

December 15, 2024: “Joy” Extended Advent 6

Welcome and Prelude: Improvisations on Service Music

Prayer of Confession

Today, as we confess our sins, we recognize how easily we overlook the gifts God gives. And we accept the sad truth that our limitations often create the conditions for sin. Let us pray.

God, we want a faith that feels like more than words, but we lack your power to embody goodness. We hear your call to serve others yet feel too worn out to make the food. We hunger to taste justice but fear the burning spice of the meal. We want our place at your table but resist sitting beside a stranger. We have lost our appetites for mere thoughts and prayers, but we fail to match our intentions to our actions. Forgive us and restore us with the healing wholeness of your presence.

My friends, God knows you are imperfect. But God did not invite you here today for what you have done or how you have behaved. God loves you. God always cared much more for you than for your shortcomings. God forgives you all your sins. Now repeat after me.

We accept God’s forgiveness. **We accept God’s forgiveness.**

We take our place in God’s purpose. **We take our place in God’s purpose. Amen.**

Gathering Song *Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn* (ELW 242)



1 A - wake! A - wake, and greet the new morn, for
2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em -
3 In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, when
4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night, though



an - gels her - ald its dawn - ing, Sing out your joy, for
man - u - el comes a - sing - ing, his hum - ble song is
all the world is de - spair - ing, as morn - ing light so
dark the win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall



soon he is born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing.
qui - et and near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing;
qui - et and free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing.
crown you with light, be strong and lov - ing and fear - less.



Come as a ba - by weak and poor, to bring all hearts to -
mu - sic to heal the bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing -
Then shall the mute break forth in song, the lame shall leap in
Love be our song and love our prayer and love our end - less



geth - er, he o - pens wide the heav'n - ly door and
kind - ness, the thun - der of his an - thems roll to
won - der, the weak be raised a - bove the strong, and
sto - ry; may God fill ev - 'ry day we share and



lives now in - side us for - ev - er.
shat - ter all ha - tred and blind - ness.
weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - der.
bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

Kyrie (ELW p. 203)

The words "kyrie eleison" are an ancient prayer meaning "Lord have mercy".

Leader

Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son, Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son

All

Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son, Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son

Chri - ste e - le - i - son, Chri - ste e - le - i - son

Ky - re - e e - le - i - son, Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son.

Canticle of Praise (ELW p. 204)

Sing glo - ry to God, and peace on earth.

We sing glo - ry to God in the high - est.

We - wor - ship you, we - give - you thanks.

We - praise you for - your glo - ry Lord.

Sing glo - ry to God, and peace on earth.

Glo - ry to God in the high - est.

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. Give us a vision of the more joyful world you quietly create. Then help us absorb your holy words; use them to propel us into your intended future. **Amen.**

First Reading: Zephaniah 3:14-20

¹⁴ Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!

¹⁵ The Lord has taken away the judgments against you; he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more.

¹⁶ On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak.

¹⁷ The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing ¹⁸ as on a day of festival."

I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it.

¹⁹ I will deal with all your oppressors at that time.

And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.

²⁰ At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the Lord.

Psalm: Isaiah 12:2-6



² 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.

³ **With joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation. R**

⁴ 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.

⁵ **Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously;
let this be known in all the earth.**

⁶ Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion,
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel. **R**

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Each of our Advent candles represents God's generous goodness, the advent of Jesus, God's greatest gift, the Spirit's fluttering flicker of joy. As we light each candle, we recognize the gifts God has given us this week. Together, we pray: *(Each prayer is said as that candle is lit.)*

God, you shield us like tender flames; **your care enables us to burn brighter.**

God, we pool our faith like candlelight; **through you we reveal hidden goodness.**

God, your justice upends this broken world. **Use your mercy to transform everything that harms.**

God, we reach for unreasonable hope; **and you prepare an unexpected future.**

God, we breathe in your peaceful refuge, **for you have made a place where we can safely rest.**

Joy ebbs and flows each day, holy God. **so we pray to you in honesty.**

Second Reading: Philippians 4:4-7

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵ Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Gospel Acclamation

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Pre - pare our hearts, our minds, our souls

To hear your word, to know your truth, Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

Gospel: Luke 3:7-18

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

⁷ 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? ⁸ 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. ⁹ 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.”

¹⁰ 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.” ¹² Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” ¹³ He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” ¹⁴ 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.”

