



“Behold, I send My messenger before Your face,  
who will prepare Your way before You.”

+ *Matthew 11:10b*

**THE THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT**

**December 13, 2020**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

We hear John the Baptist coming to prepare the way for the Lord, whose earthly birth we are preparing to celebrate and whose greater advent on the Last Day is the promise of resurrection and eternal life for all who believe in His name.

Between our coming to faith and His coming again, we are called to lives of faith that continue to rejoice, to pray, and to give thanks in all circumstances. We can do that because we have come to the light of our salvation and the hope of eternal life.

Now certainly it’s easier to rejoice, pray, and give thanks when things are going well. It’s another thing in time of suffering or illness or persecution—amidst reverses, challenges, and disappointments of each day. Nevertheless, the Spirit of Christ seeks to enable us to do just that—to rejoice always, to pray always, and to give thanks to God always in all circumstances.

This is holy living, constantly keeping the eyes of faith on the sure and certain Word and promises of God for His people, the God who blesses, keeps, comforts, and strengthens us. We rejoice with the psalmist, saying, “This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it” (Psalm 118:24).

Yours in Christ Jesus, +Pastor Griebenaw

Pastor’s phone: 760-679-3699

Pastor’s email: [pastor@gracelutheranelcentro.org](mailto:pastor@gracelutheranelcentro.org)

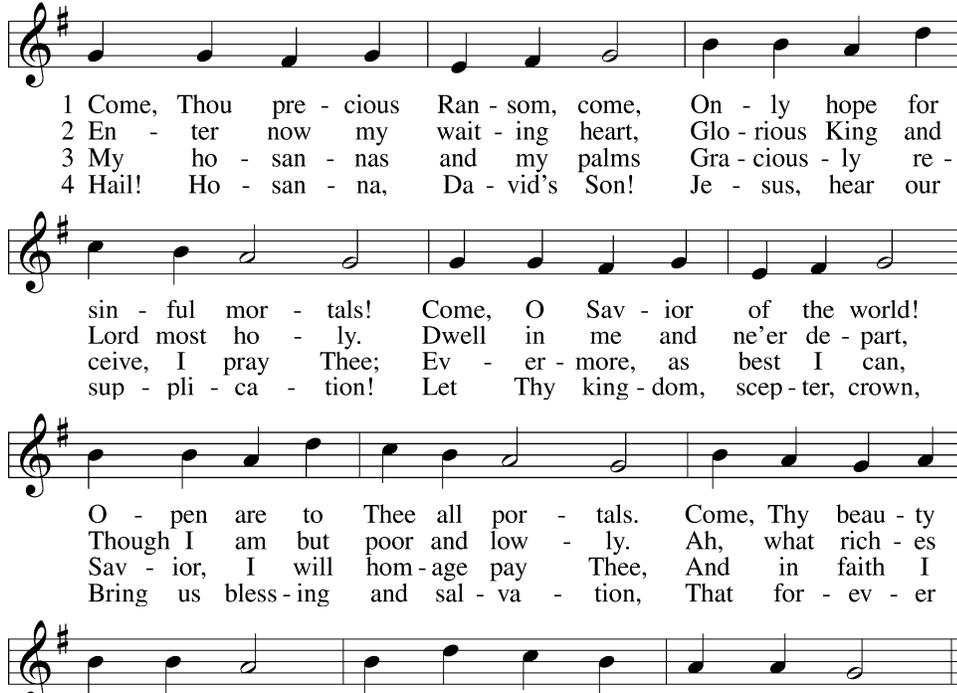


*John the Baptist in a Landscape, Paola Farinati (1524-1606), Public Domain*

## ✠ DIVINE SERVICE, SETTING THREE ✠

### HYMN OF INVOCATION: Come, Thou Precious Ransom, Come

LSB 350



1 Come, Thou pre - cious Ran - som, come, On - ly hope for  
2 En - ter now my wait - ing heart, Glo - rious King and  
3 My ho - san - nas and my palms Gra - cious - ly re -  
4 Hail! Ho - san - na, Da - vid's Son! Je - sus, hear our

sin - ful mor - tals! Come, O Sav - ior of the world!  
Lord most ho - ly. Dwell in me and ne'er de - part,  
ceive, I pray Thee; Ev - er - more, as best I can,  
sup - pli - ca - tion! Let Thy king - dom, scep - ter, crown,

O - pen are to Thee all por - tals. Come, Thy beau - ty  
Though I am but poor and low - ly. Ah, what rich - es  
Sav - ior, I will hom - age pay Thee, And in faith I  
Bring us bless - ing and sal - va - tion, That for - ev - er

let us see; Anx - ious - ly we wait for Thee.  
will be mine When Thou art my guest di - vine!  
will em - brace, Lord, Thy mer - it through Thy grace.  
we may sing: Hail! Ho - san - na to our King.

