



5:00 P.M. HOLY EUCHARIST

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT : COMFORT YE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2025

THE REVEREND NOELLE YORK-SIMMONS, *Rector*

THE REVEREND ROBBIE LAUGHTON, *Associate Rector*

THE REVEREND BETH BINGHAM, *Associate Rector*

THE GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE

Please stand.

Celebrant Light and peace, in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

Celebrant If I say, "Surely the darkness will cover me, and the light around me turn to night," darkness is not dark to you, O Lord; the night is as bright as the day; darkness and light to you are both alike.

Psalm 139:10-11

A SONG OF CHRIST'S GOODNESS

St. Anselm of Canterbury

Reader Jesus, as a mother you gather your people to you:

People You are gentle with us as a mother with her children;

Reader Often you weep over our sins and our pride:

People tenderly you draw us from hatred and judgement.

Reader You comfort us in sorrow and bind up our wounds:

People in sickness you nurse us, and with pure milk you feed us.

Reader Jesus, by your dying we are born to new life:

People by your anguish and labor we come forth in joy.

Reader Despair turns to hope through your sweet goodness:

People through your gentleness we find comfort in fear.

Reader Your warmth gives life to the dead:

People your touch makes sinners righteous.

Reader Lord Jesus, in your mercy heal us:

People in your love and tenderness remake us.

Reader In your compassion bring grace and forgiveness:

People for the beauty of heaven may your love prepare us.

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

Please be seated.

THE FIRST READING

Isaiah 35:1-10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you."

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

PSALM 146 (*read in unison*)

- 4 Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help! *
whose hope is in the LORD their God;
- 5 Who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them; *
who keeps his promise for ever;
- 6 Who gives justice to those who are oppressed, *
and food to those who hunger.
- 7 The LORD sets the prisoners free;
the LORD opens the eyes of the blind; *
the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;
- 8 The LORD loves the righteous;
the LORD cares for the stranger; *
he sustains the orphan and widow,
but frustrates the way of the wicked.
- 9 The LORD shall reign for ever, *
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations.
Hallelujah!

Gospeller The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.'

"Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

Gospeller The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

HOMILY

The Rev. Noelle M. York-Simmons

INTERCESSIONS

Celebrant In the spirit of this season, we ask God for what we need to sustain us as we participate in the Christmas season as people coping with loss, pain, suffering, loneliness, grief, sadness.

God, we come to you in the Advent season with pain growing inside us. As the nights have been growing longer, so has the darkness wrapped itself around our hearts. In this season of our longest nights, we offer to you the pain in our hearts, the trauma that we cannot put into words.

God of love, God of mercy,

People **Hear our prayer.**

Celebrant Compassionate God, we are grieving over what might have been. Loss has changed our experience of this season. It was once a special time for us, but this year the loss is too great. We find ourselves adrift, alone, lost. Lord help us find our way.

God of love, God of mercy,

People **Hear our prayer.**

Celebrant Advent and Christmas remind us of all that used to be and cannot be anymore. The memories of what was, the fears of what may be, can be stifling for us. All around us we hear the sounds of celebration. But we experience a sense of feeling low. Please be near us this night.

God of love, God of mercy,

People **Hear our prayer.**

LITANY OF REMEMBRANCE

- Celebrant We light this candle to remember those persons whom we have loved and lost. We pause to remember their names, their faces, their voices. We give thanks for the memory that binds them to us in this season which anticipates Christmas.
- People **May God's eternal love surround them.**
- Celebrant We light this candle to redeem the pain of loss: the loss of relationships, the loss of jobs, the loss of health. As we gather up the pain of the past, we offer it to You, O God. Fill us with the gift of peace.
- People **Refresh, restore, renew us, O God, and lead us into your future.**
- Celebrant We light this candle to remember ourselves this Advent season. We pause now to remember the past weeks, months and years of struggle and anguish. We each carry with us some measure of grief, sadness, anxiety, depression, hurt, fear and pain.
- People **Let us remember that the Son of righteousness is gloriously risen, giving light to those who sat in darkness and the shadow of death.**
- Celebrant This candle is lit to remember our faith and the gift of hope which God offers to us in the Christmas story. We remember that God, who shares our humanity, prepares for us a place where sorrow and pain are no more, but life everlasting.
- People **The Lord will guide our feet into the way of peace.**

Following the litany, you are invited to come forward to light candles for your own intercessions.

