

Welcome to Worship
December 15th, 2024
Advent 3

Prelude *Pastorale on the Sussex Carol* ~ John S. Dixon

Gathering Hymn *Prepare the Royal Highway* ~ ELW 264

Prayer of the Day

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

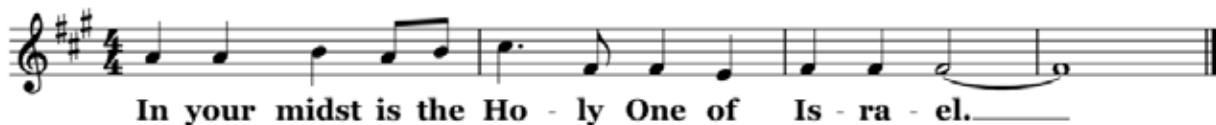
First Reading Zephaniah 3: 14-20

The prophet Zephaniah's message is mostly one of judgment for sin. This reading, however, which comes from the conclusion of the book, prophesies joy for Judah and Jerusalem. Judgment has led to repentance, and God's salvation is at hand.

Word of God, word of life
 Thanks be to God

Psalm Isaiah 12:2-6

Cantor sings refrain first, then all sing refrain.



Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid,
 for the Lord God is my strength and my might, and has become my salvation.
With joy you will draw water
 from the wells of salvation. **R**
And you will say in that day: Give thanks to the Lord, call on God's name;
 make known the deeds of the Lord among the nations; proclaim that this name is exalted.
Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously;
 let this be known in all the earth.
Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion,
 for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel. **R**

Gospel

Luke 3: 2-16

John the Baptist is a herald of Jesus, whose way is prepared by “repentance for the forgiveness of sins.”. John teaches that preparation for God’s reign is about bearing fruits of merciful justice, radical generosity, and vocational integrity.

The word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord;
make his paths straight.

Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth,
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’ ”

John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”

And the crowds asked him, “What, then, should we do?”¹¹ In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none, and whoever has food must do likewise.” Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”

As the people were filled with expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Hymn of the Day

Joy to the World ~ ELW 267

Musical Offering

Advent Ring ~ arr. William E. Moats (Hallelujah Ringers)

Offertory Hymn

Light Dawns on a Weary World ~ ELW 726 (vs. 1-2, NO refrain)

Communion Hymn

Come to the Table ~ ELW 481

My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness ~ ELW 251

Sending Hymn

Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness ~ ELW 843

Postlude

Fanfare on "The Boar's Head Carol" ~ John S. Dixon

Flowers are in Honor of Larry Cruz