*Text and tune: Public domain*

*Stand – The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.*

### CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

LSB 184

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

*Matthew 28:19b; [18:20]*

**C** Amen.

**P** Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

*[Hebrews 10:22]*

**P** Our help is in the name of the Lord,

**C** who made heaven and earth.

*Psalms 124:8*

**P** I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,

**C** and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

*Psalms 32:5*

*Kneel (or remain standing) – Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.*

**P** Almighty God, our maker and redeemer, we poor sinners confess unto You that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against You by thought, word, and deed. Wherefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**C** O most merciful God, who has given Your only-begotten Son to die for us, have mercy upon us and for His sake grant us remission of all our sins; and by Your Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of You and of Your will and true obedience to Your Word, to the end that by Your grace we may come to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**P** Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us and has given His only Son to die for us and for His sake forgives us all our sins. To those who believe on His name He gives power to become the children of God and has promised them His Holy Spirit. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.

Grant this, Lord, unto us all.

*Mark 16:16; John 1:12*

**C** Amen.

*Stand*

## SERVICE OF THE WORD

### INTROIT

*Psalm 85:8–9, 12–13; antiphon: v. 7*

*The pastor and congregation chant responsively. The antiphon is chanted by the pastor before and after the psalm.*



*(Antiphon)* Show us Your steadfast love, | O LORD,\*  
and grant us Your sal- | vation.

<sup>8</sup> Let me hear what God the | LORD will speak,\*  
for He will speak peace to His people, to His saints; but let them not turn back to | folly.

<sup>9</sup> Surely His salvation is near to those who | fear Him,\*  
that glory may dwell | in our land.

<sup>12</sup> Yes, the LORD will give | what is good,\*  
and our land will yield its | increase.

<sup>13</sup> Righteousness will go be- | fore Him\*  
and make His foot- | steps a way.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

*The antiphon is repeated.*

*The Advent Candle is lit.*

### KYRIE

*Mark 10:47*



**C** Lord, have mer - cy up - on us. Christ, have mer - cy up -



on us. Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

*The Gloria in Excelsis is omitted during Advent.*

## SALUTATION AND COLLECT OF THE DAY



**P** The Lord be with you.



**C** And with thy spir - it.



**P** Let us pray.

**P** Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



**C** A - men.

*Sit*

## OLD TESTAMENT READING

*Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11*

**P** The Old Testament Reading is from Isaiah, chapter 61.

<sup>1</sup>The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to bring good news to the poor; He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; <sup>2</sup>to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; <sup>3</sup>to grant to those who mourn in Zion— to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified. <sup>4</sup>They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. . . .

<sup>8</sup>For I the LORD love justice; I hate robbery and wrong; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. <sup>9</sup>Their offspring shall be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are an offspring the LORD has blessed. <sup>10</sup>I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation; He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. <sup>11</sup>For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations.

**P** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

## GRADUAL

*Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:26, alt.*

*The pastor and congregation chant responsively.*



Rejoice greatly, O daughter of | Zion.\*

**Shout aloud, O daughter of Je- | rusalem.**

Behold, your King is com- | ing to you;\*

**righteous and having sal- | vation.**

Blessèd is He who comes in the name | of the LORD.\*

**From the house of the LORD we | bless You.**

**EPISTLE READING**

*1 Thessalonians 5:16-24*

**P** The Epistle is from First Thessalonians, chapter five.

<sup>16</sup>Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup>pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup>give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. <sup>19</sup>Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup>Do not despise prophecies, <sup>21</sup>but test everything; hold fast what is good. <sup>22</sup>Abstain from every form of evil.

<sup>23</sup>Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup>He who calls you is faithful; He will surely do it.

**P** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

*Stand*

**ALLELUIA & VERSE**



**C** Al-le - lu - ia. Al-le - lu - ia. Al-le - lu - ia.

Alleluia. Behold, I send My messenger before Your face,  
who will prepare Your way before You. Alleluia.

*Matthew 11:10b*



**C** Al-le - lu - ia. Al-le - lu - ia. Al-le - lu - ia.

**HOLY GOSPEL**

*John 1:6-8, 19-28*

**P** The Holy Gospel according to Saint John, the first chapter.



**C** Glo - ry be to Thee, O Lord.

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness, to bear witness about the Light, that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He was not the Light, but came to bear witness about the Light. . . .

