

An Ancient-Future Faith Community
Liturgy
December 14, 2025
Third Sunday of Advent (Joy)

GATHERING

Let It Rise

Let the glory of the Lord
Rise among us.

(repeat)

Let the praises of the King
Rise among us; let it rise.

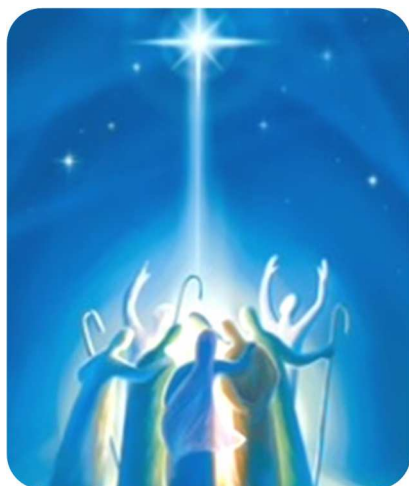
Let the songs of the Lord
Rise among us.

(repeat)

Let the joy of the King
Rise among us; let it rise.

Oh, let it rise; Oh, let it rise.

CCLI Song #2240585 ©1997, 1999
Maranatha Praise, Inc. Holland Davis.



**Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the LORD their God:**

He made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them;

He keeps faith forever.

He executes justice for the oppressed,

He gives food to the hungry.

The LORD sets the prisoners free;

the LORD opens the eyes of the blind.

The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;

the LORD loves the righteous.

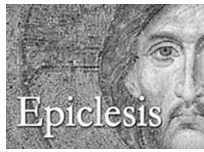
The LORD watches over the strangers;

The LORD upholds the orphan and the widow,

but the way of the wicked He brings to ruin.

**The LORD will reign forever; your God, O Zion, to all generations.
Praise the LORD!**

— Psalm 146:5-10



Behold the Lord

Great and marvelous are Your works, Oh Lord Almighty.
True and righteous are all Your ways, King of the ages.
Who will not fear You, oh Lord, And glorify Your Name?

Chorus

Behold the Lord, God is my salvation;
In Him I trust, and will not be afraid.
And I will give thanks,
And sing among the nations forever;
Behold the Lord; behold the Lord; behold the Lord!

So rejoice and be glad in this: Our God is with us;
Messiah, Emmanuel, Lion of Judah.
Lift up your voice and declare the glory of our King.

Bridge

Join the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb,
The thunderous praises of one new man;
The Kingdom of the Messiah is at hand.

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PRAYERS OF ADORATION, INVOCATION AND THANKS

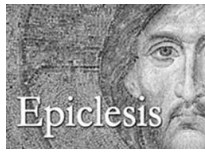
Calling on our Father God, in the Name of Jesus, inspired by the Spirit

God of all hope and joy, **Open our hearts in welcome,**
so that at His coming Your Son, Jesus Christ, may find in us a
dwelling prepared and ready for Him, who lives and reigns with
You and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

O come, Thou Dayspring, 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!

Text: Latin hymn, 12th century; transl. John M. Neale, 1851.
Hymn tune: VENI EMMANUEL, 15th century plainsong.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

God, who at various times and in various ways
spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,
has in these last days spoken to us by His Son,
whom He appointed heir of all things,
through whom also He made the world,
and who is the radiance of His glory
and the exact representation of His nature.

*When the fullness of time had come,
God sent forth His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,
born a descendant of David according to the flesh;
born of a woman, born under the Law;
in the likeness of sinful flesh, to be an offering for our sin;
so that He might redeem us,
that we might receive adoption as His children.*

**God also highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him
the name that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.**

— from Hebrews 1:1-3; Romans 1:3, 8:3-4;
Galatians 4:3-4, Philippians 2:9-11

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

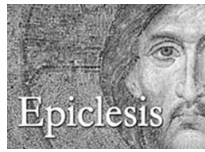
Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him,
on those who hope in His steadfast love.

*Our soul waits for the LORD;
He is our help and our shield.*

For our hearts rejoice in Him,
because we trust in His holy name.

*Let Your steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us,
Even as we hope in You.*

— Psalm 33:18, 20-22



Most merciful God, always with us, always coming:
You pardon all who truly repent and turn to You.

**We confess with sadness that we have not always kept watch
for You. We have occupied ourselves with our own concerns.
We have not loved You with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.**

[Silent confessions]

Have mercy on us, O God, in Your loving-kindness.
In Your great compassion, cleanse us from our sin.

**Create in us a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within us.
Restore to us the joy of our salvation
and sustain us with Your bountiful Spirit,
that we may walk in Your ways always,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

— based on Psalm 51:10-12

O Little Town of Bethlehem (verse 4)

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the great glad tidings the prophets did foretell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

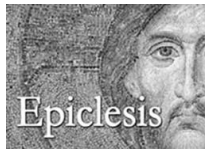
Words: Philip Brooks, 1867; Hymn tune: Lewis Redner, 1868.
(Lyric alteration for Advent)

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel!
Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!
*The LORD has taken away the judgments against you;
He has turned away your enemies.*

The King of Israel, the LORD your God, is in your midst,
a mighty one who will save;
He will rejoice over you with gladness;
He will renew you in his love;
He will exult over you with loud singing!

