

Grace

and peace to you
2 Thessalonians 1:2

December 11, 2022

10:30 a.m.

Grace Presbyterian Church

Prelude O Come, O Come, Emmanuel arr. Brain Childers

GATHERING AS GOD'S PEOPLE

Welcome & Announcements

The Peace

Introit Rejoice, Rejoice with Music arr. Stacey Nordmeyer

Rejoice! This is a day for praise!
Rejoice, rejoice with music; this is a day for praise!
The light of joy is coming; let every heart be raised.
The morning now is breaking; creation's song awaking.
This is the dawn of grace. This a day for praise!
Rejoice! This is a day for praise!

Call to Worship

Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

Let our gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.

Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let our requests be made known to God.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard our hearts and minds in Jesus Christ.

Lighting of the Third Advent Candle

On this third Sunday in Advent we bear witness to the light of Christ with all the faithful of every time and place:

With Mary, the mother of Jesus, we magnify the Lord, rejoicing in God our Savior, for the Mighty One has done great things for us, and holy is God's name.

The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory.

Alleluia!

Hymn

O Lord, How Shall I Meet You

O Lord, how shall I meet you,
how welcome you aright?
Your people long to greet you,
my hope, my heart's delight!
O kindle, Lord most holy,
a lamp within my breast,
to do in spirit lowly
all that may please you best.

Love caused your incarnation;
love brought you down to me;
your thirst for my salvation
procured my liberty.
O love beyond all telling,
that led you to embrace
in love, all loves excelling,
our lost and fallen race.

You come, O Lord, with gladness,
in mercy and goodwill,
to bring an end to sadness
and bid our fears be still.
In patient expectation
we live for that great day
when your renewed creation
your glory shall display.

Invitation to Confession

Relying on God's mercy, let us confess our sins against God and against our neighbor.

Prayer of Confession

Lord God, we confess that we are not ready for your kingdom of love and peace to be established among us. We still turn away from others' sufferings; we still postpone caring for your gift of creation; we still tolerate war and take too lightly the burdens of making peace.

Forgive us, O God, for our unreadiness. Awaken us once more to your presence among us, and make of us signs of the coming victory of your mercy; through Jesus Christ, the child of your love and brother to our hopes. Amen.

Moment of Silent Reflection and Confession

Assurance of Forgiveness

These are words you may trust, words that merit full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save us.

He personally bore our sins in his body on the cross, that we might be dead to sin and alive to all that is good.

Friends, believe the Good News, in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

Celebration of Forgiveness

Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now ye hear of endless bliss:
Jesus Christ was born for this!
He has opened heaven's door,
and we are blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this!
Christ was born for this!

PROCLAIMING GOD'S WORD

Anthem "Do You Hear What I Hear?" Regney/Shayne/Eithum

Word with the Children

Prayer for Illumination

God our helper, by your Holy Spirit, open our minds that as the Scriptures are read and your Word is proclaimed, we may hear with joy what you proclaim to us today, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

First Lesson (pg. 663 Old Testament)

Isaiah 35:1-10

Second Lesson (pg. 11 New Testament)

Matthew 11:2-11

Sermon

Streams in the Desert

Hymn

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming
from tender stem hath sprung,
of Jesse's lineage coming,
by faithful prophets sung.
It came, a floweret bright,
amid the cold of winter,
when half spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
the rose I have in mind;
with Mary we behold it,
the virgin mother kind.

To show God's love aright
she bore for us a Savior,
when half spent was the night.

This flower, whose fragrance tender
with sweetness fills the air,
dispels with glorious splendor
the darkness everywhere.
Enfleshed, yet very God,
from sin and death he saves us
and lightens every load.

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Affirmation of Faith

from 'A Brief Statement of Faith'

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God. Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel.

Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition, Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world. God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of the sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal.

In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth, praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

Prayers of the People

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Presentation of Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory

Lo How A Rose E'er Blooming

Praetorius, arr. Walter May

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming
From tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming
As men of old have sung.
It came, a floweret bright,
Amid the cold of winter
When half spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
The Rose I have in mind:
With Mary we behold it,
The virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright
She bore the world a Savior
When half spent was the night.

Doxology

REGENT SQUARE

All creation, join in praising
God the Father, Spirit, Son,
evermore your voices raising
to the eternal Three in One:
come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king!

Prayer of Dedication

SENT TO SERVE GOD'S KINGDOM

Hymn

Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending

Lo, he comes with clouds descending,
once for our salvation slain;
thousand, thousand saints attending
join to sing the glad refrain:
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!
Christ the Lord returns to reign.

Now redemption, long expected,
comes in solemn splendor near;
all the saints this world rejected
thrill the trumpet sound to hear:
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!
See the day of God appear!

Yea, amen, let all adore thee,
high on thine eternal throne;
Savior, take the power and glory;
claim the kingdom as thine own.
Come, Lord Jesus; come, Lord Jesus; come, Lord Jesus.
Thou shalt reign, and thou alone!

Charge and Benediction

Postlude

“Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland”
(Savior of the Nations, Come)

J.S. Bach

“To Know Christ, and To Make Him Known.”

Musicians: Chancel Choir, Cathedral Ringers, Valerie Clayton & Kevin Engleman,
Pastor: Jim Reisner
Worship Leader: Tabitha Sterman
Advent Candle Lighting: Bernice and Nicole Nkrumah
Audio and Video: Ben Morris

The chancel flowers this Sunday are given to the Glory of God by Don and Marcia Pizer, in honor of Cecily Pizer's birthday.

Scripture

Isaiah 35:1-10

The desert and the parched land will be glad;
the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.
Like the crocus, ² it will burst into bloom;
it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.
The glory of Lebanon will be given to it,
the splendor of Carmel and Sharon;
they will see the glory of the LORD,
the splendor of our God.
³ Strengthen the feeble hands,
steady the knees that give way;
⁴ say to those with fearful hearts,
“Be strong, do not fear;
your God will come,
he will come with vengeance;
with divine retribution
he will come to save you.”
⁵ Then will the eyes of the blind be opened
and the ears of the deaf unstopped.
⁶ Then will the lame leap like a deer,
and the mute tongue shout for joy.
Water will gush forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert.
⁷ The burning sand will become a pool,
the thirsty ground bubbling springs.
In the haunts where jackals once lay,
grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.
⁸ And a highway will be there;
it will be called the Way of Holiness;
it will be for those who walk on that Way.
The unclean will not journey on it;
wicked fools will not go about on it.

⁹ No lion will be there,
nor any ravenous beast;
they will not be found there.
But only the redeemed will walk there,
¹⁰ and those the LORD has rescued will return.
They will enter Zion with singing;
everlasting joy will crown their heads.
Gladness and joy will overtake them,
and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Matthew 11:2-11

² When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples ³ to ask him, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?”

⁴ Jesus replied, “Go back and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵ The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy^[b] are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. ⁶ Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.”

⁷ As John’s disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? ⁸ If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings’ palaces. ⁹ Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written:

“I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.”^[c]

¹¹ Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.