

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

DECEMBER 14, 2025

345 HARK! A THRILLING VOICE IS SOUNDING

1 Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding!

“Christ is near,” we hear it say.

“Cast away the works of darkness,

All you children of the day!”

2 Startled at the solemn warning,

Let the earthbound soul arise;

Christ, its sun, all sloth dispelling,

Shines upon the morning skies.

3 See, the Lamb, so long expected,

Comes with pardon down from heav’n.

Let us haste, with tears of sorrow,

One and all, to be forgiv’n;

4 So, when next He comes in glory

And the world is wrapped in fear,

He will shield us with His mercy
And with words of love draw near.

△ 5 Honor, glory, might, dominion
To the Father and the Son
With the ever-living Spirit
While eternal ages run!

Text: Latin, c. 5th–10th cent.; tr. Edward Caswall, 1814–78, alt.

Text: Public domain

(The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.)

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

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.

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C who made heaven and earth.

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

C and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

(Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.)

P O almighty God, merciful Father,

C I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.

P Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word,

announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

SALUTATION AND COLLECT OF THE DAY

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Let us pray.

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 Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Isaiah 35:1–10

A The Old Testament Reading is from Isaiah, chapter 35.

¹The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the
crocus;

²it 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.

³Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴Say to those who have an anxious heart,
“Be strong; fear not!

Behold, your God
will come with vengeance,
with the recompense of God.

He will come and save you.”

⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

⁶then shall the lame man leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.

For waters break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
⁷the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸And a highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Way of Holiness;
the unclean shall not pass over it.

It shall belong to those who walk on the way;
even if they are fools, they shall not go astray.

⁹No 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.

¹⁰And the ransomed of the LORD shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain gladness and joy,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

A The Epistle is from James, chapter 5.

⁷Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. ⁹Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. ¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

(Stand)

HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 11:2–15

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the eleventh chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

²When John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples ³and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” ⁴And Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. ⁶And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.”

⁷As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses. ⁹What then did you go out to see? A

prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.

¹⁰This is he of whom it is written,

“Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
who will prepare your way before you.’

¹¹Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. ¹²From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. ¹³For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, ¹⁴and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. ¹⁵He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

SERMON

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

P Friends in Christ, I urge you all to lift up your hearts to God and pray with me as Christ our Lord has taught us and freely promised to hear us.

God, our Father in heaven, look with mercy on us, Your needy children on earth, and grant us grace that Your holy name be hallowed by us and all the world through the pure and true teaching of Your Word and the fervent love shown forth in our lives. Graciously turn from us all false doctrine and evil living whereby Your precious name is blasphemed and profaned. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P May Your kingdom come to us and expand. Bring all transgressors and those who are blinded and bound in the devil's kingdom to know Jesus Christ, Your Son, by faith that the number of Christians may be increased. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Strengthen us by Your Spirit according to Your will, both in life and in death, in the midst of both

good and evil things, that our own wills may be crucified daily and sacrificed to Your good and gracious will. Into Your merciful hands we commend [name(s)] and all who are in need, praying for them at all times: Thy will be done. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Grant us our daily bread, preserve us from greed and selfish cares, and help us trust in You to provide for all our needs. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Forgive us our sins as we also forgive those who sin against us so that our hearts may be at peace and may rejoice in a good conscience before You, and that no sin may ever frighten or alarm us. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Lead us not into temptation, O Lord, but help us by Your Spirit to subdue our flesh, to turn from the world and its ways, and to overcome the devil with all his wiles. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

- P** And lastly, O heavenly Father, deliver us from all evil of both body and soul, now and forever. Lord, in Your mercy,
- C** **hear our prayer.**
- P** We trust, O Lord, in Your great mercy to hear and answer us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
- C** **Amen.**

SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT

PREFACE

LSB 216

- P** The Lord be with you.
- C** **And also with you.**
- P** Lift up your hearts.
- C** **We lift them to the Lord.**
- P** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
- C** **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

P It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord our God, king of all creation, for You have had mercy on us and given Your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. Grant us Your Spirit, gracious Father, that we may give heed to the testament of Your Son in true faith and, above all, firmly take to heart the words with which Christ gives to us His body and blood for our forgiveness. By Your grace, lead us to remember and give thanks for the boundless love which He manifested to us when, by pouring out His precious blood, He saved us from Your righteous wrath and from sin, death, and hell. Grant that we may receive the bread and wine, that is, His body and blood, as a gift, guarantee, and pledge of His salvation. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son 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.