<sup>19</sup>This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" <sup>20</sup>He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." <sup>21</sup>And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." <sup>22</sup>So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" <sup>23</sup>He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the LORD,' as the prophet Isaiah said."

<sup>24</sup>(Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) <sup>25</sup>They asked him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" <sup>26</sup>John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands One you do not know, <sup>27</sup>even He who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." <sup>28</sup>These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

**P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.



**C** Praise be to Thee, O Christ.

**NICENE CREED**

**C** I believe in one God,  
 the Father Almighty,  
 maker of heaven and earth  
 and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
 the only-begotten Son of God,  
 begotten of His Father before all worlds,  
 God of God, Light of Light,  
 very God of very God,  
 begotten, not made,  
 being of one substance with the Father,  
 by whom all things were made;  
 who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven  
 and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary  
 and was made man;  
 and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.  
 He suffered and was buried.  
 And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures  
 and ascended into heaven  
 and sits at the right hand of the Father.  
 And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,  
 whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
 the Lord and giver of life,  
 who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
 who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,  
 who spoke by the prophets.  
 And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,  
 I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,  
 and I look for the resurrection of the dead  
 and the life  $\text{✠}$  of the world to come. Amen.

*Sit*

**HYMN OF THE DAY: Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding**

LSB 345

1 Hark! A thrill - ing voice is sound - ing! "Christ is  
 2 Star - tled at the sol - emn warn - ing, Let the  
 3 See, the Lamb, so long ex - pect - ed, Comes with  
 4 So, when next He comes in glo - ry And the  
 Δ 5 Hon - or, glo - ry, might, do - min - ion To the  
 near," we hear it say. "Cast a - way the  
 earth - bound soul a - rise; Christ, its sun, all  
 par - don down from heav'n. Let us haste, with  
 world is wrapped in fear, He will shield us  
 Fa - ther and the Son With the ev - er -  
 works of dark - ness, All you chil - dren of the day!"  
 sloth dis - pel - ling, Shines up - on the morn - ing skies.  
 tears of sor - row, One and all, to be for - giv'n;  
 with His mer - cy, And with words of love draw near.  
 liv - ing Spir - it While e - ter - nal a - ges run!

*Text and tune: Public domain*

## SERMON

Rev. Griebenaw

*After the Sermon the pastor may say:*

**P** The peace of God, which passes all understanding,  
keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

*Philippains 4:7*

**C** Amen.

*Stand*

## OFFERTORY

*Psalm 51:10-12*



**C** Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re -  
new a right spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a -  
way from Thy pres-ence, and take not Thy Ho - ly Spir - it  
from me. Re - store un - to me the joy of Thy sal - va -  
tion, and up - hold me with Thy free spir-it. A - men.

*Kneel (or remain standing)*

## PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

*(1 Timothy 2:1-4)*

**P** In peace let us pray to the Lord:

**C** Lord, have mercy.

**P** For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord:

**C** Lord, have mercy.

**P** For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all,  
let us pray to the Lord:

**C** Lord, have mercy.

**P** For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord:

**C** Lord, have mercy.

**P** For Matthew and Michael, for all pastors in Christ, for all servants of the Church, and for all the people,  
let us pray to the Lord:

**C** Lord, have mercy.

**P** For Donald, for all public servants, for the government and those who protect us, that they may be  
upheld and strengthened in every good deed, let us pray to the Lord:

**C** Lord, have mercy.

**P** For those who work to bring peace, justice, health, and protection in this and every place,  
let us pray to the Lord:

**C** Lord, have mercy.

**P** For those who bring offerings, those who do good works in this congregation, those who toil,  
those who sing, and all the people here present who await from the Lord great and abundant mercy,  
let us pray to the Lord:

**C** Lord, have mercy.

**P** For favorable weather, for an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord:

**C** **Lord, have mercy.**

**P** For our deliverance from all affliction, wrath, danger, and need, let us pray to the Lord:

**C** **Lord, have mercy.**

**P** For . . . [*additional bids for prayer may be inserted here*] . . . let us pray to the Lord:

**C** **Lord, have mercy.**

*The prayers then continue:*

**P** For the faithful who have gone before us and are with Christ, let us give thanks to the Lord:

**C** **Alleluia.**

**P** Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

*Silence for individual prayer may follow.*

**P** Rejoicing in the fellowship of all the saints, let us commend ourselves, one another, and our whole life to Christ, our Lord:

