

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

GATHERING AND PRAISE

Focus your mind on worshipping God.

With the words of this Psalm, God calls you to worship him.

Psalm 33:1-3 (NIV)

Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him.

Praise the LORD with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre.

Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy.

Pray this prayer:

O Lord Jesus Christ,
Your first coming brought joy to your waiting people.
Keep us in faith and hope
as we eagerly wait for you to return again.
Amen.

Praise God with the words of this Advent song:

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”
(You can find a recording of our church singing this song on YouTube.)

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Chorus

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

O come, O Key of David, come
and open wide our heavenly home.
Make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery.

O come, O Bright and Morning Star,
and bring us comfort from afar!
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
and death's dark shadows put to flight.

CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE

Pray this prayer of confession:

God of salvation, in Christ you have done great things—

our hearts are filled with joy.

By your power you lifted us out of the wasteland of sin

and brought us with joy and laughter into your kingdom.

Salvation is your gift to us.

But we confess that often we try to replace your gift with our own efforts.

We try to complete what is already perfect;

we try to add to what is already full;

we try to earn what we already have.

Forgive us for our foolishness.

Help us to focus on your grace.

Help us to live grateful lives in return.

For Jesus' sake alone, Amen.

God gives you hope with these words:

1 Peter 1:3-4

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope

through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.

This inheritance is kept in heaven for you.

Give thanks to God with this song:

“Joy to the World”

(You can find a recording of our church singing this song on YouTube.)

Joy to the world! the Lord is come:
let earth receive her King,
Let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns:
let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

SERMON

Watch the sermon on YouTube or listen to the audio recording on CD.

SENDING

Share Prayer Requests

Make a list of the things that give you and others joy this Advent season.

Make a list of the things you hope will give you and others joy next year.

Use this list to pray to God, giving thanks and asking him for blessings of joy.

Offering:

You can contribute to the ministry of the church and this month's special offering online or by mailing a check to PO Box 9339, Fresno, CA, 93791.

Praise God with this song:

“How Great Our Joy”

(You can find a recording of our church singing this song on YouTube.)

While by the sheep
we watched at night,
Glad tidings brought
an angel bright.

Chorus

How great our joy.
Joy joy joy!
Praise we the Lord
in heaven on high.

"There shall the Child
lie in a stall--
This Child who shall
redeem us all."

This gift of God
we'll cherish well,
That ever joy
our hearts shall fill.

Read these words:

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

(Romans 15:13)

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