P In the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,
at His command, and with His own words, we
receive His testament:

P Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: “Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.”

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: “Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

PAX DOMINI

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C Amen.

334 O LORD, HOW SHALL I MEET YOU

1 O Lord, how shall I meet You,
How welcome You aright?
Your people long to greet You,

My hope, my heart's delight!
O kindle, Lord most holy,
Your lamp within my breast
To do in spirit lowly
All that may please You best.

2 Your Zion strews before You
Green boughs and fairest palms;
And I too will adore You
With joyous songs and psalms.
My heart shall bloom forever
For You with praises new
And from Your name shall never
Withhold the honor due.

3 I lay in fetters, groaning;
You came to set me free.
I stood, my shame bemoaning;
You came to honor me.
A glorious crown You give me,
A treasure safe on high

That will not fail or leave me
As earthly riches fly.

4 Love caused Your incarnation;
Love brought You down to me.
Your thirst for my salvation
Procured my liberty.
Oh, love beyond all telling,
That led You to embrace
In love, all love excelling,
Our lost and fallen race.

5 Sin's debt, that fearful burden,
Cannot His love erase;
Your guilt the Lord will pardon
And cover by His grace.
He comes, for you procuring
The peace of sin forgiv'n,
His children thus securing
Eternal life in heav'n.

6 He comes to judge the nations,
A terror to His foes,
A light of consolations
And blessed hope to those
Who love the Lord's appearing.
O glorious Sun, now come,
Send forth Your beams so cheering,
And guide us safely home.

Text: Paul Gerhardt, 1607–76; tr. The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941, alt.

Text: Public domain

341 LIFT UP YOUR HEADS, YE MIGHTY GATES

1 Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates!
Behold, the King of glory waits.
The King of kings is drawing near;
The Savior of the world is here.
Life and salvation He doth bring;
Therefore rejoice and gladly sing.
To God the Father raise
Your joyful songs of praise.

2 A righteous Helper comes to thee;
His chariot is humility,

His kingly crown is holiness,
His scepter, pity in distress.
The end of all our woe He brings;
Therefore the earth is glad and sings.
To Christ the Savior raise
Your grateful hymns of praise.

3 How blest the land, the city blest,
Where Christ the ruler is confessed!
O peaceful hearts and happy homes
To whom this King in triumph comes!
The cloudless sun of joy is He
Who comes to set His people free.
To God the Spirit raise
Your happy shouts of praise.

4 Fling wide the portals of your heart;
Make it a temple set apart
From earthly use for heav'n's employ,
Adorned with prayer and love and joy.
So shall your Sov'reign enter in
And new and nobler life begin.

To God alone 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.

Text: Georg Weissel, 1590–1635; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, alt.
Text: Public domain

POST-COMMUNION COLLECT

P Let us pray.

We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who

lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

BENEDICTION

P The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

C Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

346 WHEN ALL THE WORLD WAS CURSED

1 When all the world was cursed

By Moses' condemnation,
Saint John the Baptist came
With words of consolation.

With true forerunner's zeal
The greater One he named,

And Him, as yet unknown,
As Savior he proclaimed.

2 Before he yet was born,
He leaped in joyful meeting,
Confessing Him as Lord
Whose mother he was greeting.
By Jordan's rolling stream,
A new Elijah bold,
He testified of Him
Of whom the prophets told:

3 Behold the Lamb of God
That bears the world's transgression,
Whose sacrifice removes
The devil's dread oppression.
Behold the Lamb of God,
Who takes away our sin,
Who for our peace and joy
Will full atonement win.

4 O grant, dear Lord of love,
That we receive, rejoicing,
The word proclaimed by John,
Our true repentance voicing,
That gladly we may walk
Upon our Savior's way
Until we live with Him
In His eternal day.

Text: Johann Gottfried Olearius, 1635–1711; tr. Paul E. Kretzmann, 1883–1965, alt.

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Divine Service, Setting Five from Lutheran Service
Book

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