



THIRD MID-WEEK
OF
Advent

A LIGHT WITH A SPECIAL PURPOSE!

AS WE GATHER

As Christmas approaches, it can be difficult to stay focused on our identity and purpose as God's people. It's easy to get swept up in the numerous worldly expectations around us. We often try to make everything perfect. We try to find the perfect tree, buy the perfect gifts, and cook the perfect meals. Yet we know that perfection exists only in Jesus. In a few days we will celebrate perfection being born in a manger. God calls us, His people, away from imperfection and into His perfection. He sets His own light within us and sets us apart to shine in this dark world. In these final few days of Advent, remember that you are set apart for a purpose: to shine the light of Christ.

+ PREPARATION +

331 THE ADVENT OF OUR KING



1 The ad - vent of our King Our prayers must now em - ploy,
2 The ev - er - last - ing Son In - car - nate deigns to be,
3 O Zi - on's daugh - ter, rise To meet your low - ly King,
4 As judge, on clouds of light, He soon will come a - gain



And we must hymns of wel-come sing In strains of ho - ly joy.
Him-self a ser - vant's form puts on To set His ser - vants free.
Nor let your faith - less heart de - spise The peace He comes to bring.
And His true mem - bers all u - nite With Him in heav'n to reign.

5 Before the dawning day
Let sin's dark deeds be gone,
The sinful self be put away,
The new self now put on.

6 All glory to the Son,
Who comes to set us free,
With Father, Spirit, ever one
Through all eternity.

INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

OPENING SENTENCES

P Christ is coming soon. Alleluia!

C We await His return and look for His coming.

P Without the light of Christ, we are only darkness.

C We would be enslaved to sin and death forever.

P But by His resurrection, Christ has called us out of darkness

C and into His marvelous light.

P Now, by Baptism, God has set us apart

C to shine with the light of Christ.

P Christ is coming soon. Alleluia!

C We await His return and look for His coming.

HYMN OF LIGHT

Phos Hilaron



L Joy - ous light of glo - ry:



C of the im - mor - tal Fa - ther; heav - en - ly, ho - ly,



bless - ed Je - sus Christ. We have come to the

set - ting of the sun, and we look to the eve - ning light.

We sing to God, the Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Spir - it:

You are wor - thy of be - ing praised with pure voic - es for -

ev - er. O Son of God, O Giv - er of life:

the u - ni - verse pro - claims Your glo - ry.

THANKSGIVING FOR LIGHT

P Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of the universe, who led Your people Israel by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Enlighten our darkness by the light of Your Christ; may His Word be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path; for You are merciful, and You love Your whole creation and we, Your creatures, glorify You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray.

Lord God, You sent Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, to

enlighten the darkness of our world. Set us apart to reflect His light to our community, so that all people may come to know Him as Lord and Savior, through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

PSALM

Psalm 24:1–10

P The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein,

C for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.

P Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place?

C He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.

P He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

C Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob.

P Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.

C Who is this King of glory?

The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle!

P Lift up your heads, O gates! And lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.

C Who is this King of glory?

The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory!

Glory be to the Father and to the Son

and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning,

is now, and will be forever. Amen.

341 LIFT UP YOUR HEADS, YE MIGHTY GATES



1 Lift up your heads, ye might - y gates! Be - hold, the
 2 A righ - teous Help - er comes to thee; His char - iot
 3 How blest the land, the cit - y blest, Where Christ the
 4 Fling wide the por - tals of your heart; Make it a



King of glo - ry waits. The King of kings is draw - ing
 is hu - mil - i - ty, His king - ly crown is ho - li -
 rul - er is con - fessed! O peace - ful hearts and hap - py
 tem - ple set a - part From earth - ly use for heav'n's em -



near; The Sav - ior of the world is here. Life and sal -
 ness, His scep - ter, pit - y in dis - tress. The end of
 homes To whom this King in tri - umph comes! The cloud - less
 ploy, A - dorned with prayer and love and joy. So shall your



va - tion He doth bring; There - fore re - joice and glad - ly sing.
 all our woe He brings; There - fore the earth is glad and sings.
 sun of joy is He Who comes to set His peo - ple free.
 Sov - 'reign en - ter in And new and no - bler life be - gin.



