

3rd Sunday of Advent

December 14, 2025

GATHERING BEFORE THE WORD

Prelude

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus Gilbert M. Martin
(born 1941)
Prelude on the Sussex Carol Russell Schulz-Widmar
(born 1944)

Greeting and Announcements

Opening Sentences

*Doxology - all to sing

No. 592

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

*Prayer of Praise

*Advent Song of Praise “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” No. 9

*O come, Thou Day-Spring, 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.*

*Call to Worship and Lighting of the Advent Candle

Leader: Today is the Third Sunday of Advent, the Sunday of Joy.

People: **Our joy is in God and in his son Jesus Christ. Like peace,
joy is a gift from God. It overtakes us and fills us when we
remember what God has done and what he has promised to
do.**

Leader: We light this candle today to remind us that Christ came, and is coming, so that all people might have a rich and abundant life. We thank God for the hope he gives us, for the peace he bestows, and for the joy he pours into our hearts.

The Candles of Hope, Peace, and Joy are lit.

Leader: Let us pray together.

People: **O God of Joy, Emmanuel, send your light into our hearts at this time. Help us to be ready for the time of Christ's appearing. Fix our hearts and our minds upon those things you have done and those you have promised to do that we may have the joy**

you have promised. As we worship you, strengthen us so that we may always do your will and so bless you and the world you have made. Amen.

*Carol of Praise

“A Candle Is Burning”

(sing to tune of “Away in a Manger” No. 25)

*A candle is burning, a candle of joy.
A candle to welcome brave Mary's new boy.
Our hearts fill with wonder, and eyes light and glow
as joy brightens winter like sunshine on snow.*

*Opening Hymn

“[Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus](#)”

*Call to Confession

Leader: The life of faith is not only about being faithful to God. It is knowing that God is faithful to us. Trusting that God will never turn away from us, let us tell the truth about our lives.

*Prayer of Confession (in unison)

Magnificent God, it is easy to rejoice at the wilderness bursting into bloom and the hungry being filled with good things. We may not want the powerful to be brought down or the rich to be sent away empty. We know that sometimes, we are the powerful. Sometimes, we are the rich. Sometimes we are the ones with privilege, ignoring and harming those you would lift up. Forgive us, humble us, and refocus us, that we may follow your way of life and truth.

A Time of Silent Prayer

*Assurance of Forgiveness

Leader: There is nothing and no one that is too far gone for God to redeem. There is no land too parched that God cannot make streams of living water flow. This is good news!

All: Through Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God.

*Response of Praise-all to sing “Angels We Have Heard On High” (refrain) No. 23

*Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Gloria in excelsis Deo!*

*We Share God's Peace

Leader: May the peace of the Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.
(*You are invited to share God's peace as you greet those around you.*)

Minute for Mission

LISTENING FOR THE WORD

Prayer for Illumination

Old Testament Reading [Isaiah 35:1-10](#) (NRSV)

Hymn (seated) "Jesus Loves Me" No. 304
*Jesus loves me! This I know. For the Bible tells me so;
Little ones to Him belong; They are weak, but He is strong.
Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.*

A PAGEANT OF READINGS AND CAROLS

On this Third Sunday of Advent we invite God's light to shine on us through the eyes and voices of our cast as they recreate the story of the Nativity by weaving readings with hymns of hope, peace, and joy.

Please join us in singing these carols when prompted by the reader:

O Little Town of Bethlehem	vs. 1	No. 44
Hark! The Herald Angels Sing	vs. 1	No. 31
Away in a Manger	vs. 1	No. 25
What Child Is This	vs. 1	No. 53
We Three Kings of Orient Are	vs. 1	No. 66
Silent Night, Holy Night	vs. 1-4	No. 60

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

Prayer for Illumination

New Testament Reading [James 5:7-10](#) (NRSV)

Sermon "Suffering and Patience"
sing for joy
The Rev. M. Rex Espiritu

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

Prayers of the People...The Lord's Prayer ('debts' and debtors')

BEARING THE WORD INTO THE WORLD

*Sending Hymn ["Joy to the World"](#)

*Charge and Benediction

Postlude A Carol Sing – All are invited to lift their voices in praise.
No. 38 *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear* (Carol)
No. 28 *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice* (In Dulci Juvilo)
No. 56 *The First Nowell* (verses 1-4 only)

(*We invite you to remain seated through the Postlude.*)

*Indicates that those who are able may stand.

Lectionary readings for December 21, 2025

Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25