



December 17, 2023

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Setting 8

"Rejoice always," begins the reading from 1 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 a spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes we are happy to wear. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God's party.

Joys & Concerns

Prelude

Panis Angelicus (Bread from Heaven)

Dr. Abe Cáceres

Cesar Franck (10 December 1822 – 8 November 1890) was a French Romantic composer, pianist, organist, and music teacher born in present-day Belgium.

In 1858, he became organist at the Basilica of St. Clotilde, Paris, a position he retained for the rest of his life. He became professor at the Paris Conservatoire in 1872. It was during his time at the Paris Conservatory that he composed this and many of his best organ and orchestral works.

I've not played "Panis Angelicus" for several years. Playing it again is like visiting with an old friend I haven't seen for some time. We had a nice time getting reacquainted, and I play it a bit differently now.

Confession and Forgiveness

P. Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who opens the heavens and draws near to us with salvation.

C. Amen

P. God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance. Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P. Everlasting God,

C. you love justice and you hate wrongdoing. We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness that make us reluctant to work against oppression. We are complicit in systems of exploitation. We choose comfort over courage. We are careless with creation's bounty. Look upon us with mercy. Turn our hearts again to you. Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways for the sake of our waiting world. Amen

P. Hear these words of assurance: God clothes you with garments of salvation and covers you with robes of righteousness. In the tender compassion of ☩ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. God's covenant is eternal, and God's blessing rests upon us all.

C. Amen

This is the Day

Psalms 118:24 and 24:1

Abe Cáceres

Refrain: First time choir, thereafter with congregation

This is the day! This is the day!

5 This is the day that the Lord has made!

9 Let us re-joice and be glad in it!

13 This is the Day of the Lord!

Choir: The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof,
and all, all, ALL they that dwell therein! Yes!

All: Refrain

Choir: Coda

All Shout on cue: Rejoice! Rejoice! REJOICE!

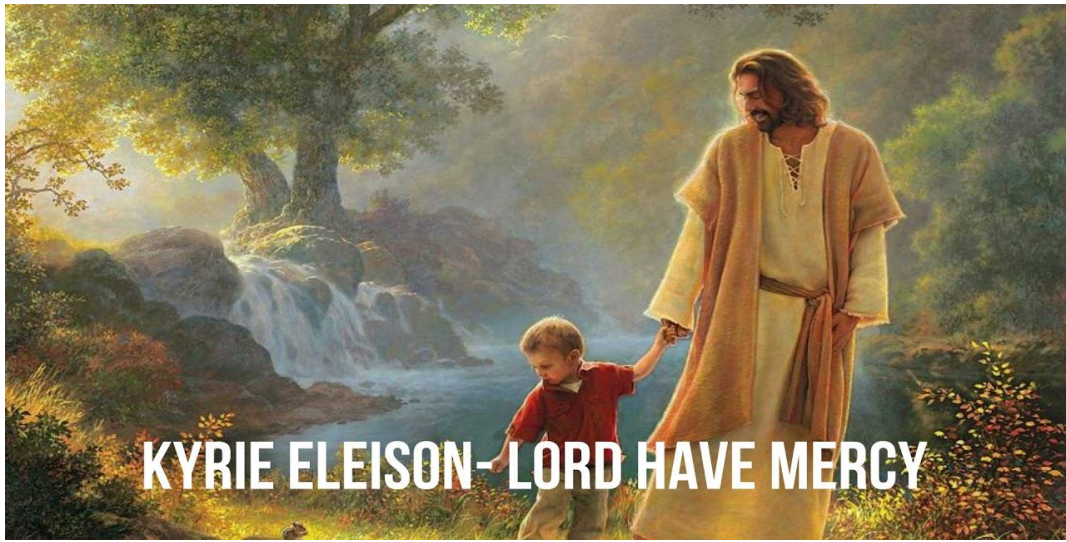


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Greeting

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

C. And also with you.



Refrain

Ky - ri - e e - lei - son, on our world and on our way.

Ky - ri - e e - lei - son, ev-'ry day.