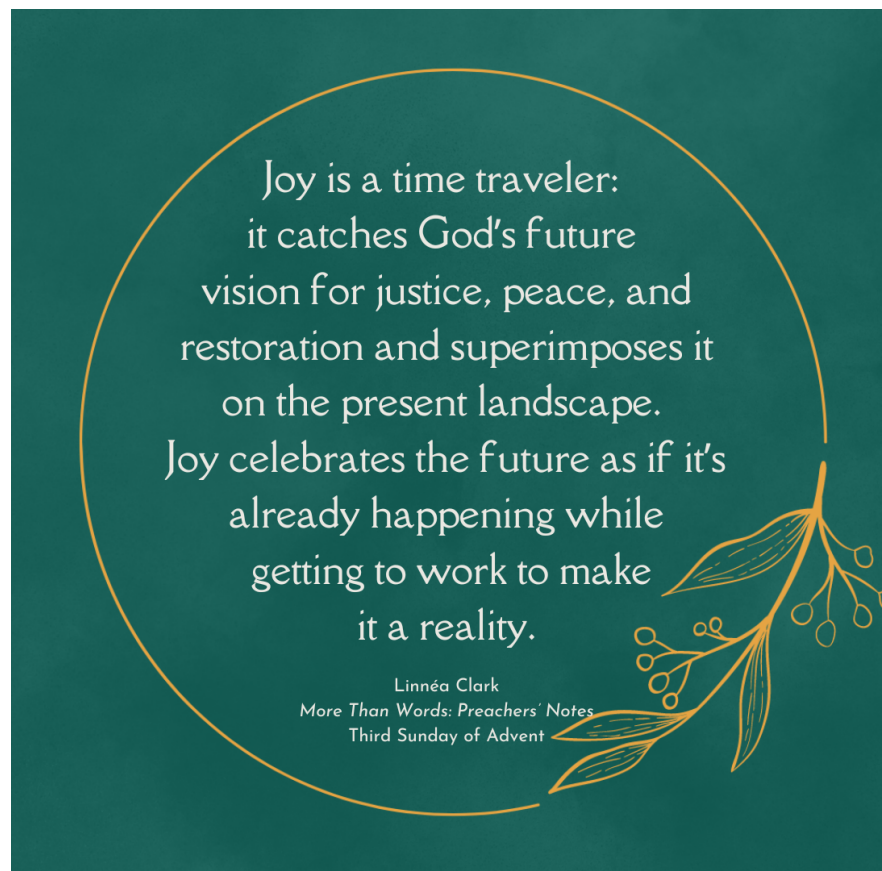
¹⁵ As the people were filled with expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶ John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

¹⁸ So with many other exhortations he proclaimed the good news to the people.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon



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Hymn of the Day *Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding!* (ELW 246)



1 Hark! a thrill - ing voice is sound - ing! "Christ is near," we
2 Wak - ened by the sol - emn warn - ing, from earth's bond - age
3 See the Lamb, so long ex - pect - ed, come with par - don
4 So, when next he comes in glo - ry and the world is
5 Hon - or, glo - ry, might, and bless - ing to the Fa - ther



hear it say. "Cast a - way the works of dark - ness,
let us rise; Christ, our sun, all sloth dis - pel - ling,
down from heav'n. Let us haste, with tears of sor - row,
wrapped in fear, he will shield us with his mer - cy
and the Son with the ev - er - last - ing Spir - it



all you chil - dren of the day!"
shines up - on the morn - ing skies.
one and all, to be for - giv'n;
and with words of love draw near.
while un - end - ing a - ges run!

Text: Latin hymn, 1632; tr. Edward Caswall, 1814–1878
Music: MERTON, William H. Monk, 1823–1889

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism for John-Thomas Vincent Pellman

Presentation (ELW p. 227)

The assembly is seated. Candidates for baptism, sponsors, and parents gather with the ministers at the font. The presiding minister may address the assembly in these or similar words:

In baptism our gracious heavenly Father frees us from sin and death by joining us to the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are born children of a fallen humanity; by water and the Holy Spirit we are reborn children of God and made members of the church, the body of Christ. Living with Christ and in the communion of saints, we grow in faith, love, and obedience to the will of God.

A sponsor presents the candidate:

I present John-Thomas Vincent Pellman for baptism.

The presiding minister addresses candidates who are able to answer for themselves:

John-Thomas, called by the Holy Spirit, trusting in the grace and love of God, do you desire to be baptized into Christ?

The candidate responds: I do.

The presiding minister addresses the assembly:

People of God, do you promise to support name/s and pray for *them* in *their* new life in Christ?

We do.

The assembly stands.

Profession of Faith (ELW p. 229)

The presiding minister addresses candidates for baptism. The assembly joins in the responses.

I ask you to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, reject sin, and confess the faith of the church.

Do you renounce the devil and all the forces that defy God,
the powers of this world that rebel against God,
and the ways of sin that draw you from God?

