

**THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**  
**December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025 – 9:30 AM**

**WELCOME**



A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom, and Jesus points to the unexpected and transforming signs of God's reign. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.

✝ Preacher – Pastor Brian Griswold  
✝ Officiant – Pastor Rudy Schneider

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

**CTW HYMN: In the Secret**

In the secret, in the quiet place,  
in my deepest heart I know  
In the stillness, in the quiet hour I wait only for You  
'Cause I want to know You more

**Chorus**

I am reaching for the highest goal, that I might receive the prize  
Pressing onward, pushing every hindrance aside, out of my way  
'Cause I want to know You more

**Chorus**

**Chorus:**

I want to know You,  
I want to hear Your voice  
I want to know You more  
I want to touch You,  
I want to see Your face  
I want to know You more

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**WORSHIP**

**OPENING HYMNS:**

Open the Eyes of my Heart	Majesty
<p><b>Chorus</b></p> <p>Open the eyes of my heart, Lord, Open the eyes of my heart; I want to see You., I want to see You. (<i>repeat 3X</i>)</p> <p>To see You high and lifted up Shining in the light Of Your glory. Pour out Your pow'r and love; As we sing Holy, holy, holy.</p> <p><b>(Chorus)</b></p> <p>Holy, holy, holy. Holy, holy, holy. I want to see You. I want to see You.</p> <p><small>© 1997 Integrity's Hosanna! Music, CCLI License # 22085334</small></p>	<p>Majesty, worship His majesty. Unto Jesus be all glory, honor, and praise. Majesty, kingdom authority Flow from His throne unto His own His anthem raise. So exalt, lift up on high the name of Jesus. Magnify, come glorify Christ Jesus, the King. Majesty, worship His majesty, Jesus who died, now glorified, King of all kings.</p> <p><small>© 1981 New Spring, CCLI License # 22085334</small></p>

## CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, alive in the world, reviving creation, ever coming to us.  
**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another. *Silence is kept for reflection.*

God of mercy, **we confess that we have sinned. We trust earthly powers and human authority alone. We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts.**

God of might, **we confess that we have sinned. We have turned away from our neighbors. We have trusted false promises.**

God in our midst, **we confess that we have sinned. We plead; come to us. Bring your mercy to birth in us.**

A righteous branch springs forth: it is Christ the Lord, our Savior, in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy. By the power of the Holy Spirit, receive the grace and forgiveness of God through Christ Jesus, whose day draws near. **Amen.**

**Prayer of the Day** - Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## GOD'S HOLY WORD

### FIRST READING: Isaiah 35:1-10

<sup>1</sup> The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus <sup>2</sup> it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and shouting. 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.

<sup>3</sup> Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees. <sup>4</sup> 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."

<sup>5</sup> Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be opened; <sup>6</sup> 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; <sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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...**Thanks be to God!**



## ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

**Connie Pinkowski & Mark Thomas**

We light this third candle of our Advent Wreath that invites us to embrace the true Light of Christ and the joy for our world that Christ brings us! We pray that our hearts and our world may once again be recreated by the power of God that dwells among us!

## ADVENT HYMN – O Come O Come Emmanuel

O come, O King of nations, come, O Cornerstone that binds in one:  
refresh the hearts that long for you; restore the broken, make us new.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

### Psalm 146: 5 - 10

<sup>5</sup> Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help, whose hope is in the LORD their God;

<sup>6</sup> **who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;  
who keeps promises forever;**

<sup>7</sup> who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger. The LORD sets the captive free.

<sup>8</sup> **The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;  
the LORD loves the righteous.**

<sup>9</sup> The LORD cares for the stranger; the LORD sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked.

<sup>10</sup> **The LORD shall reign forever, your God, O Zion, throughout all generations.  
Hallelujah!**



### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



### HOLY GOSPEL

A Reading from the Holy Gospel of Matthew 11: 2 - 11; **Glory to You, O Lord!**

<sup>2</sup> When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples <sup>3</sup> and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" <sup>4</sup> Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup> the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. <sup>6</sup> And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

<sup>7</sup> 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? <sup>8</sup> What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces.

<sup>9</sup> What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.

<sup>10</sup> 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.'

<sup>11</sup> "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."

The Gospel of the Lord...**Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ!**

## SERMON – Pastor Brian Griswold

### HYMN OF THE DAY: All Earth is Hopeful

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| 1 All earth is hopeful; the Savior comes at last!<br>Furrows lie open for God's creative task:<br>this, the labor of people who struggle to see<br>how God's truth and justice set ev'rybody free.                   | 3 Mountains and valleys will have to be prepared;<br>new highways opened, new protocols declared.<br>Almost here! God is nearing, in beauty and grace!<br>All clear ev'ry gateway, in haste, come out in<br>haste! |
| 2 People of Israel, you heard the prophet tell:<br>"A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel";<br>she conceived him, "God with us,"<br>our brother, whose birth<br>restores hope and courage to children of this<br>earth. | 4 We first saw Jesus a baby in a crib.<br>This same Lord Jesus today has come to live<br>in our world; he is present, in neighbors we see<br>our Jesus is with us, and ever sets us free.                          |

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

- ✠ At this time, we would like to also recognize those joining us via Facebook Live and give voice to any greetings or prayer requests submitted for our worship.

