giving thanks, concluding)*...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

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.

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life...

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

With this bread and cup, we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.

Come, Holy Spirit.

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.

A - men, a - men, a -

men, a - men, a - men.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:
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

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

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.

SHARING OF THE SACRAMENT

All are welcome to Holy Communion today. Lutherans believe that Christ is truly present in the bread and wine. The ushers will invite you forward to receive; please keep 6 feet of distance between you and the next group of communicants. Gluten free wafers are available; please let the pastor know if you wish to receive them. If you are able to receive either bread or wine (but not both), please know that you still receive the full communion.

COMMUNION MUSIC

“Comfort Ye My People” - Dennis Johnson

BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

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

Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION *led by the assisting minister*

Most High God, you have come among us at this table.

By the Spirit’s power, form us to be bearers of your word, sharing gifts of mercy and grace with all, through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest.

Amen.

BLESSING

May the Lord make you grow and abound in love for one another and for all. **Amen.**

May God so strengthen your hearts that you may be blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus. **Amen.**

May the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be with you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN

“People, Look East”

Red Book #248

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord!

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

“My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness” - Mary Beth Bennett

SERVING IN WORSHIP TODAY

The Rev. Kimberly van Driel	Presiding Minister
Jim Cunningham	Assisting Minister
Amy Beiler	Reader
Christiaan van Driel	Crucifer
Sharon Heist Miller	Children's Church
Signe Mitchell	Organist
Harry Cunningham	Senior Choir Director
Sue Morrow	AV Assisting Minister
Heather Helsel	PowerPoint Assisting Minister
Roxanne Glagola	Altar Guild
Marlin Boltz and Jack Rudzki	Ushers
Susan Farrell and Sue Morrow	Counters

Flowers are given to the glory of God by Sandy Lefebvre.

THIS WEEK AT FIRST ENGLISH

Monday, 12/13	5:00 PM	Community Dinner
	8:00 PM	NA Meeting (Social Hall)
Tuesday, 12/14	7:00 PM	Council Meeting
Wednesday, 12/15	11:00 AM	Staff Meeting
	7:30 PM	Advent Service of Evening Prayer
	7:00 PM	AA Meeting (Social Hall)
Thursday, 12/16	10:30 AM	Bible Study
	7:00 PM	Choir Rehearsal
	7:30 PM	NA Meeting (Downstairs)
Friday, 12/17		Pastor Kimberly's day off
Saturday, 12/18	12:00 PM	NA Meeting (Downstairs)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We mourn with the family of Tamara Lehew Whitty who died in resurrection hope on December 4th. Rest eternal grant her, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon her. A memorial service for Tamm will be streamed via zoom from Grosse Point Congregational Church in Grosse Point, MI, where she was music director. The service will be Monday, December 13th, at 11 a.m. and may be joined via this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88672610336?pwd=dUZ5NUU0dXhGUWRpRm4wbkdualEvUT09>.

Sundays @ Lutherlyn has been moved to First English for next Sunday, December 19th. All children age 3 – confirmation age are welcome to gather after worship.

As you are able, please continue to support First English's ministry financially during this time. Your gifts allow our ministry to continue. You can mail offerings into the church office (241 N. Main Street, Butler PA 16001) or give online at <http://firstenglishbutler.org/giving/>.

Butler Hospital is now allowing pastoral visitation. If you are hospitalized and would like Pr. Kimberly to visit, please let the church office know.



PRAYERS

The family of Tamara Lehew Whitty; those affected by the shooting at Oxford High School in Michigan; the Ball family; Deb L.; Fred Miller; the family of Ruth Walker; Bob Ringler; the McClellan family; the family of Glenn Miller; Hazel Warheit; Emma Lee and David Hartle; the family of Joyce Hall; Eric; Lisa; Jan Nieto; Kathy Kline's niece Rose; Bill and Judy Vilcheck and family; the family of Kara Greeley; the family of Larry

Kline; Jeff LaLonde; the Pelgrin and Buehler family; Jean Morrow; families of Joan Chew, Henry Sinopoli, and Mark Grossman; family of Shirley Sellers; family of Barbara Petanovich and Curtis Wilbert; friend of the Swansons; Don, Betty and family; Mia Gill; Claude and all the soldiers who have been recently deployed to Kuwait as well as their families; Eleanor Roth; Joe Roudebush; Joe and Linda; Dave Konesni; Raymond Sawyer; Donna; the family of Rita Wagner; the family of Carol Duffus; Judy O. and family; Graham Cannon; Anne Ferguson; Claudia; Karen; Anita; Kitty Walker; Nancy Hoehn; Tad Sellers; Aryl Bashline; Jenna; Tom Olson; Pam Patterson

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS

Micah 5:2-5a

From Bethlehem comes a ruler

Luke 1:46b-55

You, Lord, have lifted up the lowly. (Lk. 1:52)

Psalms 80:1-7 (alternate)

Let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved. (Ps. 80:7)

Hebrews 10:5-10

I have come to do your will

Luke 1:39-45 [46-55]

Blessed are you among women / My soul magnifies the Lord