- P. For peace in the world, for the health of the church, for the unity of all;
for this holy house, for all who worship and praise,
let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord
- C. **Refrain**
- P. That we may live out your impassioned response to the hungry and the poor;
that we may live out truth and justice and grace,
let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord
- C. **Refrain**
- P. For peace in our hearts, for peace in our homes, for friends and family;
for life and for love, for our work and our play,
let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord
- C. **Refrain**
- P. For your Spirit to guide; that you center our lives in the water and the Word;
that you nourish our souls with your body and blood,
let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord
- C. **Refrain**



Prayer of the Day

A. Let us pray.

C. **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**

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 God, 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; to 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.

L. Word of God. Word of life.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Lighting of Advent Wreath

- P.** Praise to you, O God, who holds our joy and sorrow.
You bring water to parched ground and life out of death.
Bless us as this light grows,
and send sorrow and sighing to flee away.
Give us strength and patience,
trusting that you are true to your promises.
Transform the lives of all who suffer
with your wonders near at hand.

C. Amen



Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah



- 1 Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
2 Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
3 Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.



He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra - el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.
He shall feed the flock like a shep-herd, gent - ly lead them home-ward.
Lift your heads and lift high the gate-way for the King of glo - ry.

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.

L. Word of God. Word of life.

C. Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

The musical score is written for two voices, Soprano and Alto, in G major (one sharp). It consists of two systems, each with an 8-measure phrase. The lyrics are: "Wait for the Lord, whose day is near." and "Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!". The notation includes treble and bass staves with various note values and rests.

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!

P. The holy gospel according to Saint John, the first chapter.

C. Glory to you, O Lord.

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.

P. The gospel of the Lord.
C. Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

John Petry, Interim Pastor

Hymn of the Day

Will You Come and Follow Me

ELW 798

The Apostles' Creed

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit,
and born of the Virgin Mary,
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again 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

A. With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration.

A brief silence

Fill our mouths with laughter and our tongues with shouts of joy as we bear witness to the great things you have done. Give your church a spirit of gladness as we gather and as we are sent. Merciful God,

C. receive our prayer.

- A.** Let the trees of the field sing your praise. Protect forests, orchards, rainforests, and all wooded areas from disease and deforestation. Keep us grateful for their gifts of oxygen, food, shade, and shelter. Merciful God,
- C. receive our prayer.**

Other prayers

- P.** Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy.
- C. Amen.**

The Peace

- P.** The Peace of Christ be with you always.
- C. And also with you.**



Anthem

He Came Down

Traditional melody from Cameroon, Transcribed by John Bell, arranged by Abe Cáceres