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation. *A brief silence.*

God of power and mercy, we praise you for Jesus and his acts of healing and liberation. Lead us to proclaim the good news from generation to generation, that all may place their hope in you. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

When lands are parched and dry, bring rain and snow; where wilderness is barren, sow seeds of life. Fill the lands with trees that grow, plants that flower, and creatures that thrive, as nature proclaims the wonder of your works. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

When there is injustice or corruption among nations and leaders, root it out. Turn their attention to inequity and the cries of the poor. Instill a deeper sense of compassion and care in all who govern. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

When bodies weaken and hearts grow fearful, speak your blessing. Grace those from our families and community that we now name silently in our hearts, or out loud, with our prayers and your blessings. *(Please name silently or out loud).* In uncertain times, remind us of the promise spoken to our ancestors in faith. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

When people are imprisoned or held captive, break the chains, and offer release. Strengthen the work of the church in restorative justice, breaking cycles of poverty, and welcoming the immigrant. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

As we await your coming, we give thanks for the faithful who have lived and died in faith. May their boldness of faith inspire our witness and work.  
God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. **Amen.**

### OFFERING & OFFERING PRAYER

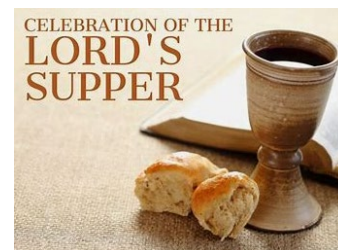
God our provider, by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth and provides for all, signs of your steadfast love and faithfulness. Receive these offerings from your bounty and bless them to be used for your glory as we prepare for the birth of your son, Jesus.  
**Amen.**

## THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life. Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

In the night in which he was betrayed, Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me. Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:



**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming. **Come, Lord Jesus.**

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**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.**

**Invitation to Communion** – Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.

## OUR TIME OF COMMUNION WITH THE LORD!

### COMMUNION HYMN 1: What Child is This?

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| 1 What child is this, who, laid to rest,<br>on Mary's lap is sleeping?<br>Whom angels greet with anthems sweet<br>while shepherds watch are keeping?<br>This, this is Christ the king,<br>whom shepherds guard and angels sing;<br>haste, haste to bring him laud,<br>the babe, the son of Mary! | 3 So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;<br>come, peasant, king, to own him.<br>The King of kings salvation brings;<br>let loving hearts enthrone him.<br>Raise, raise the song on high,<br>the virgin sings her lullaby;<br>joy, joy, for Christ is born,<br>the babe, the son of Mary! |
| 2 Why lies he in such mean estate<br>where ox and ass are feeding?<br>Good Christian, fear; for sinners here<br>the silent Word is pleading.<br>Nails, spear shall pierce him through,<br>the cross be borne for me, for you;<br>hail, hail the Word made flesh,<br>the babe, the son of Mary!   |  |

## COMMUNION HYMN 2: Emmanuel

Emmanuel Emmanuel  
His name is called Emmanuel  
God with us revealed in us  
His name is called Emmanuel

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**Closing Prayer** - God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

**Blessing** - May God who comes among us, Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit, grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness, and good news to share today and always.  
**Amen.**

## CLOSING HYMN: Prepare the Royal Highway

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|---|--|
| 1 Prepare the royal highway;<br>the King of kings is near!<br>Let ev'ry hill and valley<br>a level road appear!<br>Then greet the King of glory,<br>foretold in sacred story: <b>Refrain</b>                              | 3 Then fling the gates wide open<br>to greet your promised king!<br>Your king, yet ev'ry nation<br>its tribute too may bring.<br>All lands will bow before him;<br>their voices join your singing:<br><b>Refrain</b> |
| 2 God's people, see him coming:<br>your own eternal king!<br>Palm branches strew before him!<br>Spread garments! Shout and sing!<br>God's promise will not fail you!<br>No more shall doubt assail you!<br><b>Refrain</b> | 4 His is no earthly kingdom;<br>it comes from heav'n above.<br>His rule is peace and freedom<br>and justice, truth, and love.<br>So let your praise be sounding<br>for kindness so abounding: <b>Refrain</b>         |

### **Refrain**

Hosanna to the Lord,  
for he fulfills God's word!

**Dismissal:** Go in peace. Keep Awake. **Thanks be to God.**

### **Notes:**

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