I renounce them.

Do you believe in God the Father?

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Thanksgiving at the Font (ELW p. 230)

Water may be poured into the font before or during the thanksgiving. At the font, the presiding minister begins the thanksgiving:

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning... To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

Baptism (ELW p. 230)

The presiding minister baptizes the candidate.

John-Thomas Vincent Pellman, I baptize you in the name of the Father,*

The candidate is immersed or water is poured on the candidate's head a second time:

and of the Son,

The candidate is immersed or water is poured on the candidate's head a third time:

and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

You belong to Christ, in whom you have been baptized. Alleluia.

The presiding minister continues with a prayer invoking the Holy Spirit to be active in the life of the newly baptized.

Let us welcome the newly baptized.

We welcome you into the body of Christ and into the mission we share: join us in giving thanks and praise to God and bearing God's creative and redeeming word to all the world.

Prayers of Intercession

Each petition ends with "Lord, in your mercy," and the congregational response is "receive our prayer."

Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Anthem: *On This Day, Earth Shall Sing*

This 16th century carol, originally in Latin, retains the latin text "Ideo, Gloria in excess Deo" which means "Therefore, Glory to God in the Highest".

Meal

Offering Prayer

Together we pray.

Holy Spirit, please bless these small gifts we give. **You set the table with plenty of love.**

Prepare room in your home **for my neighbor and me.** Prepare a place in your vision **for my neighbor and me.**

Prepare a seat at your table **for my neighbor and me.**

Holy Spirit, you have blessed these gifts we give. **You set the table with plenty of love. Amen**

Great Thanksgiving Dialogue

Leader Congregation

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Leader Congregation

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Leader Congregation

Let us give thanks to the Lord, to the Lord our God.

All

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Preface

Holy, Holy, Holy

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry Lord.
Ho - san - na in the high - est. Blessed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Words of Institution

Lord's Prayer

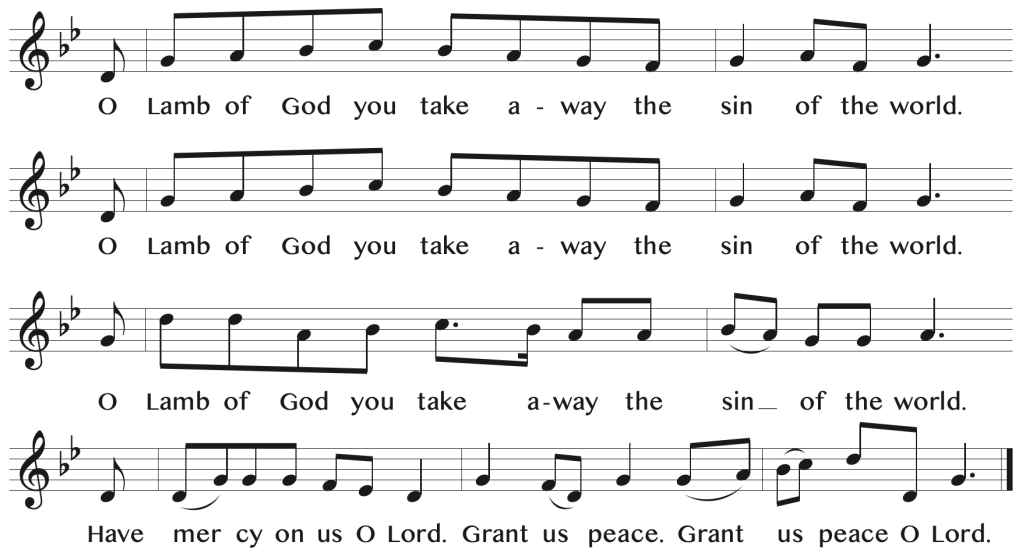
Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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

Communion Song



O Lamb of God you take a - way the sin of the world.