You are also invited to the altar rail for a time of laying on of hands and healing prayer.

All stand

THE PEACE

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

THE HOLY COMMUNION

To you, Lord, belongs the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory and the majesty.
All that is in the heavens and the earth is yours, and of your own we give you.

The Lord is here.

God's Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to offer thanks and praise.

It is right indeed, it is our joy and our salvation, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, at all times and in all places to give you thanks and praise through Christ your only Son. You are the source of all life and goodness; through your eternal Word you have created all things from the beginning and formed us in your own image.

When we sinned and turned away you called us back to yourself and gave your Son to share our human nature. By his death on the cross, he made the one perfect sacrifice for the sin of the world and freed us from the bondage of sin. You raised him to life triumphant over death; you exalted him in glory. In him you have made us a holy people by sending upon us your holy and lifegiving Spirit.

In his coming among us the day of our deliverance has dawned, and through him you will make all things new when he comes in power and majesty to judge the world.

Therefore with the faithful who rest in him, with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

All glory and thanksgiving to you, holy Father; on the night before he died your Son, Jesus Christ, took bread; when he had given you thanks, he broke it, gave it to his disciples, and said: Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you; do this to remember me.

After supper he took the cup; when he had given you thanks, he gave it to them and said: Drink this, all of you, for this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins; do this as often as you drink it, to remember me.

**Glory to you, Lord Christ;
your death we show forth;
your resurrection we proclaim;
your coming we await;
Amen! Come Lord Jesus.**

Therefore loving God, recalling your great goodness to us in Christ, his suffering and death, his resurrection and ascension, and looking for his coming in glory, we celebrate our redemption with this bread of life and this cup of salvation. Accept our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving which we offer through Christ our great high priest. Send your Holy Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine which we receive may be to us the body and blood of Christ, and that we, filled with the Spirit's grace and power, may be renewed for the service of your kingdom.

United in Christ with all who stand before you in earth and heaven, we worship you, O God, in songs of everlasting praise.

Blessing, honor and glory be yours, here and everywhere, now and forever. Amen.

As Christ teaches us we pray,

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, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

We who are many are one body, for we all share the one bread.

Draw near and receive the body and blood of our Savior Jesus Christ in remembrance that he died for us. Let us feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

To receive communion, please follow the ushers to the altar. Upon placing your hands forward, you will receive a wafer. You may consume it and then receive the wine from the chalice or hold onto the wafer and the chalice-bearer will intinct it for you. You may also cross your hands over your chest for a blessing to receive neither element or not to receive the wine.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God of all compassion,
by the dying and rising of your Christ
you restore us to yourself
and enfold us in your love.
May we who have been refreshed
with the bread of life and cup of salvation
be renewed by your healing spirit
and made ready for the coming of your kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

BLESSING

DISMISSAL

THE CHANCEL FLOWERS ARE GIVEN

In memory of Robert W. Hutcheson

In memory of John R. Hutcheson, Jr.

In memory of Louise Perry Rawles

WE PRAY FOR THE DEPARTED

Michael Barrett, Polly Venable, Tom Dillon, Derek Shows, Catherine Claggett

WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO SERVE OUR COUNTRY OVERSEAS

Kate Ballard, Holly Prousalis, Omar Sharif, the Hood, Doherty, Jennings, and Streyder families

PRAYERS FOR THE PARISH

Bonnie-Lorraine Thiele, Barbara Cooley, Mary Crow, Gladys Hook, LaVerne Scott-Rayford, David Caleb,
Gail & Ridge Multop, Helen Lewis, Susanne O'Neill, Hadley Kimberlin, Sam Brathwaite, Kimberly Richmond,
Linda Hoekstra, Denise Blood, Bill Wilson, Caroline Long, Matthew Fitzpatrick, Peter West, Tyger Latham,
Quiana Lawhorn, Carol Lafley, Van Bridgers, Matt Rhodes, Rusty Vellek,
Susan Fitzgerald, Diane, Carol Quesenberry