

LARGE PRINT

Worship Celebration

Third Sunday of Advent

December 17, 2023 + 9 AM

We Gather as God's Children

Words of Welcome

Prelude

In Dulci Jubilo

J. S. Bach

+ Call to Worship

People of God: rejoice!

We leap for joy at the sound of your greeting!

We rejoice, for God is in our midst.

In the name of God, all people are welcome in this place.

We exult with all our hearts;

We sing aloud and shout with delight.

Our souls will magnify the Divine,

For God has brought down the powerful

And lifted up the lowly.

The almighty has done great things for us.

God will gather the outcast and change shame into praise.

God will bring us home.

+ Hymn

Good Christian Friends Rejoice

UMH 224

Lighting of the Advent Candles

Choral Introduction *Preparing Our Hearts* Ruth Elaine Schram

Today we light three candles,

remembering that God has invited and accepted us all.

We respond and accept God's welcome,

in the hopes of welcoming all in the world.

May we welcome all of God's children
as enthusiastically as we welcome Jesus.

***May we share in God's generosity
and invite all people to share in God's love.***

Choral Response

Preparing Our Hearts

Ruth Elaine Schram

We Grow in God's Word

Leader: With disciples of every time and place,
let us listen for the word of God among us.

People: *Our ears and hearts are open.*

First Lesson — Luke 14.15-24 (NRSVUE)

¹⁵ One of the dinner guests, on hearing this, said to him, "Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!" ¹⁶ Then Jesus said to him, "Someone gave a great dinner and invited many. ¹⁷ At the time for the dinner he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is ready now.' ¹⁸ But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my regrets.' ¹⁹ Another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my regrets.' ²⁰ Another said, 'I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.' ²¹ So the servant returned and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his servant, 'Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.' ²² And the slave said, 'Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.' ²³ Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled. ²⁴ For I tell you, none of those who were invited will taste my dinner.' "

The word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Second Lesson — Luke 1.39-55 (*NRSVUE*)

³⁹ In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰ where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴² and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³ And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴ For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

⁴⁶ And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,

⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.

Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed,

⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me,

and holy is his name;

⁵⁰ indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him

from generation to generation.

⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones

and lifted up the lowly;

⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things

and sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴ He has come to the aid of his child Israel,

in remembrance of his mercy,

⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors,

to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

The word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Invited and Welcomed

Hymn

Once in Royal David's City

UMH 250

Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer

Opportunities for Ministry and Invitation to Give Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory Anthem *Bring Us Hope* Ruth Elaine Schram

Doxology *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (v. 5 and refrain) UMH 211

***O come, thou Key of David, come,
and open wide our heavenly home.
The captives from their prison free,
and conquer death's deep misery.***

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

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Prayer of Thanksgiving

***Gracious God,
teach us to give thanks in all circumstances,
for you are always with us.
Thank you for the privilege
of sharing what we have with others,
of giving ourselves away in love,
And of receiving the gifts that others share with us. Amen.***

We Go Out to Serve in God's Name

+ Hymn *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming* UMH 216

+ Benediction

Postlude *Wake, Awake for Night is Flying* arr. Paul Manz

***Our service of worship is ended.
Our worship through service now begins.***

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