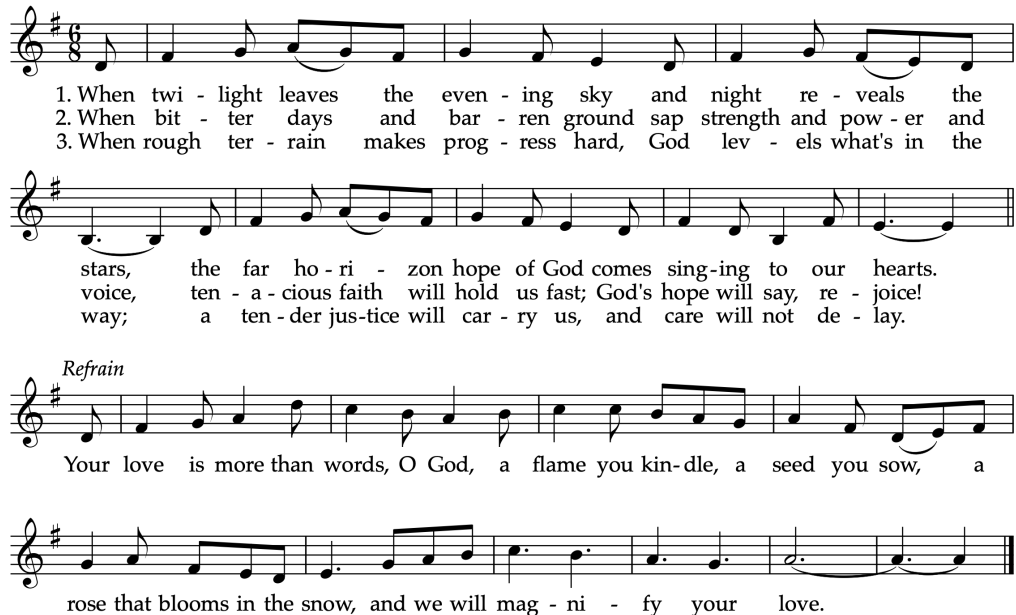
O Lamb of God you take a - way the sin of the world.

O Lamb of God you take a-way the sin_ of the world.

Have mer cy on us O Lord. Grant us peace. Grant us peace O Lord.

Communion Hymn: *More Than Words*

“More Than Words” was written to accompany worship throughout the Advent season. This original hymn explores the thematic interplay of each of the seven Advent words (care, faith, justice, hope, peace, joy, and love) as gifts from God. As God’s love is magnified for us, we magnify it like Mary, too. It will be our communion hymn for the remainder of the season.



1. When twi - light leaves the even - ing sky and night re - veals the
2. When bit - ter days and bar - ren ground sap strength and pow - er and
3. When rough ter - rain makes prog - ress hard, God lev - els what's in the

stars, the far ho - ri - zon hope of God comes sing - ing to our hearts.
voice, ten - a - cious faith will hold us fast; God's hope will say, re - joice!
way; a ten - der jus - tice will car - ry us, and care will not de - lay.

Refrain

Your love is more than words, O God, a flame you kin - dle, a seed you sow, a
rose that blooms in the snow, and we will mag - ni - fy your love.

Prayer after Communion

God, what you have planned for us unfolds slowly.

Your love is often unrecognizable, unappreciated, gentle and unnoticed.

But at this table we have noticed what others do not see.

We have tasted your unspoken goodness. And now send us out to magnify your love. Amen.

Blessing

God of endings and beginnings, God in the darkness and the light,

God, our hope for the journey, ✚ bless and keep you now and forever. **Amen.**

Sending Song *Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying* (ELW 436)



1 Wake, a - wake, for night is fly - ing, the watch-men
2 Zi - on hears the watch-men sing - ing, and all her
3 Glo - ri - a! Let heav'n a - dore you! Let saints and



on the heights are cry - ing; a - wake, Je - ru - sa - lem, at last.
heart with joy is spring-ing. She wakes, she ris - es from her gloom.
an - gels sing be - fore you, with harp and cym-bal's clear-est tone.



Mid - night hears the wel - come voic - es, and at the
Her dear friend comes down, all glo - rious, the strong in
Gates of pearl, twelve por - tals gleam - ing, lead us to



thrill-ing cry re - joic - es: "Come forth, you maid-ens! Night is past.
grace, in truth vic - to - rious: her star is ris'n; her light is come.
bliss be - yond all dream-ing, with an - gel choirs a - round your throne.



The bride - groom comes! A - wake; your lamps with glad - ness take!"
Now come, O Bless - ed One, Lord Je - sus, God's own Son.
No eye has caught the light, no ear the thun - d'ring might



Al - le - lu - ia! Rise and pre - pare the feast to share;
Sing ho - san - na! Oh, hear the call! Come one, come all,
of such glo - ry. There we will go: what joy we'll know!



go, meet the bride - groom, who draws near.
and fol - low to the ban - quet hall.
There sweet de - light will ev - er flow.

Dismissal

People of God, you have heard of the advent of God's goodness.

You carry the blessing of God, God, the First Whisper, Jesus, the Living Promise, Spirit, the Speaker of Hearts.

Now go into this world expecting God's justice and nurturing God's peace.

God, we will magnify your love.

Organ Postlude:

To allow those who wish to use the postlude as a time of reflection at the close of worship, we ask that the congregation exit the sanctuary in a way that allows that. We invite you to visit over refreshments in the centrum.