To God the Fa - ther raise Your joy - ful songs of praise.
 To Christ the Sav - ior raise Your grate - ful hymns of praise.
 To God the Spir - it raise Your hap - py shouts of praise.
 To God a - lone be praise For word and deed and grace!

5 Redeemer, come and open wide
 My heart to Thee; here, Lord, abide!
 O enter with Thy grace divine;
 Thy face of mercy on me shine.
 Thy Holy Spirit guide us on
 Until our glorious goal is won.
 Eternal praise and fame
 We offer to Thy name.

FIRST READING

Acts 9:1–22

But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” And he said, “Who are you, Lord?” And he said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.” The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” And the Lord said to him, “Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.” But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.” But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; and taking food, he was strengthened.

For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus. And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.” And all who heard him were amazed and said,

“Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?” But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

C Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE

Romans 1:1–7

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

C Thanks be to God.

HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 1:18–25

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as

your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Immanuel”

(which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

C **Thanks be to God.**

P In many and various ways, God spoke to His people of old by the prophets.

C **But now in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son.**

SERMON: The Darkness cannot overcome the Light.

933 MY SOUL REJOICES



1 My soul re - joic - es, My spir - it voic - es— Sing the
2 His arm now bar - ing, His strength de - clar - ing— Sing the



great - ness of the Lord! For God my Sav - ior Has shown me
great - ness of the Lord! The proud He scat - ters, Their rule He



fa - vor— Sing the great - ness of the Lord! With praise and
shat - ters— Sing the great - ness of the Lord! Op - pres - sion



bles-sing, Join in con-fess-ing God, who is sole-ly Might-y and
halt-ed; The meek ex-alt-ed. Full are the hun-gry; Emp-ty, the



ho-ly— O sing the great-ness of God the Lord! His mer-cy
wealth-y— O sing the great-ness of God the Lord! Here is the



sure-ly Shall rest se-cure-ly On all who fear Him,
to-ken All that was spo-ken To A-br'ham's off-spring



Love and re-vere Him— O sing the great-ness of God the Lord!
God is ful-fill-ing— O sing the great-ness of God the Lord!

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LITANY

P Lord Jesus Christ, set us apart

C to shine with Your Gospel.

P Send Your peace and salvation to the darkness of this world.

Lord Jesus Christ, set us apart

C to shine with Your Gospel.

P Unite all people to live in harmony and show each other

mercy. Lord Jesus Christ, set us apart

C to shine with Your Gospel.

P Turn those who persecute You and Your Church to confess

You as Lord and Savior. Lord Jesus Christ, set us apart

C to shine with Your Gospel.

P Embolden us all to share the love that has been lavished on us

in Your death and resurrection. Lord Jesus Christ, set us apart

C to shine with Your Gospel.

P Grant favorable weather for the nourishment of Your creation.
Lord Jesus Christ, set us apart

C to shine with Your Gospel.

P Keep all those who suffer oppression and persecution strong
in the faith. Lord Jesus Christ, set us apart

C to shine with Your Gospel.

P Send healing and care to all those who suffer illness and grief,
Lord Jesus Christ, set us apart

C to shine with Your Gospel.

COLLECT FOR PEACE

P O God, without You, we are only darkness, but You have
baptized us into the light of Christ. Set us apart to shine Your
Gospel light to the world and to be people of peace in this
world of division, despair, and darkness; through Jesus Christ,
Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the
Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

C 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.

BENEDICAMUS

P Let us bless the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

BENEDICTION

P The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve you.

C Amen.

349 HARK THE GLAD SOUND



1 Hark the glad sound! The Sav - ior comes, The Sav - ior
2 He comes the pris - 'ners to re - lease, In Sa - tan's
3 He comes the bro - ken heart to bind, The bleed - ing
4 Our glad ho - san - nas, Prince of Peace, Thy wel - come



prom - ised long; Let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare a
bond - age held. The gates of brass be - fore Him
soul to cure, And with the trea - sures of His
shall pro - claim, And heav'n's e - ter - nal arch - es



throne And ev - 'ry voice a song.
burst, The i - ron fet - ters yield.
grace To en - rich the hum - ble poor.
ring With Thy be - lov - ed name.

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