— from Zephaniah 3:14-17



TIME OF OFFERING

Words and prayers of praise, gratitude, and expectancy

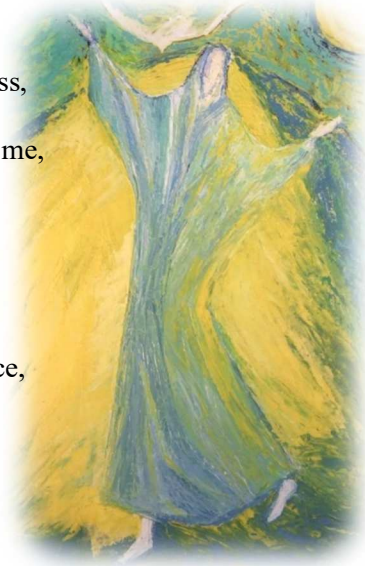
The Magnificat

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
And my spirit exults in God my Savior.
For He has looked with mercy on my lowliness,
And His name will be forever exalted.
For the mighty God has done great things for me,
And His mercy will reach from age to age.

And holy, holy, holy is His name.

He has mercy in ev'ry generation;
He has revealed His power and His glory.
He has cast down the mighty in their arrogance,
And has lifted up the meek and the lowly.
He has come to help His servant Israel;
He remembers His promise to our fathers.

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LIGHTING OF THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE: JOY

Reading: Isaiah 35:1-10

Lighting of the candle

*We light this candle as a symbol of joy.
May the joyful promise of Your presence, O God,
make us rejoice in our hope of salvation.*

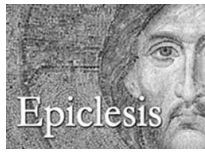
Response:

O Dayspring, Splendor of Eternal Light and Sun of Righteousness:

**Come and enlighten those who sit in darkness
and in the shadow of death.**

Come, O come, Emmanuel.

Prepare, then, the way of the Lord.



THE WORD

Isaiah 35:1-10

Psalms 146:5-10

James 5:7-10

Luke 1:46b-55

Matthew 11:2-11

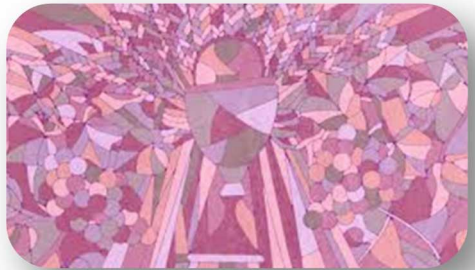
THE TABLE

Remembering the Body of Christ

Passing of the Peace

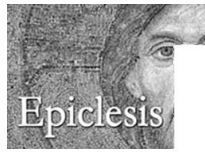
The Lord be with you! **And also with you!**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

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



The Lord's Prayer (spoken)

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



Jesus, I am Resting

Jesus, I am resting, resting in the joy of what Thou art.
I am finding out the greatness of Thy loving heart.
Thou hast bid me gaze upon Thee, and Thy beauty fills my soul.
For by Thy transforming power, Thou hast made me whole.

Chorus:

Jesus, I am resting, resting in the joy of what Thou art.
I am finding out the greatness of Thy loving heart.

Oh, how great Thy loving kindness,
Vaster, broader than the sea.
Oh, how marvelous Thy goodness
Lavished all on me.
Yes, I rest in Thee, Beloved,
Know what wealth of grace is Thine;
Know Thy certainty of promise
And have made it mine.

Simply trusting Thee, Lord Jesus,
I behold Thee as Thou art.
And Thy love so pure, so changeless,
Satisfies my heart;
Satisfies its deepest longings,
Meets, supplies its ev'ry need,
Compasseth me 'round with blessings,
This is love indeed.

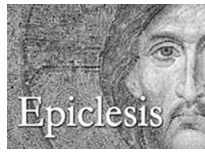
CCLI Song #2697066 ©1998 New Spring. Words: Jean Sophia Pigott; Music: David Hampton.

SENDING FORTH

The Life of the Body

Jesus, I am Resting (verse 4)

Ever lift Thy face upon me as I work and wait for Thee;
Resting 'neath Thy smile, Lord Jesus, earth's dark shadows flee.
Brightness of the Father's glory, sunshine of my Father's face,
Keep me ever trusting, resting, fill me with Thy grace.



Benediction:

Beloved, hear and take these words of blessing and exhortation into your hearts, as you watch and wait with eager anticipation the coming of Christ:

Rejoice in the Lord always. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. So may the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

— from Philippians 4:4-7

Amen.

Now, may our Lord Jesus Christ, who came once in humility and will come again in triumph and glory, fill your hearts with joyful expectation at all times, as you go forth into the world to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God! Come quickly, Lord Jesus. Maranatha!

A thought about worship...

“Advent is the time when God breaks in on us with new surprises and touches us with a renewing and restoring power.... We should use the Advent season as a period to identify the matters from which we need to be redeemed. Identify whatever it is that seems to be holding you in its power.... Commit it to the One who comes to set the prisoners free, turn it over to Christ in prayer, and ask the one who has come into your life to take this problem up into Himself.” (Robert E. Webber, *Ancient-Future Time: Forming Spirituality through the Christian Year* [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004], 38, 51).

Image credits. p. 1: Ain Vares, *A Child Is Born*, www.ainvaresart.com (Estonia);
p. 5: Macha Chmakoff, *Magnificat à la Trinité*, contemp.

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

Epiclesis: An Ancient-Future Faith Community

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Sunday mornings at The Carmichael Chapel, 4600 Winding Way
(Corner of Winding Way and Pasadena), Sacramento, CA 95841.

Informal gathering: 10:00 AM; Worship at 10:30 AM.

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