

St. Matthew Lutheran Church of Westfield

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The Third Sunday in Advent December 17, 2023

Color of the Day: BLUE-the color of the sky-helps convey that powerful message. Our Christian faith rests on the hope that Christ, who came in history assuming our flesh, will also return on the last day of time from that same blue sky he ascended long ago. Advent, a preparatory time of waiting and watching, communicates the message of hope.

Opening Hymn #563 - *Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness*
Confession and Absolution Page 184

⌘ ⌘ ⌘ *Service of the Word* ⌘ ⌘ ⌘

Introit Page 186

Ps 85: 8-9, 12-13; antiphon: Ps. 85:7

Show us your steadfast love, | O LORD,*
and grant us your sal- | vation.

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.

Surely his salvation is near to those who | fear him,*
that glory may dwell | in our land.

Yes, the LORD will give | what is good,*
and our land will yield its | increase.

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.

Show us your steadfast love, | O LORD,*
and grant us your sal- | vation.

Kyrie Page 186

Gloria In Excelsis (Omitted during Advent). Page 187

Salutation & Collect of the Day Page 189

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.

Old Testament Reading Page 190

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

¹The 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; ²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³to 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. ⁴They shall build up the
ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair
the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. ⁸For 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. ⁹Their
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. ¹⁰I 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. ¹¹For 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.
Gradual Page 190

Zech 9:9; Ps. 118:26, alt.

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 Page 190

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit.

²⁰Do not despise prophecies, ²¹but test everything; hold fast what is good.

²²Abstain from every form of evil. ²³Now 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. ²⁴He who calls you
is faithful; he will surely do it.

Choral Anthem

Alleluia Page 190

Holy Gospel Page 190

John 1:6-8, 19-28

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him.

⁸He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

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



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

Creed Page 191/192

Children's Message

Hymn of the Day #345 – *Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding*

The Sermon Give Thanks in All Circumstances
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Want to read along, miss a sermon, need some inspiration, need a review of church doctrine? Check out Pastor Bogs' blog at: rabswritings.blogspot.com or Pastor Mendez's blog at: pastormendez.blogspot.com.

Introduction

Rejoice Always

It is God's will that _____ .

Knowing what our Lord has done _____ .

Our joy moves us to _____ .

Our joy is both _____ .

Do Not Quench the Spirit

We quench the Spirit when _____ .

We know what we teach is true because _____ .

Paul's Blessing

We are joyful because we are _____ .

We are able because God is _____ .

What Does This Mean?

We are waiting to celebrate _____ .

We give thanks for _____ .

We give thanks for _____ .

We give thanks for _____ .

Other Notes or Questions for Pastor:

Offertory Page 192

Offering & Prayer of the Church Page 193

Our First Fruits and Tithes are our regular, top priority, proportionate, grateful gifts to the Lord for the work of the Gospel. Our Offerings are special gifts for special causes over and above our tithes. This is an act of worship for members and friends of St. Matthew who are moved by God's love to respond to the Gospel. Guests should not feel obligated to participate.

✠ ✠ ✠ *Service of the Sacrament* ✠ ✠ ✠

Preface Page 194

It is truly meet, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, whose way John the Baptist prepared, proclaiming Him the promised Messiah, the very Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and calling sinners to repentance that they might escape from the wrath to be revealed when He comes again in glory. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

Sanctus Page 195

Lord's Prayer Page 196

The Words of Our Lord & Pax Domini. Page 197

Agnus Dei & Distribution. Page 198/199

Before partaking of the Lord's Supper, we ask that you read our communion statement on the pew insert behind the Bible. Thank you.

Distribution Hymns #636 – *Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness*

#751 – *O God of Love, O King of Peace*

#515 - *Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers*

Nunc Dimittis Page 199

Thanksgiving Page 200

Salutation & Benedicamus Page 201

Benediction Page 202

Closing Hymn #333 - *Once He Came in Blessing*