**C** **To You, O Lord.**

*The live-stream service concludes with the following:*

## LORD'S PRAYER

*Matthew 6:9–13*

**P** Taught by our Lord and trusting His promises, we are bold to pray:

**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.**

## CONCLUDING COLLECT

**P** Let us pray.

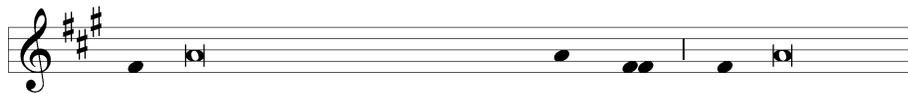
Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness and put upon ourselves the armor of light now in the time of this mortal life in which Your Son, Jesus Christ, came to visit us in great humility, that in the Last Day, when He shall come again in glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C** **Amen.**

*Stand*

## BENEDICTION

*Numbers 6:24–26*



**P** The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make



His face shine upon you and be gra - cious un - to you.



The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and ✠ give you peace. S



**C** **A-men, a-men, a - men.**

*The Divine Service will continue with the Lord's Supper for those present at the church. Please sing and/or read aloud the closing hymn in your home and, if possible, please come by the church for Holy Communion between 10:30am and 11:30am, parking by the concrete ramp along Holt Avenue.*

**CLOSING HYMN: Arise, O Christian People**

LSB 354



1 A - rise, O Chris - tian peo - ple! Pre - pare your - selves to -  
2 Pre - pare the way be - fore Him; Pre - pare for Him the  
3 The hum - ble heart and low - ly God rais - es up on  
4 Pre - pare my heart, Lord Je - sus; Turn not from me a -



day; Pre - pare to greet the Sav - ior, Who takes your  
best. Cast out what would of - fend Him, This great, this  
high; Be - neath His feet in ter - ror The haugh - ty  
side, And help me to re - ceive You This bless - ed



sins a - way. To us by grace a - lone The  
heav'n - ly guest. Make straight, make plain the way: The  
soul shall lie. The heart sin - cere and right, That  
Ad - vent - tide. From stall and man - ger low Come



truth and light were giv - en; The prom - ised Lord from  
low - ly val - leys rais - ing, The heights of pride a -  
heeds God's in - vi - ta - tion And makes true prep - a -  
now to dwell with - in me; I'll sing Your prais - es



heav - en To all the world is shown.  
bas - ing, His path all e - ven lay.  
ra - tion— It is the Lord's de - light.  
glad - ly And forth Your glo - ry show.

*Text and tune: Public domain*

**✠ SOLI DEO GLORIA ✠**  
(TO GOD ALONE BE THE GLORY)

## SOME FINAL THOUGHTS FROM YOUR PASTOR

Brothers and Sisters,

It happened! It took us over *four years* but it finally happened! And it's all thanks to Leo . . .

*We decorated the outside of our home! Leo is so proud!*



This is the first year that Leo has been into decorating for Christmas. During our walks home from church, Leo began noticing the decorations that people put up and would yell, “They decorated!” Obviously, we needed to decorate, too! So we piled up the family and dragged the boys to go shopping for Christmas lights! It was Sam’s first trip to a retail store (I know—crazy “Pandemic Kid” that he is). Some two hours later, we left with a about \$150 worth of lights and Leo’s new buddy: Toots the Elf!

*I know Leo would love to see pictures of your Christmas decoration, too!* So take a picture and put in on the church Facebook page as a comment to this post! We can have our own virtual Christmas lights parade!

Also, please remember to join me for our next **Advent Bible Study** on “Zoom” this **Tuesday at Noon (ending by 1:00pm)**. To join the study on your computer, go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7603525715> or to join by phone, call either “669-900-9128” or “346-248-7799” and enter 7603525715# (the password is “12345”).

Then tune-in **Wednesday at 7:00pm** on Facebook for our Midweek Advent service. The service folder is on our website ([www.GraceLutheranElCentro.org](http://www.GraceLutheranElCentro.org)) and the live-stream is on our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/GraceLutheranElCentro](http://www.facebook.com/GraceLutheranElCentro)).

Lastly, please continue to mail your tithes and offerings to the church's post office box: Grace Evangelical-Lutheran Church, PO Box 1530, El Centro, CA 92244-1530.



Yours in Christ Jesus, +Pastor Griebenaw