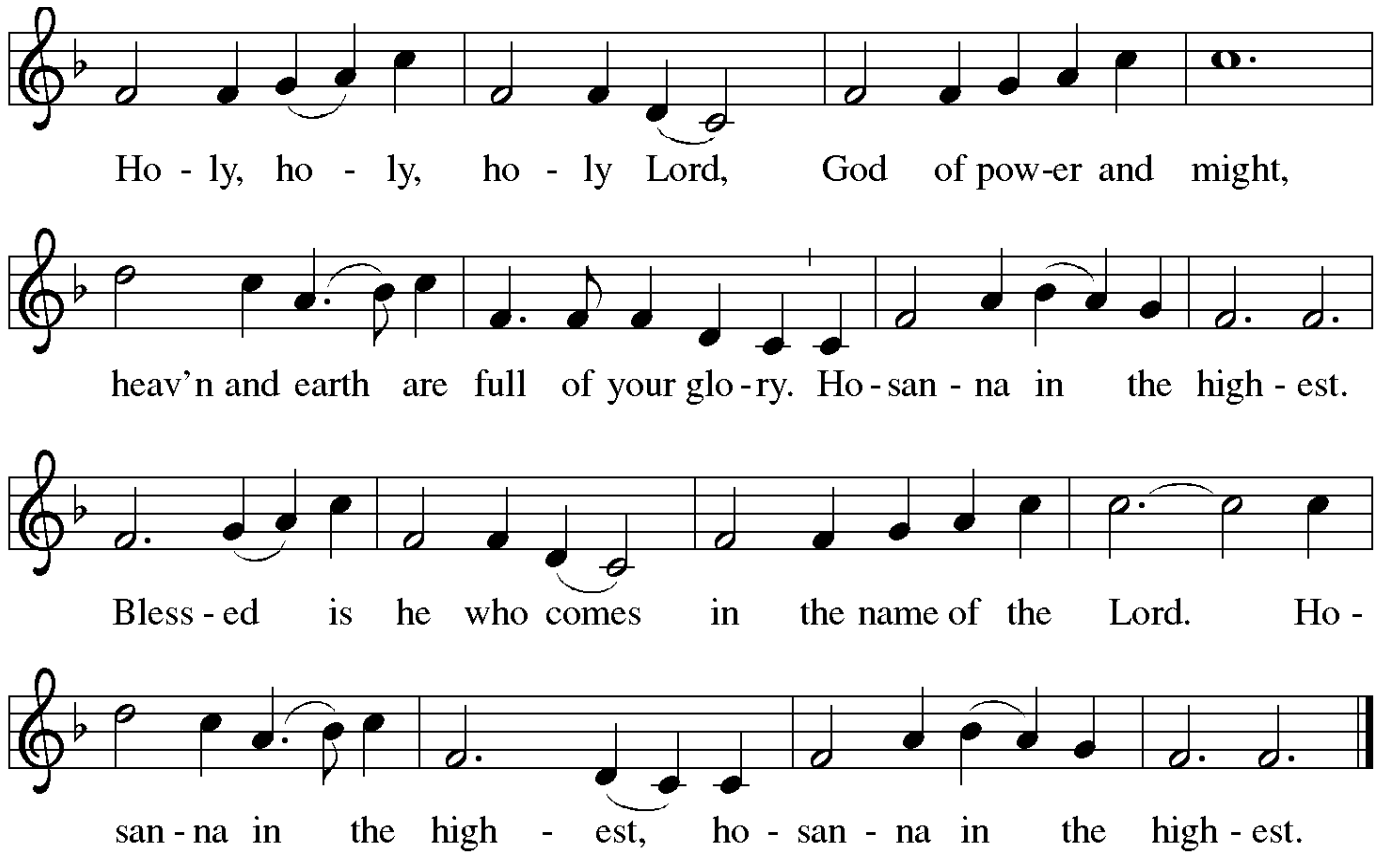
Offertory Prayer

- A.** God our provider,
- C. by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen**

The Great Thanksgiving

- P.** The Lord be with you.
- C. And also with you.**
- P.** Lift up your hearts.
- C. We lift them to the Lord.**
- P.** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
- C. It is right to give our thanks and praise.**
- P.** It is right that.....we praise your holy name saying:

The Sanctus



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,
heav'n 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.

Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

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

- P.** There is a place for you at the banquet. Come and feast at Jesus' table.
Everyone is invited, no exceptions.
- C. Amen.**

Communion Hymns*On Eagles Wings*

ELW 787

Take, Oh, Take Me As I Am

ELW 814

Post Communion Blessing

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

C. Amen

Post Communion Prayer

A. Generous God, in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior.

C. Amen.

The Blessing

P. The God of peace bless you, the love of Christ sustain you in hope, and the anointing of the Spirit ✠ remain upon you now and forever.

C. Amen

Sending Hymn*Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart!*

ELW 874

Dismissal

A. Go in peace. Keep awake.

C. Thanks be to God.

Postlude

REMINDER: This Wednesday evening – December 20 – will be our final Advent Midweek Worship Services at 7:00 pm.

All are invited and encouraged to attend!!

Servers for Sunday, December 17th:

Assisting Minister..... Julie Bogle
Reader Sylvia Lambert
Altar Guild Ginny King
Greeters Tim Clark / Shannon Thomsen
Guest Musician Dr. Abe Cáceres



Sign-up sheets for the various worship assistant slots are on the board in the hallway. Please consider spending time giving glory to God by filling one of these positions on a Sunday.

**Candles in the sanctuary this month are provided by
Matt & Larissa Himmeger, in Loving Memory of Earl Himmeger and Val Borysiewicz.**

After Worship Fellowship today is
provided by your Church Council.



Important Dates and INFORMATION

December 24th



January 7th

January 14th

Meet & Greet

with Pastor Wolfgang Herz-Lane



Congregational Meeting

*To Vote on the Call
& the Terms of the Call
for our New Pastor*



January 21st

January 28th



PLEASE JOIN US
For
The 8th Annual
Mary Jo Albert
Memorial Christmas Concert



**Monday, December 18, 2023
at 7:00 p.m.**

**Performance Musicians
Dr. Bradley Hunnicutt, *Piano*
Mr. Ray Greene, *Viola***